

The vine leaf of Château le Puy

EDITORIAL

Ever since our export policy was launched in 1964, we have neglected the USA for reasons related to administrative import formalities. These make this country one of the world's most protectionist nations. To help Château le Puy wines get a strong foothold in the USA on a long-term basis and in an inexpensive way, we have decided to set up a number of restaurants bearing our name, the first of which will be based in Washington.

The purpose of this restaurant will be to provide guests with an opportunity to taste Château le Puy wines by serving a glass of wine with each of the main courses, the cost of the wine being included in the price of the meal.

This restaurant will seek to be a showcase for French-style Bistronomie but with a slightly Americanised feel to it. It'll be in the hands of an expert duo. Indeed, for this exciting project we are being supported by two leading chefs, whose names we will be revealing shortly.

Guests enjoying their Château le Puy wine can purchase it either directly in the restaurant (which will have a stock available at all times), from delicatessen outlets or from local stockists.

From September onwards, our wines will be available in a minimum of 35 states thanks to the distribution agreement we recently concluded with the company Rosenthal.

To top it all off, each evening our restaurants will be running paid courses providing an opportunity to discover Château le Puy wine and French gastronomy.

Jean Pierre Amoreau

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SEPTEMBER 2016 N° 18

A WINEGROWING FAMILY

No one could tell stories like granny and she was the official repository of our family history. However, some anecdotes came down to me from the protagonists themselves. You always remember the adventures you've had yourself more easily. During the last summer holidays, my cousin Michel visited the region to relax in the shadow of the huge trees on our property. Such moments of leisurely relaxation are often a time for sharing secrets. We were chatting in the peaceful shade of a cedar tree when he pointed to my car and said "it needs cleaning". This was certainly true, but I didn't really pay much attention to the comment, preferring instead to continue catching up with the gossip about people we knew, and who had now moved out of the area. Despite this, he insisted: "do you want me to do it? It'll be just like the good old days". For as long as I can remember, Michel had always loved cars. He collected scale models of them and was forever sticking pictures gleaned from any magazines lying in the kitchen onto the walls of the bedroom we shared in turn in the property. Nevertheless, I found the question little strange.

- The good old days? Did you used to be a car washer then?

- It was one of my specialities. When I was 12, I was always after money for sweets, miniature cars and magazines, especially magazines in fact, and I knew that my parents didn't waste money easily! So I offered to wash dad's car and he accepted. I spent half a day on it. It was so clean and shiny afterwards that mom asked me to wash hers too, and I obliged. That's how I earned my first money.

- Yes, but it's easy when it's just your parents. Pascal washed dad's car as well.

- The story doesn't end there. The neighbours and later my parents' friends all eventually became loyal customers. It has to be said though, that I didn't cut corners. I built up a reputation as the best car washer in the whole neighbourhood! And I was very proud of this! But what was really funny was when I came here on holiday with grandad and granny. As you'll remember, grandad's car was always very dirty.

- That's a fact, he was always driving up and down the rows of vines in it, whatever the weather.

- That's right, and so naturally I offered to wash it.

-For nothing?

-Oh no, I wanted a few Francs for the chore. After all, I was almost a professional! And guess what... He told me "no". He even added "no way". I have to tell you I was quite astonished, because he was usually happy when we did a bit of work.

- You're right, work has always been valued around here. So why did he refuse then? Did he give you an explanation?

- You won't believe it! When I asked him why, his expression became deadly serious and he told me there and then "listen Michel, it's good of you to want to work but you have to understand that if I take the car out and you wash it in the courtyard and the neighbours pass by, they'll see you. And we can't have that, Michel, because they'll think I have money". He looked so serious, I didn't press him any further. Things have certainly changed now.

After laughing about the story, we both agreed that the world had changed but that fortunately family ties had survived.

Valérie Amoreau

To be continued in the next issue

MILLESIME 2009 BARTHÉLEMY

FICHE ORGANOLEPTIQUE

DESCRIPTION

A powerful wine, full of character.

An intense crimson robe with mauve highlights.

The nose is powerful with plenty of depth, reflecting the high degree of maturity of the grapes, bringing us delightful prune and Morello cherry flavours.

On the palate, the tannins are smooth and delicately accompanied by a superb freshness with plenty of length.

This is a highly complex wine, which assumes its full potential with airing.

ANALYSE

Alcohol content 20/20	14.26	%vol
Reducing sugars	0.30	gr/l
Total acidity	3.88	gr/l
Volatile acidity	0.69	g/l
PH	3.47	
SO2 free	4	
SO2 total	10	

YIELD

14,64 Hectolitres/Hectare

A vintage and its history... Barthélemy 2009

2009: a sunny year

The year 2009 was a hot one. In fact, it was one of the hottest for a century.

Only two months were colder than normal, these being January and February. The beginning of January was marked by a cold snap accompanied by snowfall on the ground throughout most of the Gironde area. The extremely violent storm which hit the whole south-west and our region in particular fortunately did not cause much damage on our property. However, the record wind speeds left us fearing the worst.

After these turbulent events, the sun came back out again and the summer was hot and sunny. August saw a late heat wave with temperatures sometimes exceeding 35°C after August 15th. This hot spell continued into the autumn. The harvests got underway from late September onwards, under a radiant sun. It's important to remember that the months of May, June, August, October and November 2009 were among the hottest ever observed and that overall the year 2009 is considered the fifth hottest year on record. One could well conclude that this was an exceptional phenomenon if not for the fact that the 11 hottest years have all occurred since 1989 (measurements began in 1930).

Although the impact of global warming cannot be denied, the year 2009 gave Le Château le Puy wines plenty of strength, complexity and an excellent potential for laying down.




OENOLOGIE

WINE COLOUR: The wine obtains its colour through the natural action of anthocyanins. These are natural substances found in particular in red grapes. They are quickly released at the start of the vatting process and are then present in the musts of the red and rosé wines and are therefore responsible for a wine's colour and hue. The anthocyanins cover a wide spectrum of colours ranging from orangey red to crimson. These substances are unstable, but when combined with the tannins during the fermentation and maturing stages they stabilise the wine's colour.


It should be noted that anthocyanins are characterised by their antioxidant properties.

Vine-friendly plants


Biodynamics is a term covering a range of practices making it possible to work the vine while ensuring maximum respect for its environment, to help it give the best of itself and of its plot. Such practices include the use of plants. Here, we present the plants most commonly used on the Le Château le Puy estate.




Camomile
Matricaria Recutita
 Part used: the flowers
 Contains terpenoids, and flavonoids
 Preparation: as a tisane
 It combats blockages caused by water stress (lack of water). It is sprayed on whenever necessary, from prefloration to the veraison stage.




Comfrey
Symphytum Officinale
 Part used: the leaves
 Contains potassium, boron, iron, calcium and nitrogen
 Preparation: as an infusion
 It stimulates both the growth and flowering of the plant.
 It also has a scarring and fertilising effect.
 It is sprayed on from the bud break (the moment the buds begin to open) until the setting (the moment the fruit begins to form).



Yarrow
Achille Millefolium
 Part used: the flowering tops
 Contains potassium hydroxide and sulphur
 Preparation: as an infusion
 It fights grape shatter by encouraging pollination.
 It is sprayed on from the flowering period to setting (the formation of the fruit).



Horsetail
Equisetum Arvense
 Part used: the whole plant
 Contains silica and calcium
 Preparation: as a decoction
 This is both a preventive and curative fungicide. It strengthens the leaves' cells.
 It is sprayed on from the bud break (the moment when the buds begin to open) until the setting (the moment the fruit begins to form).




Nettle
Urtica Diocia
 Part used: leaves and stems
 Contains nitrogen and iron.
 Preparation: as an infusion or a decoction.
 It stimulates and fertilises the plant, boosts its natural defences and encourages transfers and photosynthesis.
 It is sprayed on from the start of the growth stage until flowering.


The preparation methods used at Le Château le Puy

Decoctions
 To produce a decoction, you need to submerge the dry plant in cold water and allow it to soak for around 24 hours before boiling it with the lid on for around half an hour. Allow it to cool before filtering and diluting it.


Infusions
 To make an infusion, you need to submerge the dry plant in cold water, heat it up until the water begins to simmer, turn off the heat source and allow to soak until completely cold. You can then filter and dilute it.



White Willow
Salix Alba
 Part used: the bark
 Contains salicylic acid
 Preparation: as an infusion
 It plays an important role in the fight against cryptogamic diseases
 It is used as a spray throughout the season.



Alder Buckthorn
Frangula Alnus
 Part used: the cut bark
 Contains tannin
 Preparation: as a decoction.
 This is a powerful fungicide.
 It can be sprayed on throughout the whole season depending on the scale of the fungal attacks encountered.



Oak
Quercus
 Part used: the cut bark
 Contains tannins and calcium
 Preparation: as a decoction.
 It helps combat cryptogamic diseases
 It is sprayed on when facing a serious mildew attack.

TRELLISING - TRIMMING

A vine is a creeper which is constantly growing, which we need to master and whose growth we need to control. To achieve this, several generations ago, in keeping with our "Bordelaise-style" or "guyot double" pruning methods, we decided to trellis the vines to allow animals and tractors to pass through easily so that work could be carried out without causing damage (ripping out the branches for example). Thanks to the installation of posts and wire, trellising makes it possible to support the vine's branches, to avoid the vegetation getting too dense and crowded, therefore allowing for the improved aeration of the grapes. In May or June, depending on the weather and plant growth conditions, we start threading the vine branches between the wire to encourage them to grow upwards. This operation is referred to as "tying" the first time and "re-tying" the second time. What's more, the leaves are then more receptive to the light, which facilitates and increases photosynthesis. The branches continue to grow upwards and we then need to master this vertical growth by cutting the tops. At Le Château le Puy, this activity is referred to as trimming. We use two different methods for this topping work, according to the task at hand. These are manual topping with shears for plots of land worked with horses, and mechanical topping for the rest.

The trimming period naturally varies according to the weather and the growth of the different vine plots. Generally, we carry out these topping operations from mid-June to mid-August, trimming 3 to 4 times in all. My grandfather used to say to me: tu vas rogner? Fais attention de ne pas attraper la rogne! (Don't get mad... get trimming!)

Pascal Amoreau

SULPHITES IN WINES

The law makes it necessary to add the wording "Contient des sulfites" (contains sulphites) on wine labels regardless of the origin or the quantity present in the wine. It's worth examining this issue to get a better understanding of the qualities and shortcomings of these agents, which are seen as allergens in much the same way as eggs, milk and peanuts, etc.

Firstly, all wines contain sulphites as nature itself produces these during the fermentation process thanks to the action of yeast. They allow wines to stabilise and therefore contribute to their quality during storage. However, the quantities produced naturally are so low that in most cases they cannot be detected during the compulsory analysis. With skilful work on the part of the wine grower, these sulphite levels are sufficient to produce a great, high-quality wine. This is the path taken by the winegrowers at Le Château le Puy, who prefer to let the natural flavour of the land shine through rather than to add chemical additives.

To make their work easier, some wine producers readily add sulphites throughout the production process (during harvesting, fermentation, maturing and bottling) with no concern for the likely effect on the wine or the consumer's health.

The sulphite levels may therefore vary from 1 to more than 100 depending on the work carried out in the wine cellars during the vinification process and the maturing of a wine. With this in mind, to ensure greater transparency, wouldn't it be better to require that the amount of sulphites present in each bottle be displayed rather than the standard wording "contains sulphites", which leads the consumer to believe that all wines are the same in this respect?

Steven Hewison

AUSTRALIA, WHERE SHOULD WE EAT TONIGHT?

- **Aria Brisbane restaurant** - (Chef Matt Moran) - 1 Eagle St, Brisbane City QLD 4000 - (61) 7 3233 2555

- **Est** (Chef Peter Doyle) 1, Establishment/252 George St, Sydney NSW 2000 - (61) 2 9240 3000

- **Ester** (Chef Matt Lindsay) 46/52 Meagher St, Chippendale Sydney NSW 2008 - (61) 2 8068 8279

- **Quay** - (Chef Peter Gilmore) - Overseas Passenger Terminal, Hickson Rd, The Rocks NSW 2000 - (61) 2 9251 5600

- **France Soir** - (Chef Géraud Fabre) 11 Toorak Rd, South Yarra Melbourne VIC 3141 - (61) 3 9866 8569

- **Grossi Florentino** (Chef Guy Grossi) 80 Bourke St, Melbourne VIC 3000 - (61) 3 9662 1811

- **Guillaume** (Chef Guillaume Brahimi) - 92 Hargrave St, Paddington Sydney NSW 2021 - (61) 2 9302 5222

Ces Chefs, parmi bien d'autres, nous ont fait l'honneur de choisir Château le Puy pour accompagner le raffinement de leurs plats.

FOR THE PLEASURE OF THE PALATE

Duck Bourguignon with small turnips

serves 6 people

- 4 duck fillets
- 3 cloves of garlic and 1 large onion
- 150 g of smoked streaky bacon pieces
- 1 bottle of Château le Puy Emilien 2013
- 600 g of small turnips
- 2 laurel leaves, thyme, salt and pepper

Peel and chop the garlic and the onion. Remove the skins from the duck fillets and cut the flesh into large cubes. Make a series of cuts in one of the skins and allow its fat to melt on a medium heat in a casserole dish. When it has given up all its fat, remove it and coat the duck cubes in the hot fat. Add the bacon pieces, the onion, the garlic, the laurel and the thyme. Cook for 10 minutes on a low light then drench with red wine. Add salt and pepper and simmer on a low light for two hours without covering, stirring from time to time. Peel the turnips and throw them in the casserole dish halfway through the cooking process. Serve right away or allow to stand and then reheat before serving, which is even better!

Françoise Amoreau