

# *The vine leaf of Château le Puy*

## EDITORIAL

This year is an anniversary year for Château le Puy. A hundred years ago, my grandfather, Jean, harvested the 1917 vintage. And a great vintage it was because it's still alive and there are still a few bottles left in the family cellar. It's rare to see a vintage last so long. We're going to drink some soon, and I know in advance that we'll spare an affectionate thought for my grandfather, for Marie-Elisa, my grandmother, for Barthélemy, my great-grandfather and for Marie-Cécile, my great-grandmother. They'll be present in our thoughts, because they all helped to make this wonderful wine. In those days, the vines were pruned using mechanical secateurs that made your hands swell, the rows between the vines were worked by a plough towed by a pair of oxen, the grapes were destalked by hand and trodden by foot; they were then pressed using a ratchet press which my grandchildren think is a prehistoric machine.

In those days, there was no electricity at the Château. This noble invention wasn't installed until 1921. All the work was done by hand or with the help of domestic animals. People walked or cycled, even to go and catch the train. They often at other people's houses, with plenty of good humour and laughter. So, this year, we will remember our ancestors and celebrate this anniversary as, with joy and emotion, we drink the nectar that is Château le Puy 1917.

Jean Pierre Amoreau

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## A WINEGROWING FAMILY

Certain talents are passed on to everyone's joy... For example, my father, Jean Pierre, inherited his mother's talent for telling stories. Those of you who know him will agree. The same mischievous look, the same sense of suspense, the same humour. At family celebrations, this inheritance gives us a chance to relive the atmosphere of late-night sessions at the château with Grandma. This summer, Dad remembered Camille and Irène who worked on the estate from 1945 to 1952. Irène did the cleaning and Camille was a vineyard worker. At the end of each month, he received a sum of money for his work and, every two months, a "quart", or quarter barrel, i.e. 56 litres. "56 litres is one helluva quantity!", said Dad.

At that moment, my brother and I knew that the story had only just begun. "I was just 10 years old, maybe, and I liked to be around when Camille brought his empty "quart" to have it filled in the cellar. My father filled it with a young wine from that year, which was still maturing. It smelt wonderful, I enjoyed it just for the smell that wafted through the air during the filling operation. But what impressed me most was Camille's strength. In one easy movement, he placed the "quart" on his shoulder and set off home, about three hundred metres from the Château. Irène waited for him at the door and behind her was the table, completely empty. Intrigued, my brother asked him: "but how do you know that?". When Dad gave us his innocent look, betrayed by the smile in his eyes, I thought I could see Grandma again. "Well, I occasionally used to follow him and have a quick look, just to check that everything was OK. But one thing's certain: the script never changed. Camille placed the "quart" on the table. And immediately, because they didn't have a tap, Camille took a small tube, placed one end in the "quart" and drew off some wine by gravity. He started by pouring the wine into a glass but, as this took too long, they both ended up crouching and then sitting on the floor, under the table, drinking straight from the tube. They drank greedily until the "quart" was empty. Then usually, after a couple of days, they emerged from their house and life went on as normal."

"Once, however, things nearly took a nasty turn, but I'm not sure that I should tell you...". As when Grandma told her stories, we had to insist on hearing the end but this time we let our children do it for us. "Alright, then, but don't you go telling this at school". They promised. "Well, one evening, during the drinking session, Camille picked up his gun and tried to shoot Irène. She escaped death by hiding under the bed. But it didn't stop Camille from firing a few shots at the walls, the windows and the furniture, in fact anything that he thought was moving. This included several shots at the dresser, where the household plates were on display. The next morning, he sobered up and saw the damage. As he swept up the remains of their crockery, he said to his wife: "Look, Irène, at what we've done". Louise, the youngest of the family, exclaimed: "But Grandpa, it was very dangerous: did it happen often?"

"No, of course not, wanting to kill his wife was an exception, but it wasn't unusual for Camille to give Irène a hiding. As she'd had enough of it, she went to see the man who was considered to be the wise man of the village. She told him about her sad life and asked him for advice. The wise man looked thoughtful and, after a few minutes of intense reflection, said to Irène: "You know, Irène, some people are born to beat other people and some people are born to be beaten. You were born to be beaten." But don't worry, Louise, the gods were aware of the situation and arranged things so that Camille died young from an unknown disease. Irène was able to end her life in peace."

Valérie Amoreau

To be continued in the next issue

## MILLESIME 1917 EMILIEN FICHE ORGANOLEPTIQUE

### DESCRIPTION

A luminous bronze colour.  
Intense aniseed, spice, smoke and candied fruit aromas.  
In the mouth, it is dense and deep without feeling heavy.  
Delightful final notes.  
A wine that has aged well with no signs of fatigue.  
An exceptional tasting experience.

Month	NOV.	DEC.	JAN.	FEB.	MAR.	APR.	MAY	JUN.	JUL.	AUG.	SEP.	OCT.	TOTAL 12 MONTHS
Climatology	Stormy and rain	Cool and sunny	Good weather and some fog and rain	Good weather and some fog and a bit of rain	Magnificent weather	Good weather with a bit of rain	Nice weather, light rain	Stormy good weather	Stormy good weather	Good weather, heat	Good weather, very stormy	Grape harvests the 1st. Good weather, frosts	
Precipitation in mm and 1/10	47	31	46	27	100	27	69	95	29	78	35	124	708
Number of days with precipitation	14	10	10	9	17	12	13	13	5	15	7	17	142
Average Temperature	8.8	2	3	4.8	7.3	9.6	17.5	20.2	20.7	19	19.5	12.1	12.04

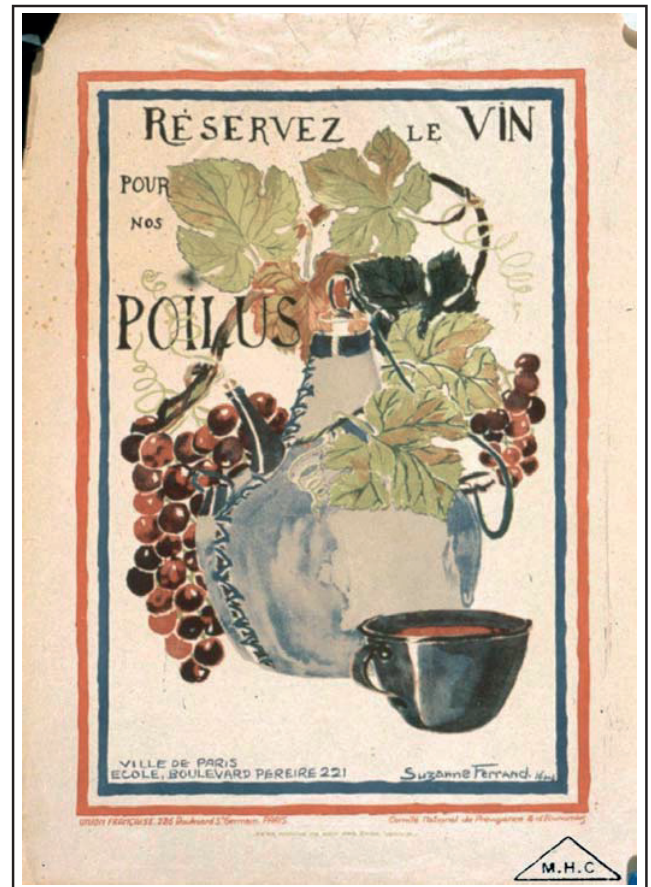
### A vintage and its history... Emilien 2017

#### 1917: the year that changed the destiny of the world

The great events of 1917 marked a turning point in the First World War. Some of them were even to shape the world in which we're still living today.

- The escalation in the fighting on land and at sea from January. Germany even talked about "all-out submarine warfare".
- The globalisation of the conflict, with the United States entering the war alongside the Allies on 6 April (they landed in Saint Nazaire on 26 June), followed by China on 14 August (there were no military consequence but a total of 140,000 Chinese workers joined the front).
- The "fatigue of the people" (Pierre Renouvin): strikes and social unrest broke out all over Europe, some leading to riots. It was the first time that the mass of the people became aware of the suffering and violence of the war.
- The October Revolution: the Bolsheviks took power in Russia and founded the USSR.

1917 also saw the birth of John Fitzgerald Kennedy and Indira Gandhi, as well as a number of famous artistes such as Danièle Darrieux, Bourvil, Henri Salvador and Robert Mitchum. Finally, the year was a tragic one for painters and sculptors, with the loss of Edgar Degas and Auguste Rodin, who left us a legacy of masterpieces.



### OENOLOGIE

**FINING OR FILTERING:** Fining consists of adding a substance of protein origin to the wine to capture and eliminate particles in suspension. A number of different substances are used, including fish glue, casein, albumin and even gelatine. Filtering involves passing the wine through a filter to obtain the same result. In both cases, these actions change the structure of the wine because they cause the loss of phenolic compounds such as tannins, colorants, etc. At Château le Puy, we believe we can obtain a brilliant, clear wine by racking it. So, we don't do any fining or filtering out of respect for our wines and our consumers.

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# 1917: daily life at Château le Puy

For many generations, Château le Puy's winegrowers have kept a daily diary of everything that has happened or has been bought or sold on the estate. These carefully-kept diaries give us a precise idea of life at the château. Here are a few anecdotes from 1917. In those days, Jean was very much the boss!

External employees were generally hired by the day or half-day. They had the names of the period: Aymond, Marthe, Charles, Elisabeth, René, Henriette, Zélie and Théodore. They each had their own tools, which cut out the possibility of theft. They were paid in an unusual way: when one of them needed money, he would come and ask my grandfather for it and would be given an advance (the smallest possible). His account would then be adjusted once a year, usually in November, depending on the number of days worked and the cash advances he had been granted.

AOUT 20 == 31 J. == S. Bernard == Lundi	
232-133 [C] Lev. 4451m, Couch. 18556m [C] Lev. 7443, Couch. 19426m	
Po au temps	
Ete a Castillon, ditte 4	
Larviers vin blanc a la requête	
Contenant 8 hectos 80 ltr	
14/	Deux Brins laire 55,50 mont 488,50
	Prime 15%
	Subvention 0,10 par hectol par quintaine 19,36
	Transp. 18,20
	Coat d
	594,22
	Corneilles 1,50
	Ch. l. Pharmacie 5,10
	Catillots d'arrosage 2,50
	une Laiton pour la chaudière 1,80
	Mèche de lampe 0,40
	Peinture a l'huile 1,-
	Poudre a bois 3,60
	Plomb 3 l. 52,5
	Quatre pour la jument 4,-
	Servant d'coffee 1,20
	Paillasse 1,50
	Melons 0,60
	Secteur 0,50
	Feuille 0 ltr 4,00
	Leux 84,30
	461,0
	39,20

The child Robert, son of Jean and father of Jean-Pierre aged 6 in 1917, was particularly spoilt. In the shopping lists, we can see that certain types of meat, sweets and even cakes were bought just for him.

Regardless of the official date for the opening of the hunting season (2 September in 1917), the men carried their guns all year round. But this mattered little. You had to be ready to shoot a "pest" at any time, a good excuse for which the "non-pests" paid the price. We can all make a mistake!!! One thing was certain: it helped to improve the daily fare. That year, our ancestor Jean killed: 16 hares, 4 rabbits, 1 water rail, 2 woodcocks, 1 magpie, 2 squirrels, 4 turtledoves, 11 quails, 5 pheasants and 15 partridges. The diary often contains entries for the purchase of powder and shot.

There were all sorts of animals on the estate: the oxen that were used for work in the vineyard and the pig, the cows and the poultry that were used partly to feed the family and partly to be sold. To allow the herd to reproduce, Jean and Marie-Elisa took the cow to the bull several times during October. There were also trips to the forest to collect heather for litter and the animal excrement was recovered to provide manure. At Castillon market, they bought only the meat that they didn't produce themselves.

## Wine for our soldiers

In those days, yet Château le Puy's wine was well-known as one of the best in the region. It was used as a "doctor wine" and was chosen to improve the wines of Saint-Emilion, replacing the wines of L'Ermitage (the authorities had prohibited blending with Côtes du Rhône wines in 1905). This explains why the terroir on which the estate is situated was named the "coteau des merveilles". In 1917, part of our harvest was requisitioned, no doubt to give even greater courage to the soldiers who were fighting in very difficult conditions.



## TRELLISING - TRIMMING

Nowadays, wine-growing is a perfectly normal activity. This climber is one of the oldest plants on Earth. There are traces of it in several parts of the world, long before man appeared on Earth, over 60 million years ago. Fragments of leaves dating back to around 33 to 56 million years BC show that vines existed in China, Japan, Alaska and Champagne.

Man arrived on Earth around 2.5 to 3 million years BC and discovered vines. He used them as a source of fresh fruit.

Between 3,000 and 9,000 years BC, man began, by accident, to make wine, leaving the grapes to ferment in an earthenware jar. This exhilarating beverage marked the beginning of more regular wine-growing. Vineyards developed rapidly from that moment on. The Egyptians taught their growing techniques to the Greeks (who alleged that they had learned them from the God Dionysus), who passed them on to the Romans. The Gauls naturally inherited them. They were excellent growers and developed vineyards all over France. They also invented the barrel, which was more practical than the earthenware jar.

During the Middle Ages, the expansion of Catholicism, which used wine in its services, favoured the development of the vineyards. The great explorers took vines to the New World.

Prior to 1610, due to the influence of the English and the Dutch, the Bordeaux wine region expanded as far as Saint-Emilion and became more professional.

The adventure was about to begin for Le Puy.

Pascal Amoreau

## HOW THE OLD VINTAGES WERE PREPARED

Those who are in the know are aware that, at Château le Puy, we have kept the wines in our cellars since 1917. A century of wines. So, it's quite common for people to ask us for a rare vintage to celebrate a wedding, a birthday, a great event or even just for a moment of pleasure. Our policy has always been to sell only wines that are ready to drink (as distinct from collectors' wines). To meet this challenge, we prepare each bottle with meticulous care.

We first select 1 bottle of the required vintage. Without standing it up straight, we open it and carefully decant it by candlelight, just as our ancestors did. Then we taste it (that's the best part!) to ensure that it has no defects, that it isn't "past its best", in other words, that it's up to our standards. By eliminating the sediment, we obtain less than 75 cl. To have enough wine to fill your bottle, we start all over again with a second bottle. We then pour the wine into a new, clean bottle. We seal it with a new cork marked with the vintage and the resealing year. All that remains is to put a label on the bottle and send it to you.

While it means that we use twice as many bottles, this method guarantees that your wine will be perfectly drinkable. It's then up to you to keep it in the very best conditions if you want to lay it down for another century or two!

Steven Hewison

## VANCOUVER, WHERE SHOULD WE EAT TONIGHT?

- **Kissa Tanto** - Chef Joël Watanabe and sous-chef Alain Chow - 263 E Pender St, Vancouver, BC V6A 1T8, Canada
- **L'Abbatoir** - Chef Lee Cooper and Owner / Operator Paul Grunberg - 217 Carrall St, Vancouver, BC V6B 2J2, Canada
- **Hawksworth Restaurant** - Chef David Hawksworth - 801 W Georgia St, Vancouver, BC V6C 1P7, Canada
- **Farmer's Apprentice Restaurant** - Chef David Gunawan - 1535 W 6th Ave, Vancouver, BC V6J 1R1, Canada
- **West Restaurant** - Chef Dang - 2881 Granville St, Vancouver, BC V6H 3J4, Canada
- **Boulevard Kitchen & Oyster Bar** - Chef Alex Chen - 845 Burrard St, Vancouver, BC V6Z 2K7, Canada
- **Agrius** - Chef Cam Picyk and sous-chef Sam Harris - 732 Yates St, Victoria, BC V8W 1L4, Canada

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

### Stewed red onions - Emilien 2014

for several people

- 1 Kilo of red onions (Roscoff variety)
- A half-bottle of Emilien 2014
- 2 tbs of vinegar
- 2 tbs of honey
- Ground pepper, Fleur de Sel
- Olive oil

Peel the onions and cut them into thin slices. Fry them gently in the olive oil until they are translucent. Reduce the heat to the minimum. Add the wine, honey and vinegar. Leave to simmer for at least 45 minutes, until you obtain a jam-like texture. Add salt and pepper and leave to cool. These stewed onions may be served with meat or foie gras. To keep them for a long period, put them in a preserving jar while they are hot, turn the jar upside down and leave them to cool.

Valérie Amoreau

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