# 1610

# The vine leaf

- from the Hill of Wonders -

#24



# DITORIA



### The world is changing

We are being forced to accept that more attention must be paid to climate change if we are to preserve the achievements of our ancestors.

Theorists have gradually taken the reins of our future, while it is the real experience of practitioners which can enable us to make the best decisions and anticipate a better tomorrow. The last three years have seen calamities such as frost, the vine disease mildew and hail, not to mention the virus which disrupted our usual wine distribution methods. We have overcome these various difficulties thanks to our experience and sense of anticipation.

At present, it is inflation which is affecting the external actions of our life. We are caught in a whirlwind of fluctuating external prices and internal costs which are forcing us to take stock of economic realities. We are obliged to react in order to preserve the balance of our structure. Our prices are rising and will follow the trend of this cursed inflation which is taking us on an unknown course.

We must wake up to current events and face them together. Our main priority is to manage the difficult times to come. We must stand as an example for the generations who will follow us.

We hope, like you, that soon we will talk of these present difficulties in the past tense, when the future opens to sunnier skies.

Jean Pierre Amoreau

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## THE FAIRGROUND ROGUES

Robert, son of Jean Amoreau, father of Jean Pierre, and so my great-grandfather, was a troublesome boy who lived his difficult teenage years in the inter-war period. Robert and his friends, including Marcel Fares, loved to spend their evenings at the dances in the Saint-Émilion region. These dances were held on Saturday evenings, as part of the travelling fairs that went from village to village.

At that time, these events were both an opportunity to flirt with the local girls, who were often chaperoned by their mothers to avoid any unfortunate encounters, and a way to relive happy memories. People would dance, drink, feast on sandwiches they had brought with them, chat and squabble over every potential chance with a girl. The boys travelled to the fairs by car, in the 1928 Renault KZ 10 unwisely lent by Marcel Fares' parents to their son for the evening. A classy set of wheels! Robert and his gang were making the very most of their last teenage years, while staying true to their traditional upbringing. They liked to go a little crazy...

One Saturday evening in the middle of June, my great-grandfather Robert and his friends headed to the neighbouring village of Salles-de-Castillon to let off some steam. They wanted to show off, but they were sadly all broke. As luck would have it, none of their parents had given them any money for the outing. And so, they came up with an idea...

The fair was set up in the middle of the village, along the road. The main tent, where the dance was being held, was surrounded on each side by the fairground stands, with raffles, hook-a-duck for children, the shooting range and the merry-go-round where children tried to win a free ride. Each stand played its own music in a joyous cacophony. At the entrance to the fair, along the roadside, was the shooting range. Sharp-shooters could win bottles of fruit juice and (more importantly!) wine. Mmm... that was an irresistible draw for our roguish teenagers! And so the devil whispered in their ears and the deed was set into motion. Robert and his friends backed up the Renault KZ to park it behind the shooting range. Then, with a thick rope, they attached the wooden leg of the stand to the bumper of their car. The intrepid Marcel jumped into the car, switched on the engine and suddenly drove off, toppling the stand and knocking down the bottles! Not realising how this had happened, the owner of the stand began shouting at passers-by and those waiting with their tickets to watch out.

At that precise moment Robert and his friends rushed to the stand also shouting "we'll help you...we'll help you!". As they picked up the bottles to put them back in their place on the stand, they sneaked one or two each, and preferably wine, under their jackets. The fair got under way again, and for free for the boys, because at that time they all carried a knife with corkscrew. No need for glasses, they drank directly from the bottles they passed around to each other. A real band of rogues!

Adrien Amoreau

To be continued in our next edition

#### LET'STALK ABOUT wine



**Infusion:** This is our traditional method to gently extract juices with an immersed cap and native yeasts, without any outside intervention.

#### THE WINE CALENDER



In January: while the vines are resting, we prune their wood.

## THE WEATHER le Puy



A mild start to the year, a harsh spell of frost in early April, rain in the spring and a heatwave in the summer; the vines experienced all weathers in 2022!

# Food for thought



"If the wine is lacking, everything is lacking."

Latin proverb

# A WINE WITH A HISTORY

## BLAISE-ALBERT 1610-2016

Organoleptic sheet

. TASTING

Presented in a crafted 1-litre bottle, its robe is a palette of purple and dark ruby with orange hues. Its nose evolves minute by minute to offer a range of sophisticated and refined aromas of very ripe red berries.

The complexity and elegance of its tannins is a true marvel. With a long finish, this wine is an immense moment of pleasure. The perfect harmony.

. ANALYSIS

Alcoholic strength
Sugars
ND\*
Total acidity
Volatile acidity
PH
3.40
Free sulphur
Total sulphur
ND\*

\*Non-detectable

# The fruit of family experience

Blaise-Albert represents the ultimate le Puy wine experience, the expression of all the complexity of our Hill of Wonders. The grapes that go into Blaise-Albert all come from a selection of the finest vines on the « Les Rocs » plot, which lies to the front of our home. The wine is then matured dynamically according to a lunar calendar established by the Amoreau family over eleven years, in used barrels to avoid the woody taste.

During a family tasting meeting, we come together to choose the vintage blends suggested by Pascal Amoreau, the family's most accomplished « palate ». Following a vote, the new Blaise-Albert is bottled in stencilled, engraved bottles, blown specially by a craft glassblower, then placed in its case to await its new owner. Only 400 bottles are produced annually.

# How do you make white wine?

Our Marie-Cécile dry white wine and Marie-Élisa sweet white both come from a single 70-year-old semillon plot, the oldest of the estate. As with red wines, the grapes are harvested by hand and treated with the utmost care. Once the berries have arrived in the cellar, they are sent straight to the press, without destemming. Gradual pressing gently extracts all the juice. At this stage, the juice obtained is a cloudy brown/beige colour and still contains a lot of suspended solid matter. The juice needs to be « clarified ». As it settles in the vat, the juice becomes clear, the larger matter (deposit) sediments and we collect the transparent juice with a low proportion of fine lees. We then transfer this clarified grape must to barrels, where alcoholic fermentation begins. The wine is matured on the lees by dynamization for as long as is necessary, a duration which varies from one vintage to another, to stabilise and acquire all its aromatic and taste potential.





# When the Burgundy climats inspire the Hill of Wonders

Climats is a reference to the boundary system created by Burgundy wine-growers, in which a well-defined area characterises a particular wine. This is an approach unique to Burgundy, but which nevertheless inspires consideration elsewhere.

For more than 400 years and fifteen generations, the Amoreau family have advocated common sense wine-growing, far from any chemical input, based on observation and experience, in addition to the caring of a very special area called the Hill of Wonders (Coteau des Merveilles).

# **Knowing how to question our techniques**

Each generation has not limited itself to simply repeating the procedures of their ancestors. On the

contrary, we have learnt to regularly question our methods to find the best solutions to numerous day-to-day issues. As of the late 19th century, Jean Pierre Amoreau's grandfather Barthélemy began to question the logic of using sulphur in the vinification process. In the early 1930s, Pierre-Robert, Adrien Amoreau's great-grandfather, contributed to the invention of the *fouilleuse* which enabled a less invasive labouring of the topsoil. In recent years, numerous experiments have been carried out, such as the creation of pollination routes for insects, the planting of companion



species among the vine rows or the pergola projects. The new generation of Amoreaus is tackling current-day issues and striving, like previous generations, to produce the most qualitative wines possible.

#### Scope for experimentation

This ongoing quest for experimentation inspired Pascal Amoreau to search for new outstanding plots of land, located just a few hundred metres from le Puy; lands on which the Amoreau family could experiment with new wines. And thus in 2012, Closerie Saint Roc came into being, a new estate managed according to the same work methods. Three plot wines have been produced here

since 2019.

Given the diversity of both the soils and the microorganisms of the various plots that make up Closerie Saint Roc, the Amoreau family thus sought to showcase the outstanding specificities of the site: altitude, distance from the bedrock, exposure, the micro-biological identity or the very nature of the soils have led to the production of three highly distinctive wines, in the style of Burgundy *climats*: Les Pins, Les Noyers and Les Sureaux.



# MARY

3 October 2022: presentation of the Closerie Saint Roc estate in Paris.

**24** October 2022: special tasting session of 100 years of le Puy, with wines dating from 1921 to 2021, in New York.

**4-5** February 2023: we'll be present at the Grenier Saint Jean fair in Angers.

19-21 March 2023: we'll be present at the ProWein fair in Dusseldorf

# THE LE PUY FIGURE 1 200

The number of bottles of *Retour des Iles*produced in 2018,
with their travel case.

### FACING CHANGE

≥ Wine plays a significant role in French agriculture. It amounts to around 15% of total French agricultural production. A worldwide reference, it has forged its reputation thanks to the specificity of its terroirs, the know-how of its growers and the multiple skills of those who craft French wine. Climate change is presently affecting wine production.

One of the most obvious consequences of these changes is the impact on the vine calendar. The growth stages of the vine, from budburst to harvest, are gradually occurring earlier and earlier. This earliness has an impact on the grapes and thus the wine. Earlier harvesting implies higher temperatures, which lead to lower yields, reduced taste freshness and higher risks during fermentation. To offset these changes, le Puy



has anticipated certain techniques to ensure an enjoyable and refreshing wine. We thus withdrew from AOC certification in order to retain our freedom to act as we see fit. We are now at liberty to grow and experiment in several directions. We began by planting more than twenty different varieties, to observe their behaviour, in addition to setting up a tying system which differs from the pergola technique. We are also making headway on our new estate, Closerie Saint Roc, with vintages that take the effects of soil and climate into closer account.

We will keep you updated on all our results and new experiments.

Pascal Amoreau

#### ...... WHEN WATER IS IN SHORT SUPPLY

This year's drought has led to potential blockages in terms of veraison and a blasting of the grapes. These conditions have also resulted in water stress which takes the form of discolouration, defoliation and a withering of the grapes. These physiological disorders are mostly cell-based. The vine is naturally capable of responding by triggering a certain number of powerful physiological mechanisms, but which are all too often inadequate if the

stress persists. A biodynamic aid can be envisaged in order to foster the mineral nourishment of the plants and their resistance. In this case, we use several plants in a decoction or infusion which help the vine to self-regulate.

#### Yarrow

Yarrow is rich in sulphur and has refreshing properties. In high temperatures, it helps to reduce burn damage and soothes the vine during climate



#### Chamomile

Chamomile contains azulene, which regulates evapotranspiration. It thus has a beneficial effect in the event of severe water stress or high temperatures. It significantly reduces the symptoms of blasting.

Steven Hewison

#### WHERE SHALL WE DINE IN BORDEAUX?

Avant Comptoir du Palais - 05 57 14 94 85 Chef Julien Camdeborde - 2 Pl. du Palais, 33000 Bordeaux

*Café Mancuso* - 09 87 12 38 15 Chef Benjamin Avila - 24 Rue Ravez, 33000 Bordeaux

*Le Carreau* - 05 57 85 90 13 Thibaud Parrou - 30 Rue du Pas-Saint-Georges, 33000 Bordeaux

Julien Cruège - 05 56 81 97 86 Chef Julien Cruège - 245 Rue Turenne, 33000 Bordeaux

Frida - 05 57 99 28 44 Chef Timothé Seguin-Medrinal - 29 Rue Buhan, 33000 Bordeaux

Estacade - 05 57 54 02 50 Chef Frédéric Montemont - Quai des Queyries, 33100 Bordeaux

*La Terrasse Saint-Pierre* - 05 57 85 89 17 Christophe Montaland - 7 Pl. Saint-Pierre, 33000 Bordeaux

*Maison Nouvelle -* 05 33 09 46 90 Chef Philippe Etchebest - 11 Rue Rode, 33000 Bordeaux

*L'Oiseau Bleu* - 05 56 81 09 39 Chef Frédéric Lafon - 127 Av. Thiers, 33100 Bordeaux

# RECIPE

Duck Bourguignon with Emilien 2019 sauce - Serves 6



- 4 duck breasts - 3 cloves of garlic - 1 large onion

- 150g of smoked bacon strips - 1 bottle of Emilien 2019

> - Salt & pepper - 2 bay leaves

- Small turnips or new potatoes

Chop the garlic and onion. Remove the skin from the duck breasts and cut the meat into large cubes. Cut slits into one of the duck breast skins and leave to melt in a saucepan on a moderate heat. Once all the fat has melted, remove the skin and brown the cubes of meat in the hot fat. Add the bacon, cut into small pieces, onion, garlic and bay leaves. Leave to brown for a few minutes on a low heat. Douse with the Emilien 2019. Add salt and pepper and simmer on a low heat for 2 hours, without covering. Stir from time to time. Serve with small roasted turnips or new potatoes.

Valérie Amoreau

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