

# The vine leaf of Château le Puy

## EDITORIAL

Our Minister for Health, Ms. Agnès Buzyn, has announced *urbi et orbi* that alcohol, including that in wine, is a poison for our body. This is true. Sugar is too, and so is salt. And tobacco. And drugs. And fat. By extension, infectious bacteria too, air pollution and many other things.

We don't choose to live, life is imposed on us through birth. Our parents chose for us. Our vital choices are how to sleep, how to eat, drink and reproduce. How to drink is thus vital. We can choose to drink water, but water is the best and the worst drink because it cannot rid itself of infectious bacteria when contaminated. Fermented beverages are the alternative. Wine is one such beverage.

The real choice lies in the dosage that each person decides on for their biological needs. We must enjoy the pleasures that wine offers us in moderation. Each person should have the right to choose their lifestyle, with or without alcohol, with or without sugar, or salt or anything else they wish.

It is important to respect other people's choices. Everyone should be able to choose the aspects of their life and not be subjected to choices made in particular by the Minister. I assert the right to choose my way of life and so of death. I would like my choice to be respected.

Jean Pierre Amoreau

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## A WINEGROWING FAMILY

In March 2018, we had the great pleasure of celebrating our Dad's 80th birthday. And if you know Jean Pierre, you also know that no-one can tell a story quite like he can. He most certainly takes after Grandma, his mother. Picture him, surrounded by his wife, children and grandchildren, over a magnificent chocolate cake made to Françoise's secret recipe... There couldn't have been a better moment to start telling us a family story. Just for once, he decided to tell us about a personal experience which he has always kept secret.

When he was around 5 or 6 years old, his grandfather Jean took him aside for a serious talk. 'It's time for you to learn why our hens hardly ever lay eggs,' he said, 'but first you must promise me two things.'

Little Jean Pierre would have promised anything just to know. It was one of the great mysteries of the village. The Amoreaus' hens didn't lay eggs!

'The first is never to tell your mother what I am about to tell you. It would make her much too sad. Promise?'

'I promise!' said the curious little boy, placing his hand on his heart.

'The second is that you must reveal the secret to your most deserving child. Promise?'

'I promise!'

And their pact was sealed.

Jean took his grandson to the chicken coop next to the house. With the child at his heels, he stepped into the coop. Inside, baskets with plaster lures were set out for the hens to lay in. Jean waved aside the hens, who responded with a disgruntled cluck, and carefully picked up two freshly-laid eggs, still warm.

'Grandpa Jean, they lay eggs!'

'Hush! Watch!'

He picked up a thin twig and made a small hole in one end of the first egg, shook it gently and made a second hole in the other end. He proudly handed the egg to his grandson.

'Go on, suck it out!'

Fascinated, Jean Pierre sucked the egg while Jean prepared the second egg for himself. It was delicious, soft and warm. A real delight. But for Jean Pierre, the mystery remained.

'Grandpa Jean, why do the hens lay eggs and not lay eggs?'

'The answer's simple, son, I come and eat them every afternoon.' 'No?!'

'I do, and so did my grandfather before me. He was the one who taught me how. And his grandfather before him, and his great-grandfather before him. And now you can come with me when you get home from school. If you like eggs, of course!' Of course Jean Pierre liked eggs and would go with Jean any time he could.

The chicken coop has since disappeared and with it the mystery of the hens that didn't lay eggs. Perhaps it's time to bring hens back to the estate so that the tradition can be revived...?

Valérie Amoreau  
To be continued in the next issue

# VINTAGE 2011 BARTHÉLEMY

## TASTING NOTE

### DESCRIPTION

This vintage expresses all the complexity of our terroir with its beautifully deep, dark red colour.

Its nose, very delicate at first, intensifies to powerful notes of truffle and red fruit.

The palate is subtle and generous.

Lastly, it has a deliciously enduring finish.

This is a well-balanced wine which is already demonstrating great ageing potential.

### ANALYSIS

Alcoholic strength	13.45	%vol.
Sugar (Glucose/Fructose)	Non quantifiable	gr/l
Total acidity	3.83	gr/l
Volatile acidity	0.53	g/l
PH	3.29	
Free sulphur dioxide	2	
Total sulphur dioxide	2	

### YIELD

44 Hectolitres/Hectare

## A vintage and its history... 2011

### 2011, the hot year

We all know that every year is different and the task of a wine-grower is to adapt in order to produce a wine of high-quality taste. For the last decade, however, we have been forced to admit the effects of global warming. 2011 was a perfect example. Winter and spring were particularly dry. Spring proved to be the warmest and driest in 50 years, with 3 times less precipitation than average! This heat and drought resulted in an exceptionally early vegetative cycle in the vines, with flowering and setting beginning around 15 May, i.e. a good three weeks in advance. The effects of the heat did not stop there, our region experienced a particularly hot spell over two days, on 26 and 27 June (37.8°C), which caused a sudden blast, especially to the Merlots.

Fortunately, nature knows best and the summer was cooler with rainy spells comparable to more 'classic' years. This restored the balance for the proper physiological growth of the vines. Once ripened, the grapes were in perfect health for the harvest. Our 2011 vintage is a great success!

Its exceptional balance and its high ageing potential will satisfy the most discerning taste-buds!



### SOME TERMS

**Supple:** This adjective describes a well-balanced wine without too much body, low in tannin and acidity on attack, and which does not overwhelm the palate; we can also say that this type of wine is smooth, fluid and easy to drink. All positive qualities!

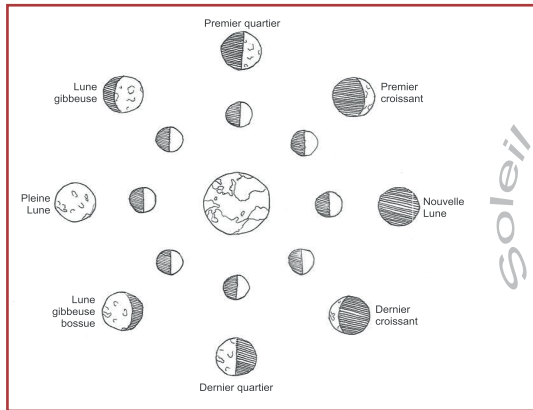
**Silky:** This describes a very refined and subtle wine. This quality expresses the delicacy, harmony and elegance of a wine. There is no aggressive acidity, but very round tannins (silky tannins) which envelop the palate like a layer of silk.

**Balanced:** A balanced wine expresses a harmony between its three main components: roundness, astringency and acidity.

# The moon, an ally of Château le Puy

Scientists have been trying for centuries to understand the moon's influence on agricultural crops. Studies are often contradictory. At Château le Puy, far from the raging debates, we have been working with moon for generations.

For us, it's not about adhering to any one method, but about upholding the practices of our forefathers who, by merit of observation, considerably improved the quality of the grapes on the estate. Our role is also to advance these techniques and to adapt them to climate change in both the vineyard and the cellars. However, the notion of the lunar calendar is difficult to understand. It's time for a few explanations...



## The different phases of the moon:

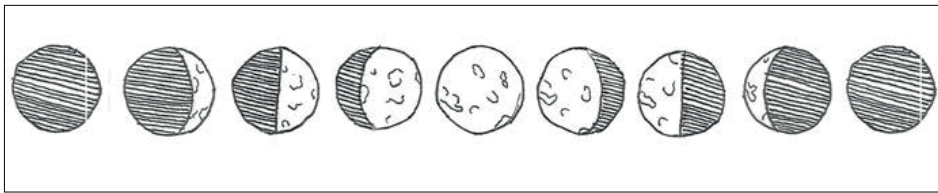
We often confuse 'rising moon' with 'waxing moon' and 'descending moon' with 'waning moon'. They are, however, two distinct phenomena.

-Waxing or waning moon: This cycle is one of the best-known and is observable from Earth. Our view of the moon changes constantly because it orbits the Earth. Its visible lit side thus varies progressively from 0% for the new moon to 100% for the full moon. When the moon is between the Earth and the sun, its lit side is not visible

from Earth, this is what we call the new moon, which is represented symbolically by a black disc. As it then turns around the Earth, the moon displays a luminous crescent which gradually grows to become a fully lit disc, which is called the full moon; the moon is then on the opposite side of the sun from the Earth.

-Rising and descending moon: The moon rises when it moves away from the Earth and descends when it moves closer. To observe this yourself, use a benchmark on the first day and evaluate its distance relative to the position of the moon on the horizon. If on the next day, it has risen from your benchmark, it is in a rising phase, and inversely.

The moon can thus be rising and waning at the same time.



## What does the lunar calendar tell us in terms of vine growth?

As the moon turns around the Earth it passes in front of the twelve constellations of the Zodiac, as does the sun in a year. There are water, air, earth and fire constellations. This is significant, because depending on the constellation and its associated element, the forces transmitted by the moon differ. For earth constellations (Taurus, Virgo and Capricorn), we can observe that the energy transmitted to the plant mostly benefits the roots. For water constellations (Pisces, Cancer and Scorpio), the energy affects the stem and the leaves. For air constellations (Aquarius, Gemini and Libra), the flowers clearly flourish. For fire constellations (Aries, Leo and Sagittarius), the predominant energy affects the fruit.



## Why the moon?

The Earth is not only influenced by the moon, but by the whole solar system. As Isaac Newton's law of universal gravitation (18th century), for example, or Albert Einstein's theory of relativity (20th century) demonstrate, the planets influence each other mutually and allow life on Earth to develop.

## How does the moon work?

The moon is the Earth's only satellite. It rotates around our planet in about 28 days, following an orbit which is similar to the sun's apparent annual trajectory as seen from the Earth. It also rotates on its own axis at practically the same speed. This is why we always see the same side of the moon. For the human eye, these two movements appear similar and correspond to a lunar month of almost 30 days. The moon's gravity influences the Earth, particularly in terms of tides, seismic activity, climate, the Earth's obliquity and rural activities.

## And in practice?

To stay in line with the forces transmitted by the moon, tasks should be carried out on the right days for each part of the plant. In this way, pruning is done on Root days with a descending moon, whereas planting will benefit more on Root days with a rising moon. We choose Fruit days to harvest and work in the vineyard. The wine-growers at Château le Puy gradually develop their own calendar, adapted precisely to the estate's terroir and vines. They believe that observation is the best way to understand the intimate qualities of each individual organism.

## THE VINE AND THE SKY

Over the last several years we have observed the effects of global warming. The character of our wines is intimately linked to the weather conditions of our geographical location. In order to flourish and produce fine grapes, a vine needs heat, light and water.

**Temperatures:** The vine must accumulate enough heat to ensure the best conditions for its vegetative cycle and the ripening of its grapes.

**Water:** enables the vine to grow and ensures proper nutrition by maintaining the link between plant and soil. This said, compared to other plants, the vine has relatively modest needs in water.

**Light:** indispensable for the photosynthesis that all plants require.

The high temperatures and lack of water of recent summers have put a great strain on vines. In these extreme conditions, the vine develops coping mechanisms: protecting its leaves from dehydration and searching deeper into the soil with its roots to find water. Fortunately, our system of biodynamic growing naturally reinforces the vine and its roots, helping it to fight these climatic conditions and produce the best grapes possible. Heatwave or drought, you can only obtain a good wine from good grapes!

Pascal Amoreau

## THE MOON IN THE GLASS

The moon also has a significant influence on life in the wine cellar. Any true wine-grower will tell you that wine does not have the same taste every day.

At Château le Puy, decisions are made nearly every day in the cellars, as we taste each wine to know its characteristics and needs as precisely as possible.

We have thus observed that Fruit and Flower days are often the best for racking and bottling because they have a beneficial influence on the wines. All their aromatic intensity and complexity will be revealed during tasting.

According to the biodynamic lunar calendar, there are only 6 to 8 Fruit days per month.

We generally avoid tasting during Root and Leaf days, because the expression of the fruit is often less pronounced. We obviously do not plan a family tasting when the moon is at its perigee (the moment when the moon is closest to the Earth at the end of its descending phase), nor during lunar nodes (when the moon crosses the sun's path).

However, these are all just generalities and each receptacle is different. Our role is to accompany each barrel and foudre individually to gently bring out their very best.

Steven Hewison

## IRELAND, WHERE SHOULD WE EAT TONIGHT?

- **Adare Manor** - Hotel Virtuoso - Chef Michael Tweedie - Adare, Co. Limerick - +353 6 160 5200
- **The Cliffhouse Hotel** - Michelin\* - Chef Martijn Kajüter - Middle Road, Ardmore, Co. Waterford - +353 2 487 800
- **The Greenhouse** - Michelin\* - Chef Mickael Viljanen - Dawson Street, Dublin 2 - +353 1 676 7015
- **Bang** - Chef Massimo Bottura - 11 Merrion Row, Dublin 2 - +353 1 400 4229
- **Bresson** - Chef Temple Garner - 4a The Crescent Monkstown - +353 1 284 4286
- **L'Ecrivain** - Michelin\* - Chefs Derry Clarke and Sean Doyle - 109a Lr. Baggot St. Dublin2 - +353 1 661 1919
- **Ballymaloe** - Chefs Jason Fahey and Gillian Hegarty - Shanagarry, Midleton, Co. Cork - +353 21 465 2531
- **Chapter One** - Michelin\* - Ross Lewis - 18-19 Parnell Square N Rotunda Dublin 1 - +353 1 873 2266

Here are some of the Chefs who have done us the honour of choosing Château le Puy to serve with their refined dishes.

## FOR THE PLEASURE OF THE PALATE

### Foie gras and pearl onion skewers - Emilien 2016

for 10 mini portions

- 1 piece of whole cooked foie gras
- Around 20 pearl onions or small whole white onions
- 3 tablespoons of dark brown sugar
- 25 cl of Emilien 2016
- 30g of butter
- Salt & pepper

Peel the onions and place them whole in a pan. Add the sugar and the butter. Half cover the onions with wine, then add water so that the onions are covered completely. Add salt and pepper and cook on medium heat, stirring gently, until the liquid has evaporated completely (around 20 mins.) Leave to cool, then place in the refrigerator. To make the skewers, cut the foie gras into cubes of 1 to 2 cm. Spike an onion, a cube of foie gras and then another onion on to each mini skewer. The ideal appetizer for a party!

Valérie Amoreau