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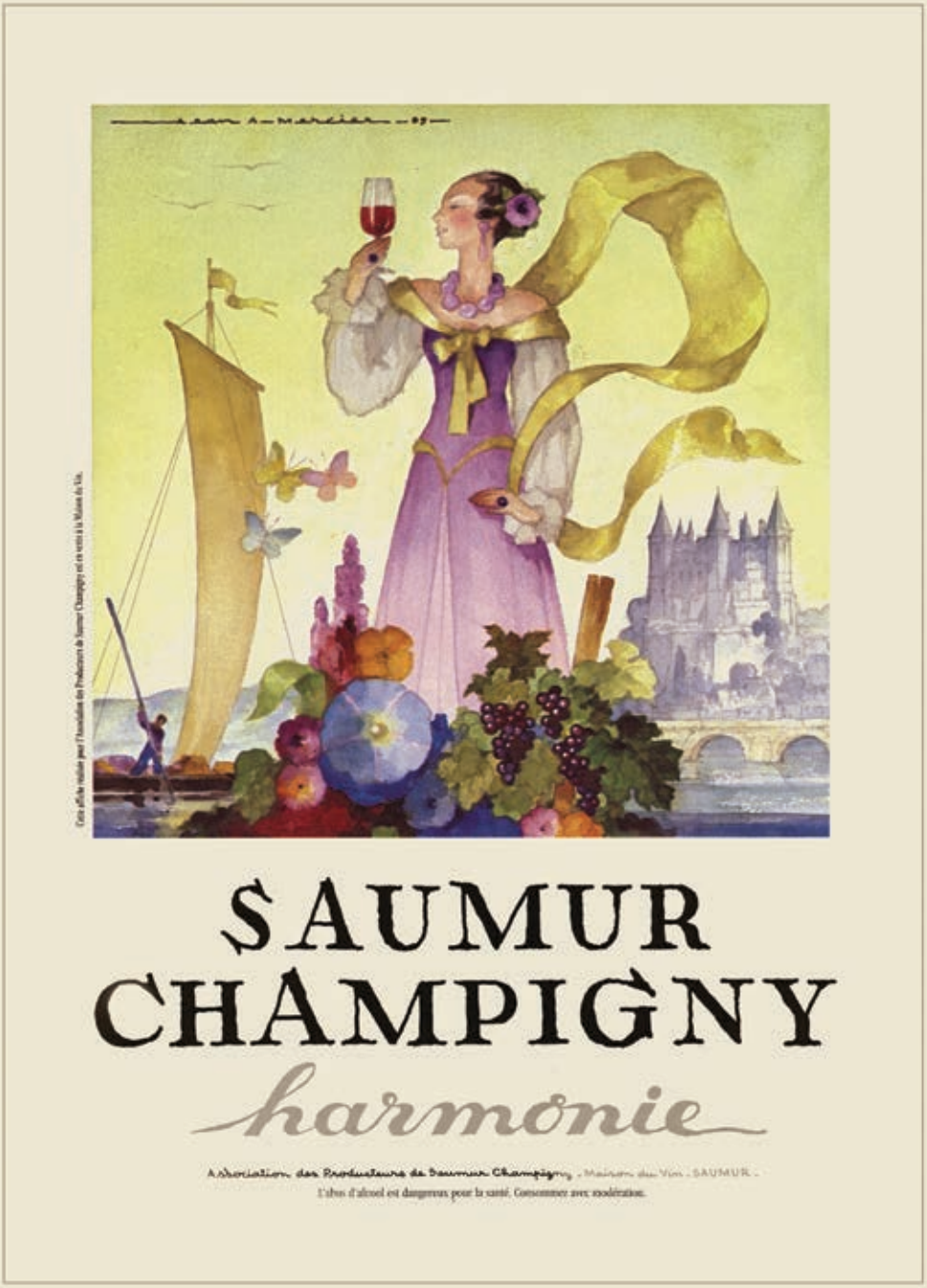
FRENCH WINE: WHAT'S IN A LABEL?

an introduction to the marks of vignerons, propriétaries and négociants

JOHN WALTER



Frontispiece: this poster for Saumur-Champigny wines, drawn by Jean Mercier for the Association des Producteurs de Saumur Champigny in 1989, has also been used as an advertising tool. The version reproduced here was published in January 1997 in the magazine 'Cuisine & Vins de France'.

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AN INTRODUCTION TO THE MARKS OF VIGNERONS, PROPRIÉTAIRES AND NÉGOCIANTS

JOHN WALTER

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FOR ALISON, ADAM, NICKY, FINDLAY, GEORGIA AND HOLLY, WITH LOVE.

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FOREWORD

The creation of this book began, unwittingly, in a search for a suitable picture to brighten our newly-decorated kitchen. Alison suggested that we could make a collage of wine-bottle labels I'd acquired some years previously to illustrate a book about printing techniques. This seemed very sensible, so we put forty assorted labels in a large frame: the result looked good, so we hung it on the wall. Next, I pondered if we could use the remaining labels for something else. The commercial prospects of framing them were investigated, though, at that particular moment, the goal was nothing more than local distribution. To offer something different, an explanatory booklet could be included with each framed set.

I have a long-term interest in recording the history of a unique French-made wind engine, the Éolienne Bollée (my website, www.archivingindustry.com/Eolienne, tells the whole story in English and French), and had already looked at links between water pumps and viticulture. Éoliennes Bollée had been erected by the owners of the châteaux of Haut-Breton-Larigaudière (in 1886), Lanessan (*c*. 1898) and Lasalle-de-Pez (in 1882), and one, believed to date from 1897, still stands in the grounds of the Domaine de Baritaud; some served communes in Chablis. The châteaux of Beau-Site, Cazalet, Climens and Montrose, amongst others, all erected wind-driven water pumps of other types.

My interest in the history of viticulture grew as I became fascinated with the idea that so much of the French economy depended on a game of chance: too much rain, too little rain, rain at the wrong time, too hot, too cold…not even including pests and disease. The industry had even flirted with disaster in the nineteenth century, initially due to 'powdery mildew' and then to the seemingly unstoppable depredations of the phylloxera louse. The story of this near-catastrophe has been masterfully told by Christy Campbell in *Phylloxera. How Wine was Saved for the World*.

I have to confess that my interest in wine was heightened by several trips to France, not least when, in a small restaurant in Chauvigny, I was introduced to a slightly sparkling white Gaillac by Jean-Paul Delaby. Regrettably, I didn't take

Above: *'Premier Cru' Château Climens, still making sweet white wines in the Barsac appellation, was one of several domaines to instal a wind-driven water pump. A typical single-rotor wind engine 'du type américain' can be seen behind the building. Some machines of this type were imported from the U.S.A., but many were made in France. The vane protruding to the left was used to turn the rotor edge-on to the wind if the gusts blew too firecely, protecting the blades.*

too much notice of the label details—possibly because by then we'd drunk the entire bottle and more—but I remember that the wine *did* taste of green apples (though I'd be the first to confess that I don't usually recognise the subtleties that would be obvious to a connoisseur). So I embarked on compiling a sixteen-page 'know your label' booklet with genuine enthusiasm: too much, because the project rapidly grew into this book.

It can only introduce a fascinating subject, of course. Nothing more! It isn't a guide to the wines themselves or to the characteristics of individual grape varieties, nor to the vagaries of the vignoble or the methods of production, but simply reflects a personal view refined by forty years experience of graphic design.

I could not have made progress without the help of the books listed on page 128, but I leaned particularly heavily on Christy Campbell's study of *phylloxera vastatrix*, Jancis Robinson's *Vines, Grapes & Wines*, and *The Art & Science of Wine* by James Halliday and Hugh Johnson. And I also read Oz Clarke's *Bordeaux* with unbridled admiration for his exceptional knowledge, engaging

style and ready wit. Jean-Claude Schmitt of The French Wine People, Matlock, Derbyshire (www.frenchwinepeople.co.uk), kindly read the manuscript when it was nearly complete, and I'm grateful for his advice and encouragement. I hope *French Wine: what's in the Label?* will find its own niche, and that I have avoided the worst mistakes. If any remain, however, they're entirely my responsibility.

Most of all, however, I have to thank my wife Alison, to whom this book owes inspiration, and Adam and Nicky not only for their support, but also for our three little grandchildren—Findlay, who likes the lever-pull corkscrew much better than the contents of any bottle; Georgia, whose preference for 'Red' still means nail varnish; and Holly, who arrived in the world mid-way through my initial researches.

JOHN WALTER, PORTSLADE, SUSSEX, 2018

Labels used by Château Pichon-Longueville are among the best of the heraldic designs, retaining both a sense of tradition and coherent symmetry. This is helped greatly by shaping the lettering around the coat of Arms. The only drawback is the awkward space to the left of the upper PICHON-LONGUEVILLE*, which could have been eliminated by extending the wings of the dexter supporter upward.*

INTRODUCTION

A brief introduction to the French wine-bottle label cannot enter into a description of the process of vinification, nor into debate about the merits of individual wines beyond acknowledging that they range from unsophisticated mass-market *vins ordinaire* to some of the finest products money can buy. That this is not always evident from the labels is just one of many points to be made.

But why exclusively French labels? This is partly due to personal interest, but also to unmatched diversity; to the many varieties of grapes that have been used; to the breadth of design found in labelling; and to colossal output. In 2012, there were 112,600 hectares 'under vine' in Bordeaux, 70,400 hectares in the Rhône valley, and 48,100 hectares in the valley of the Loire; across France; 558,000 people were involved in some way with the wine industry; and there were more than 25,000 vineyards!

It is true that certain motifs reappear regularly, including the Arms of Bordeaux (not always rendered accurately!) and bunches of grapes; it is also true that the use of heraldry on French labels generally lacks the authority of its German equivalent.* Yet there are many honourable exceptions to this criticism: labels used by some of the châteaux in Bordeaux and Burgundy, for example, which embody Arms of noble families dating back prior to the 1789 revolution.

Currently, the wines of Château Canon-le-Gaffelière, Clos l'Oratoire, La Mondotte and Château d'Aguilhe all display the Arms of the Comtes de Neipperg. An entry in Rietstap's *Armorial General* (1887) considers the family to be of German origin, 'Wurt[temberg]., Bade[n] (Comtes de St.-Empire, 5 fév. 1726), "gules, three annulets argent; for a crest, a pinion gules thereon the

* This is partly due to the demise of traditional heraldic principles in 1789, when the Revolutionaries rejected anything redolent of the aristocracy. Ironically Napoléon I had soon re-introduced a form of heraldry, personal and civic, which formed the basis for a partial return to the pre-1789 values when the monarchy was restored. However, the absence of a controlling influence, e.g., in the form of a College of Arms, means that no robust attempts have been made to ensure that the Arms of Bordeaux used on labels conform to the true blazon. Germany has a much stronger tradition of Arms, and influential genealogical organisations maintain high standards even though there is no central heraldic body.

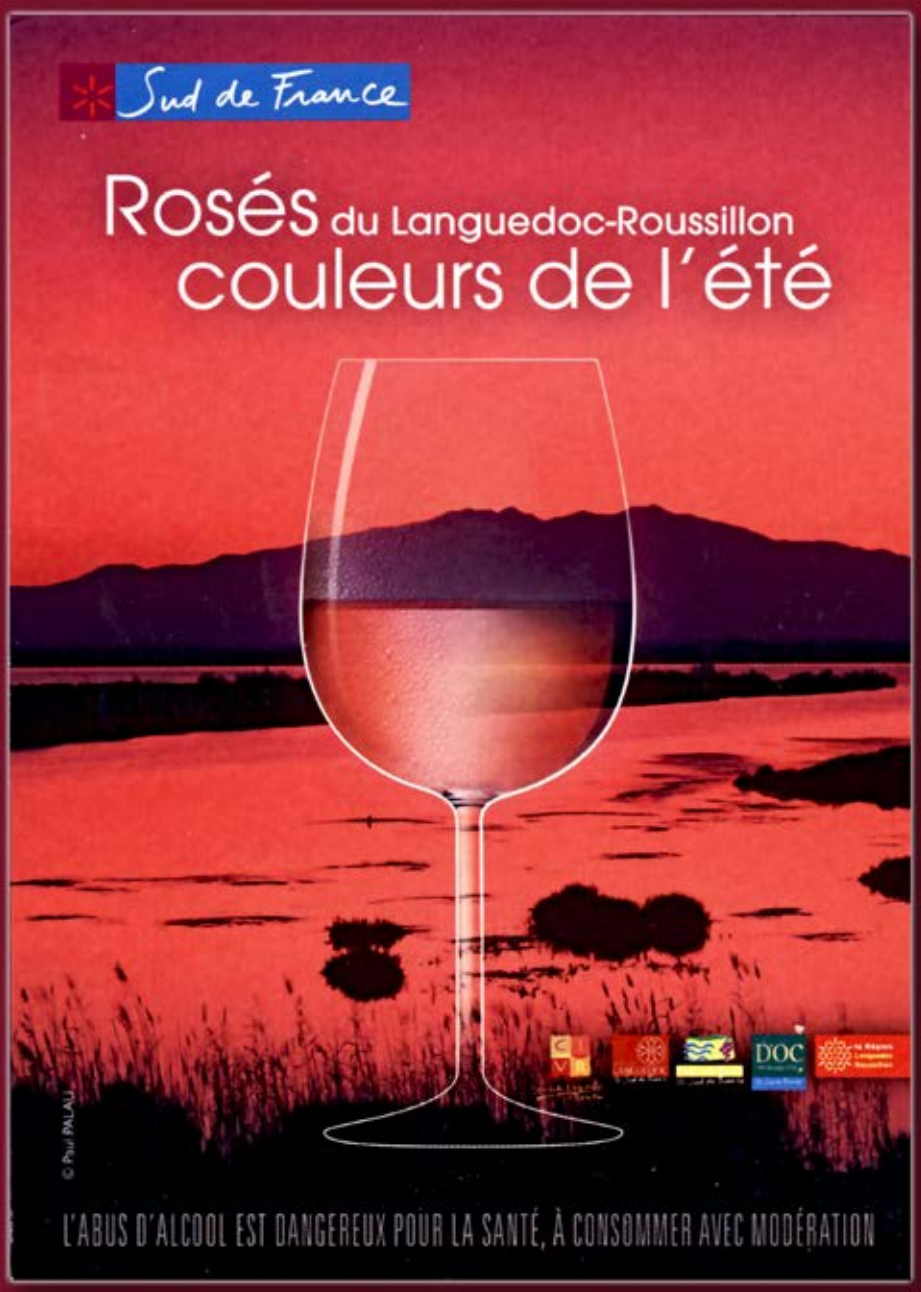
Above: *this typifies the use of heraldry in German winemaking. The label is a multi-colour lithograph—red, green, yellow, blue, black—with details added in gold. Typematter is integral with the black printing-stone or block, leaving nothing to be overprinted. The Arms are those of Paul Alfons, Fürst von Metternich-Winneburg, but the vineyard is now owned by the Oetker group.*

charges of Arms argent"…' Château de Malle includes a drawing of its gates on the label of its sweet white wines, with the Arms of the Lur family—'gules, three crescents argent 2 and 1, a chief or'—on the iron tracery spanning the pillars. The gates are not original to the property, built in the seventeenth century by Jacques de Malle, but were erected by Pierre de Lur-Saluces, uncle of Pierre de Bournazel (†1985) who replanted the vineyards after they had been virtually destroyed in the gales of 1956. The Arms are those of the Lur family of 'Limousin, Périgord, Guyenne, [and] Auvergne'.

Many of the printers who specialised in wine-bottle labels kept huge quantities of pre-printed blanks—often registered designs—onto which the names of négociants could be added to order. As this kept costs to a minimum, near-identical labels will be found bearing a variety of district or communal names.

The introduction in 1935 of *Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée* (AOC), and the changes to what became *Appellation d'Origine Protegée* in 2012, did little to change the situation. Designs still range from the simplest single-colour printing to fine reproductions of illustrations commissioned by Mouton-Rothschild from artists of such stature as Picasso and Chagall. Ironically, "Picasso's Vintage", 1973, is not generally reckoned to have been a particularly good year…but will always fetch a good price owing to the notoriety of the label!

Below: *Négociants and distributors have always had a peculiar fascination with the 'mediaeval scroll' type of label, which can be found in a tremendous variety of styles. Customarily (if mistakenly) associated with the poorest Vins de Table dating prior to the 1980s, labels of this type can also be found on AOC wines—including these four examples: a Côtes du Rhône 'Réserve Merlin' label, printed by Barthelémy of Avignon; an undated 'Maison Albert Dailly' Morgon label by Devevey of Beaune; the label of a red Touraine made from Cot grapes, printed by Ruél of Poitiers; and an unsigned blank for a Juliénas.*



A card produced in 2009 to promote the rosé of Languedoc–Roussillon, once known more for quantity than quality—but now the home of excellent wines.

THE STORY

There can be little dispute that the French *industrie viticole* has played a dominant role in establishing wine as something which can either be drunk young (though under *Appellation* rules only Beaujolais nouveau and the *Primeurs* can be sold in the year of bottling) or laid-down as an investment. The term 'champagne' is now widely used generically—however much the French government and the European Union would wish otherwise!—and the names of individual varieties of grape have attained universal currency. Yet progress has not always been smooth.

Even disregarding the *grande roulette* of each individual vintage, the industry has been forced to look into the abyss more than once: near-destruction in the nineteenth century may have been averted (even though the underlying problems have never entirely gone away), but *les viticulteurs* must still confront a perceptible decline in the popularity of wine in France and a rapid rise in enthusiasm for rival products. In this, ironically, exports of root-stock and vines from France in the first half of the nineteenth century have had an important influence; the output of Chile and Argentina, where the Carmenère and Malbec grapes have found new life, is often claimed to be more true to pre-phylloxera wines than many of those now being created in France.

Winemaking, in the modern sense, is generally accepted to have been introduced to southern France by the Greeks, who colonised the area that is now Marseille in the sixth century BCE. This knowledge was then exploited by the Romans when, in turn, they conquered what had been Greek territory. With the demise of the western Roman empire, responsibility for the creation of wine fell on the shoulders of the early Christian monks—including St Martin of Tours (316–97), to whom the beginnings of the study of viticulture are sometimes attributed. By the Middle Ages, the techniques had been refined to a point where the wine, often but not exclusively red, would be familiar to today's drinker.

The work was still largely the purview of the religious orders; the Church was one of the richest establishments, and monks had the time not only to tend

Above: a selection of Arms based on those of Bordeaux
(See opposite for details).

Use and misuse of heraldry

The eight details each purport to show the Arms of Bordeaux. But even modern illustrations do not tally with the official blazon: "gules, a depiction of the *Grosse-Cloche*, sally-port open, argent, masoned sable, beneath a *léopard* [a uniquely French heraldic term for a lion passant-gardant] or; on a sea azure, waves sable and argent, thereon a crescent argent; in chief, 'semy of France' [at the time of the grant, 'France Ancienne': a blue field strewn with gold fleurs-de-lys]…" The Grosse-Cloche (centre detail), a mediaeval fortified gate now greatly reduced from its original design, should be shown with portcullis raised and a bell in the central tower. Many small-scale depictions of the Arms omit the bell, the crescent, and the waves on the sea. And the supporters were not the lions shown in (5) and (7), but instead heraldic 'antelopes regardant', gorged with gold coronets and chained.

Clockwise from top left:
(1) 1998 Bordeaux AOC 'Mis en Bouteille' by René Fabry of Carbon-Blanc;
(2) Bordeaux Supérieur AOC Domaine de Landy, distributed by 'Domigny à Maurois';
(3) 1953 Puisseguin AOC St-Émilion, Caves de Maurois;
(4) Montbazillac AOC, bottled anonymously in Paris in the 1960s;
(5) Bordeaux AOC Méthode Champenoise, 'Réserve Liotard', G. Liotard, Château la Grande Chapelle à Lugon–Gironde, *c.* 1980;
(6) Bordeaux AOC bottled by P. Dumonet of La-Graves-d'Ambarès, *c.* 1989;
(7) Bordeaux AOC, Lagarde, 'à la Propriété par S.C.E.A. Raymond, St. Laurent-du-Bois (Gironde)';
(8) St-Estèphe AOC, S.E. Château Canteloupe et Commanderie, 1985.

vines but also to learn (and refine) the methods of turning grapes to liquid gold. It was popularly said in Saumur that the great riches of Étienne Bouvet-Ladubay, the nineteenth-century creator of Moc-Baril (the largest bottler of sparkling wine in the world prior to 1914), had made his fortune not from the efforts of his manufactory in nearby Saint-Florent, but instead by finding the *Trésoir des Moines*—the fabled monks' treasure, a hoard of gold and silver accumulated from exploits which included centuries of winemaking.

Until the nineteenth century, French wines were valuable exports. Bordeaux, in particular, has had a lengthy association with the English wine-trade dating back at least to 1152; the area passed to the English crown as part of the dowry of Eleanor of Aquitaine when she married Henry of Normandy (Henry II from 1154). In 1203, King John exempted Bordeaux wine-traders from many of his taxes, and the oldest vineyard to be identified by name—le Château Haut-Brion, 'Ho-Bryan' to the diarist Samuel Pepys, writing in 1663—may still be found making highly-rated wines, hemmed-in by the suburban sprawl of Pessac.

Below: *Château Moc-Baril in St-Hilaire–St-Florent, a suburb of Saumur, now known as 'Château Bouvet-Ladubay', was built with the fortune made by Étienne Bouvet. The adjoining 'Moc-Baril' factory was the largest wine-bottling plant in the world by 1900. Photograph taken by John Walter in 2002.*

Above: *Château Haut-Brion, a Premier Cru Classé in Pessac-Léognan AOC, is believed to be the oldest vineyard to have been named specifically (by Samuel Pepys in 1663). From a postcard by Cartes Postales Elcé of Bordeaux, postmarked 1989.*

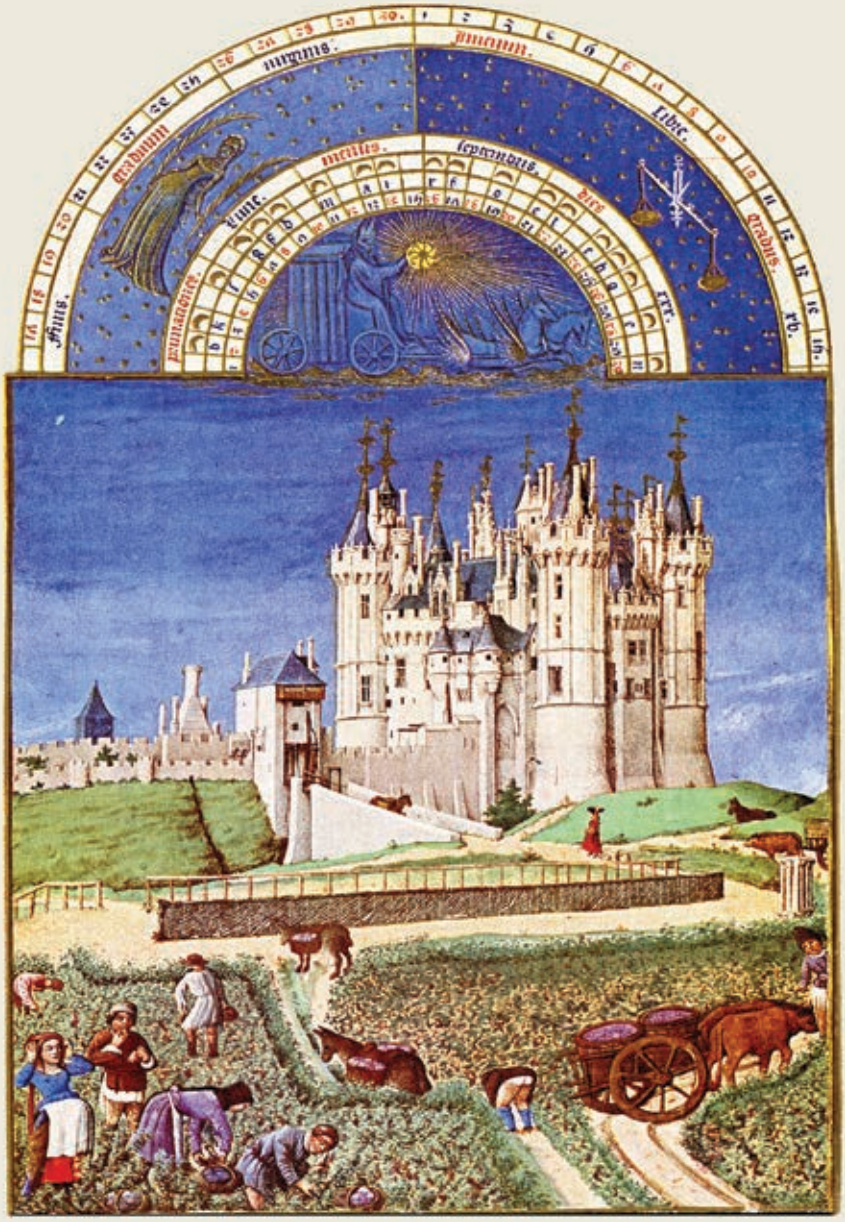
Though heavily taxed in Britain from 1693 until, remarkably, the budget of 1860, the centuries-old export trade proceeded happily until *oïdium tuckeri* fungus (powdery mildew) accidentally arrived on vines imported in the 1850s from the U.S.A. However, once it had been found that sulphur killed the fungus—and the correct dosage had been discovered by experimentation—the ill-effects were minimised. By 1858, output had recovered to pre-oïdium levels. But then came the wine louse (*phylloxera*), which was destined to bring French viticulture to its knees; thousands of vineyards were ruined, millions of francs were lost, the export trade was threatened, and decades were to pass before effectual long-term solutions could be found.

The first phylloxera aphids* to reach France were imported with rootstock acquired in the U.S.A. in 1862 by M Borty, propriétaire of Le Clos Borty, a small high-walled vineyard in rue Longe, Roquemaure (Gard). The new vines seemed to prosper, but in their third year they suddenly began to wither and die.

***** Though the wine louse is widely identified as *Phylloxera vastatrix* (a name which is still customarily used in France), its accepted scentific name is currently *Daktulosphaira vitifoliae* of the Phylloxeridae (family). This name was conferred by the first person to establish its identity, in 1855: the renowned Scottish botanical artist Walter Hood Fitch (1819–92). The term 'phylloxera' derives from Greek 'dry leaf', among the first symptoms of infestation.

The fairy-tale illustration dominating the label of Saumur Rosé de Cabernet wine, marketed by Verdier et Fils of Doué-la-Fontaine, was adapted from the castle shown on a hill behind a vineyard in a world-renowned book of hours (right). And this was the mediaeval artist's view of a real castle: Saumur, below. The drawings show the south face surprisingly accurately, although they stretch the proportions vertically; the photograph shows the north face, towering over the river Loire.

Below: *'September' from 'Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry', 1412–16.*



Then came an outbreak in neighbouring Pujaut; and what had become known as *le tache de Roquemaure* ('the Roquemaure pocket') soon spread southward to Villeneuve and Avignon. Infestation of a vineyard in Le-Crau-Saint-Rémy, south of the confluence of the Rhône and Durance rivers, was a bad sign. Then, in 1866, a vineyard in Floirac in the Gironde was infected; by the end of 1868, virtually the entire Rhône valley from Tournon to the Mediterranean coast had succumbed. The Cognac district reported its first infestation in 1872, and the first in Burgundy, in the commune of Mancey in Saône-et-Loire, was discovered in June 1875. Phylloxera had also invaded the Loire valley.

Within twenty years, virtually every wine-making district in France was threatened. Many vineyards had been burned when infection became apparent, yet still the plague had spread. Some antidotes were ingenious: burying a live toad under each vine to 'suck the poison out of the roots' was proffered, but, fortunately for toads, never approved. Experimenters soon established that fifty days of immersion in water was enough to kill the root-crawling aphids that transmitted infection. However, though some of the flat and low-lying vineyards in the southern Rhône and along the Gironde estuary could be treated by inundation, too many others were on hillsides. Treatment with carbon bisulphide proved to be an effective insecticide if injected directly into vine roots by *Piqueurs* wielding giant cast-iron syringes, but innoculating millions of plants was beyond comprehension; potassium carbonate worked well when in solution, but prodigious amounts of water were required.

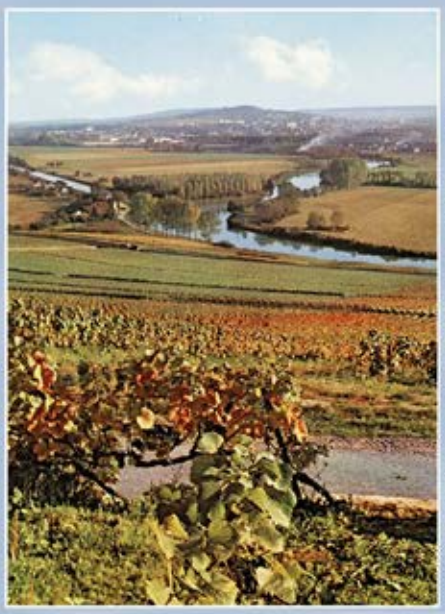
Solving the underlying problems was to take many years. And even once this had been done, the imprecise science of the day allowed debates to rage: even the action of winemakers' yeast was not known with certainty. Replanting with American vines became fashionable, but some of the imports proved to be just as susceptible to phylloxera as the vines they were to replace. In addition, wine made from the grapes of American vines often suffered *goût de renard*, a foxy taste which was largely unacceptable in Europe. Hybridisation was tried, but grafting French vines on to disease-resistant American rootstock ultimately proved to be the best solution. In 1874, the French government had announced a 300,000-franc prize for the first cure to demonstrate its effectiveness—but not until 1884 was the superiority of grafting over chemical treatment or inundation widely acknowledged.

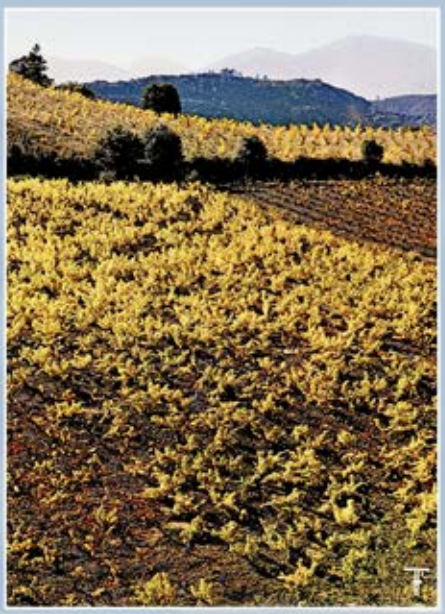
No sooner had progress been made in the campaign against phylloxera than *peronospora*, downy mildew, struck some of wine-growing areas in the Cévennes

Above: *this aerial view shows Château de la Goulaine in Haute-Goulaine, Loire-Atlantique, dating from the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, with its French-style formal gardens and neatly-planted vines running almost up to the gate. From a picture-postcard by Artaud Frères, Nantes.*

in 1880 and spread rapidly. Unlike phylloxera, which destroyed only the vines (wine could still be made from the grapes that survived), mildew affected the taste and could wreck an entire crop in a matter of hours: an even greater threat to prosperity. Fortunately, the discovery of Bordeaux Mixture, or *Bouillie Bordelaise*, copper sulphate in solution, provided a speedy remedy. By the end of the 1880s, downy mildew had been largely eradicated.

But French viticulture had been brought to the brink of destruction. One of the largest wine-growing areas, the Gironde (which includes Bordeaux) was the worst hit; of 141,420 hectares under cultivation in 1882, no fewer than 138,000 had been affected by phylloxera. Strenuous attempts were made to conserve and even re-plant French vines, notably in areas where sand- or gravel-based soils stopped the seemingly inexorable advance of aphids, but the keys to restoring output were importation of rootstock from North America and introduction of grafting on an unprecedented scale.





Above left:
vines in the Champagne district, near Reims, from a picture-postcard by Collection "Reims-Cathédrale".

Above right:
autumn in the Pays d'Oc, from a picture-postcard published by Éditions des Septfonts of Causse-de-la-Selle.

Below:
the Château de Lagrezette, one of the wine-producers in the Cahors region, from a picture-postcard published by 'Pierron' in the 1970s.

The harvest finally exceeded pre-infection levels in 1893. By 1901, production was outstripping consumption: a problem of an entirely different kind. A series of scandals, including the sale of 'wines' made without grapes, culminated in a rebellion in the Midi in the early 1900s and troops had opened fire on protesters in Narbonne in June 1907.

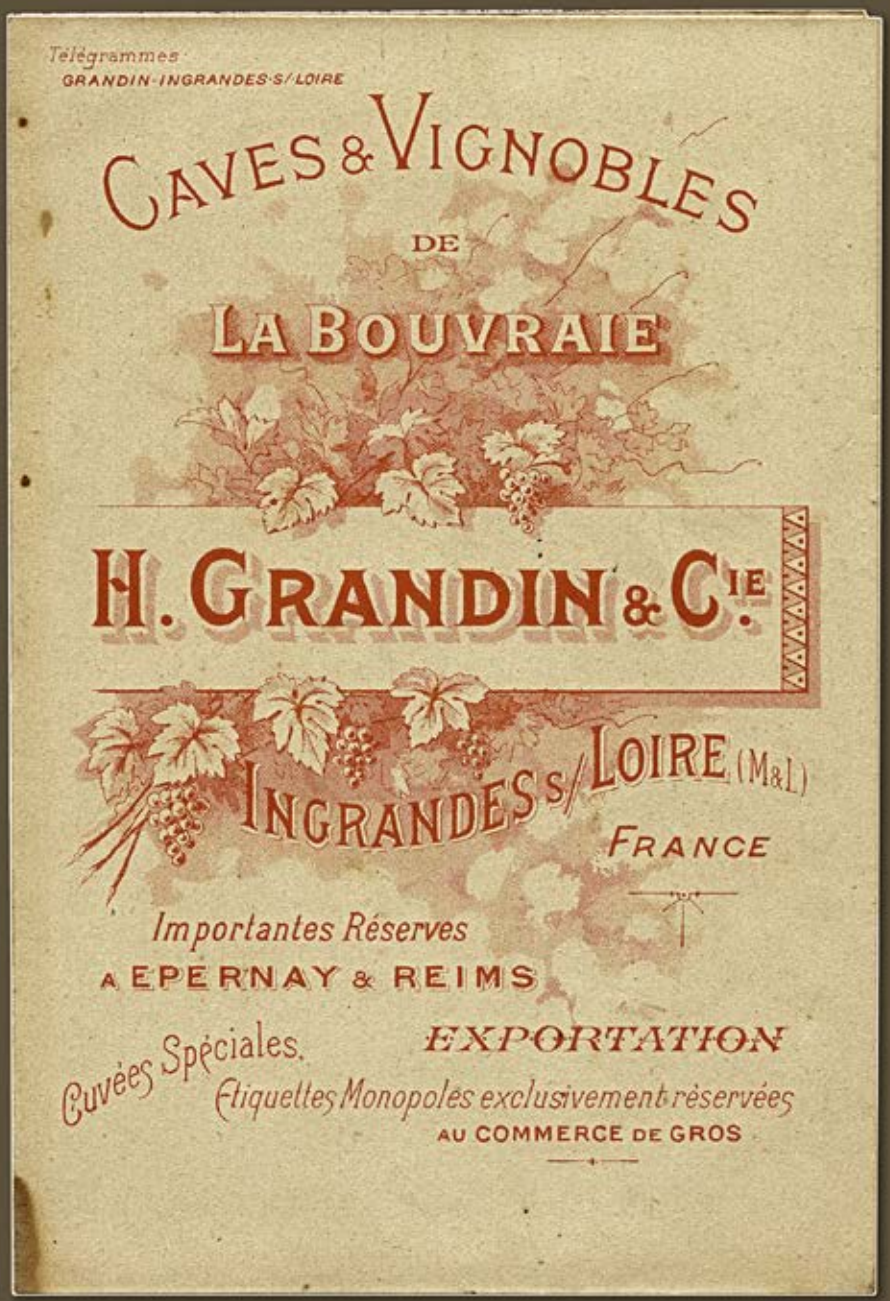
A decree passed on 3rd September 1907, ordering that wine should be nothing but the product of the fermentation of fresh grapes or grape juice, restored a measure of normality. However, the First World War had soon created great problems in northern France, where the output of the Champagne district, in particular, was ruined by a combination of German occupation and the destruction wrought as the front line surged to-and-fro. Reims, the 'capital of Champagne' was seriously damaged, and many propriétaires and négociants fled to less dangerous areas.

The end of hostilities had little remedial effect on production of wine in France. The northern districts naturally required time to re-establish vineyards, and the gradual shift of rural population to urban districts was accompanied by another era in which cheap, weak or adulterated wines were sold in vast quantities…often in open defiance of the law of 1907.

The problem was by no means unique to France, and many European wine-producing countries had similar worries. The French now give credit for a satisfactory solution to Pierre Le Roy de Boiseaumarié, 'Le Baron Roy' of Châteauneuf-du-Pape, and Joseph Capus, parliamentary deputy for the Gironde and minister of agriculture in the mid 1920s. Together they were able to create the *Syndicat des Vignerons de Châteauneuf-du-Pape* (1924) and a similar association in Côtes-du-Rhône (1929).

The *Office International de la Vigne et Vin* was formed in Herault in 1929, and, in 1932, the *Fédération des Associations Viticoles de France* created a 'Section des Grands Crus' with Le Roy as secretary-general. A judgment obtained in 1933 defined not only the Châteauneuf-du-Pape vignoble, but also the thirteen varieties of grape that could be used.

Moves towards standardisation rapidly grew until Capus could propose to control the production of wine across the whole of France; passed into law on 30th July 1935, this created the *Comité National des applications d'origine des vins et des eaux-de-vie*. Individual *Appellations d'Origine Contrôlée* (AOC), with legal backing, were to be used to improve quality and restrict output. There is little doubt that the regulations had positive effects, but the rise in the quality



This leaflet, printed on both sides of a single sheet folded to create four pages, promoted the wines (including champagne from Épernay and Reims) marketed by Grandin of Ingrandes sur Loire. It dates from the early twentieth century.

of output has not always been able to camouflage potential weaknesses arising from excessive bureaucracy. Though phylloxera and mildew have been kept at bay (either can still be a threat to production), French viticulture still faces many challenges. These include over-production, even though attractive EU subsidies have encouraged many viticulteurs to destroy their vines. Output in 2014, about ten per cent higher than 2013, was 46·151 hectolitres—the equivalent of about 6·15 *billion* 75cl bottles. However, the consumption of wine has been drastically reduced by health concerns and restrictions placed on drink-driving. More than eighty people in every hundred drank wine in France in 1980; by 2010, however, the number had fallen to 62 and is still declining.

Much has been made of the differences between the market for wines in France, which still retains a sophistication generally unmatched elsewhere, and those in the English-speaking world. Some commentators have even identified a problem in a perceived preference in France for *terroir* over *cépage* (a 'cep' is

Below: *this aerial view shows the commune of Ludes, in the Marne département of northern France. Wooded hills and well-ordered vineyards surround the compact village. From a hand-tinted 'false colour' 1950s photo-postcard by* CIM*–Combier Imprimeur, Mâcon.*

an individual vine): for wines sold by the name of their producer over those sold on the basis of the grapes from which they have been made. According to this argument, the French and the English buy their wines very differently. The Frenchman buys by the name of the *propriétaire*; the Englishman simply buys a Chardonnay, a Sauvignon blanc, a Merlot or a Syrah (customarily known as 'Shiraz' outside France).

Of course, this is gross simplification; not all Frenchmen have such a detailed knowledge of wine production, and not all Britons are as undiscerning. One survey undertaken recently in France suggested that only three in every hundred people actually understood the concept of terroir, but that ten times as many, thirty per cent, recognised the meaning of cépage.

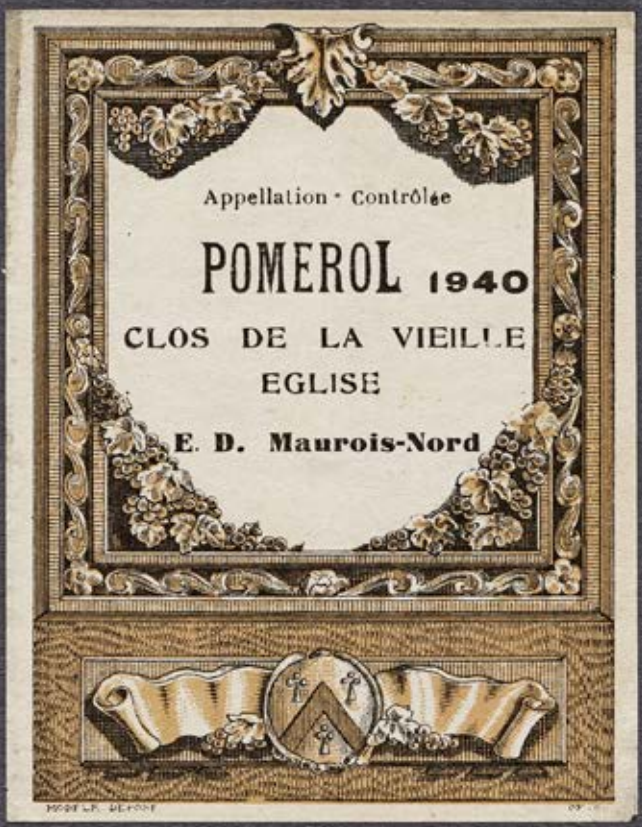
Right: *labels produced during the Second World War tended to be plain. Supplies of paper and ink were ever-increasingly restricted, favouring simple designs. Many were printed in a single colour, relying on the hue of the stock to give an additional visual dimension. The exception to all this austerity, of course, were the label blanks remaining in stock from pre-war days; these could be adapted merely by overprinting details of the vintage.*

Disregarding mystique, terroir will still have a vital effect on the quality of wine. The term is virtually impossible to translate, but acknowledges the ways in which growth of a vine can be affected: by the geology of soil and sub-soil, by drainage, by fluctuations in temperature or humidity, by the way a vineyard slopes. The permutations are endless. In essence, every *terroiriste* knows that micro-climates will ensure that seemingly identical vines at opposite ends of the vineyard will develop perceptibly differently. However, though *les Climats de Bourgogne* were recognised in 2015 as a World Heritage Site, a strip of barren land can nonetheless stand alongside one producing wine of the finest quality.

Much of the subtlety in wines of the best classes arises from blending as many as ten varieties of grape; processing techniques and ageing, which can include the deliberate use of old barrels, also have important effects on development. But it is to the terroir, and to the experience of the viticulteur, that the greatest effects may be attributed.

Yet there is truth in claims that exports of French wine have often been compromised by an absence of detail on the labels. The best *Appellation d'Origine* products sell into a market, even outside France, which prides itself


CHÂTEAU BATAILLEY
1943
PAUILLAC MÉDOC
MIS EN BOUTEILLES AU CHATEAU
MARCEL BORIE
PROPRIÉTAIRE


Appellation · Contrôlée
POMEROL 1940
CLOS DE LA VIEILLE
EGLISE
E. D. Maurois-Nord

on knowledge. In this, terroir is a key advantage. For the broader less-educated (but sometimes no less discerning) market, terroir can be a mystery; cépage is much simpler to understand, and many consumers buy wine according to the type of grape. The runaway success of Merlot and Chardonnay in the 1980s and a more recent predilection for Viognier and Picpoul de Pinet owe much to the *cépageurs*.

Unfortunately, wines promoted on varietal lines, unless made from grapes unusual enough to command a premium, rarely prosper once the price has risen above a benchmark figure (regarded as €13 in 2015).

An exception must be made for Alsace, where Teutonic traditions ensure that the name of the grape has always played a leading role.* Languedoc–Roussillon provides another exception, at least partially, as the traditional reliance on large-scale output of vins de table has given way to vins de pays sold on the basis of cépage: a process which has been accompanied by a notable rise in quality. An obvious answer would be simply to define the grape variety on labels which would otherwise be *terroiriste*. This has already been undertaken successfully in some districts since 2012, even though it offends many die-hard traditionalists.

The introduction of Appellations d'Origine Contrôlée proved to be very controversial in the areas where classification systems were already in use. In Bordeaux, for example, the *Cru Classé* system of 1855 was still deemed to be effectual; 58 'red' and 21 'white' vineyards had been grouped by quality, descending from *Premier Cru* or 'first growth' to *Cinquième Cru* ('fifth growth'). Essentially similar systems have been used in Barsac and Sauternes (from 1855), Graves (1953) and St-Émilion (1955, where there are still only two 'A'-status *Premier Grands Cru Classé)*. Lesser grades of *Cru Bourgeois* were introduced in Médoc and Haut-Médoc in 1932, to be revised in 2003 when the grades of *Cru Bourgeois Exceptionnel* and *Cru Bourgeois Supérieur* were created; and *Cru Artisan* appeared in 2006.

The classification used in Bourgogne differs considerably from that of Bordeaux, being based more on geographical district than the performance of individual estates. Grades begin with *Grand Cru* and *Premier Cru*, descending to the name of a village and, lastly, a regional identifier. Wines produced by a

* This is hardly surprising, as Alsace and Lorraine were surrendered to Germany at the end of the Franco–Prussian War in 1871 and not formally regained until the Treaty of Versailles was ratified in 1919. Though Lorraine has always seen its heritage as largely French, the customs and outlook of some parts of Alsace remain essentially German.

Left and below:
two typical 'mass-production' labels, rarely associated with the best wines (though both claim Appellation Contrôlée status). The use of a grapes motif is common on labels of this type, as is a version of the Arms of Bordeaux—though the precise design, and especially the true colours, are rarely observed.

The regionalisation of wine production, and the sheer volume of production, encouraged many printers to specialise in the design and manufacture of packaging. Many held huge stocks of standardised pre-printed label blanks onto which the name of a négociant and details of the vintage could be overprinted.

Grand Cru are usually marked with vineyard name; by a Premier Cru, with the name of the vineyard and the village. Only red and white can be offered by Grand and Premier Cru, leaving rosé and sparkling wines to be promoted under the Bourgogne appellation; by sub-regional terms such as Macon-Villages; by cépage, as Bourgogne-Aligoté; or by wine-type ('Crémant de Bourgogne').

Above: *this cheerful label promoting the white wine of the Jurançon* AOC *inaugurated in 1936 in south-west France, is typical of 1950s mass-market designs. The bottle was filled in the cellars of a co-operative and sold by another—the Union Commerciale Viti-Vinicole, Négociants of Jurançon, Basse-Pyrénées, whose distinctive wine-glass* UCVV *trademark has clearly been used to suggest a seal of approval. The printing method appears to be three-colour lithography (red, black and green), with details of the fleurs-de-lys, trumpet and trumpeter's clothing added in metallised gold.*

Considered in their entirety, French wines were greatly improved by the introduction of the AOC system. The quality grades were originally *Vin de Table* ('table wine'), the most basic, acknowledging only the producer and French origin; *Vin de Pays* ('country wine'), which could include regional and varietal details; *Vin Délimité de Qualité Supérieure* (VDQS, 'wine defined as of superior quality'); and *Appellation d'Origin Contrôlée* (AOC), which, being the finest grade, was subject to restrictions on the use of grape varieties and production techniques which did not hamper the others. Applying the regulations was the responsibility of l'Institut Nationale des Appellations d'Origine (INAO).

Attempts were made to regulate production, but targets were still to be reached when the Second World War interrupted work. Though wine was still made in quantity, the industry (particularly in northernmost Départements) did not recover until the late 1940s. Annual output eventually stabilised at

50–60 million hectolitres, including wine used in the production of spirits or for industrial purposes.

In 2005, when there were 472 Appellations Contrôlée 'du vin', 43·9 million hectolitres of wine were made for personal consumption and 9·4 million for other purposes. Perhaps surprisingly, AOC wines contributed more than half the total (53·4 per cent), the remainder being vins de pays (33·9 per cent), vins de table (11·7 per cent) and VDQS (0·9 per cent). By 2012, total production had fallen to 41·6 million hectolitres, output of red wine, including rosé, outstripping white in the proportion 83:17.

In 2012, the old Appellation Contrôlée categorisation changed and the *Institut national de l'origine et de la qualité* assumed control. Vins de table and VDQS disappeared, the former to be integrated in the new *Vin de France* category and the latter to be either upgraded to AOP status (*Appellation d'Origine Protégée*, the new AOC) or included in IGP, *Indication Géographique Protégée*, which has replaced the Vins de Pays. Labelling restrictions were sensibly altered so that details of the grapes and the date of the vintage can appear on any French product, regardless of grade. However, few of the new regulations had become visible by the end of 2012, as only Beaujolais Nouveau and some fifty other *en primeur* wines* had been affected. And agencies with wine in course of production were allowed to use existing labels—owing to the perpetual uncertainty over the success of a vintage, with yields which can easily be half or double a previous year, many bottlers hold extensive stocks of pre-printed labels on which only details of vintage need to be added.

The original 1935 Appellation Contrôlée regulations prevented wine-makers in AOC districts naming constituent grapes. Obviously, a large proportion of wines are blends; so-called *varietals*, made from a single variety of grape, were still comparatively unusual in French viticulture prior to 2010 (Vins de Pays excepted)—though this is changing in the face of foreign competition, and in the enthusiasm of some sections of the winemaking industry for varieties of grapes which are rarely cultivated, generally overlooked, or serve only as an anonymous blender.

In 2010, 'red' Merlot, occupying 114,675 hectares of vineyards (14·1 per cent of the national total), was the most common of all the cultivated grapes.

* Beaujolais and 'en primeur' wines can be sold from the third Thursday in November of the year of the vintage, leaving only a few weeks between havesting the grapes and bottling. However, 'primeur' in Bordeaux, by comparison, does not occur until the Spring of the year *after* the vintage.

Unheralded Ugni Blanc (alias Trebbiano), used in France mainly as the base for blending and for production of spirits such as Cognac, was the most popular white variety (83,445 hectares, 10·3 per cent). Eight of the top-ten grapes were used to make red wine, the exceptions being Ugni Blanc and Chardonnay (seventh place, 45,243 hectares, 5·6 per cent).

A few large-scale winemakers, particularly in Languedoc–Roussillon, have recently begun to offer wines made only from Carignan, Malbec (much rarer now in France than in the 1950s), Marsanne, Mourvèdre or Roussanne. Some of the rarest of all the many French grape varieties occupied less that a hundred hectares each in 2005, but, despite the odds, attempts are being made to save many historic vineyards for posterity—efforts which should be acclaimed, assuming the products are drinkable.

Attempts to reduce the Wine Lake of the late twentieth century focused on eradication not only of the vines that produced insipid wine but also of those (*Teinturiers* or 'tinters') whose role was merely to add colour. Unfortunately, some of these were such prolific producers, and so resistant to disease, that the 1977-vintage instructions to destroy them were not universally applauded even though generous subsidies could be sought.

The greatest problems occurred in the Midi, home of vins de table of the roughest type, where high yields were commonplace and quality traditionally came second to quantity. Typical of beneficial changes made between 1969 and 1978 could be found in Gard Département, where a 39 per cent increase of Carignan, a capable producer, was balanced by reductions of 41 per cent of unworthy Aramon and 55 per cent of equally uninspiring Couderc noir. But even the most important estate must pay constant attention to the need for changes. These may be subtle—replacing damaged or low-performing vines, perhaps—or simply because consumers demand fruitier reds or zestier whites.

Les Vignobles Rollet of St-Étienne-de-Lisse in St-Émilion, viticulteurs of Château du Vieux-Guinot since 1729, had acquired *grands crus* Châteaux Roc-Saint Michel and Gaillard de la Gorse by the 1930s, and then bought Château Fourney in 1957. In the commune of Gardegan (Côtes de Castillon AOC), Rollet bought Château de Fourquerie in 1934 and Château Grand Tertre in 1980. In 2013, the Côtes de Castillon vineyards contained 85 per cent Merlot and 15 per cent Cabernet (mixed Franc and Sauvignon); Saint-Émilion estates were 70 per cent Merlot, 16 per cent Cabernet Sauvignon and 14 per cent Cabernet Franc. However, details published in 1993 indicate that the Vieux-Guinot estate was

Château Montrose in St-Estèphe, in the Gironde, was listed as '2e Grand Clu Classé' under the original 1855 Bordeaux classification. Owned by the Charmolüe family from 1896 until acquired by the Bouygues brothers in 2006, Montrose continues to make fine red wines. Note the wind-pump alongside the flagstaff—a reminder of the part played by water in viticulture, and that inundation was once commended as a defence against phylloxera. From a photo-postcard published in the 1950s by SAGEP, 51 av. Trudaine, Paris.

A typical label applied to bottles of Château du Vieux-Guinot by Vignobles Rollet SA. Prior to 1971, they were marked as the product of P. ROLLET PROPRIÉTAIRE À SAINT-ÉTIENNE ST. ÉMILION *and had a very different seal on the base-strip.*

then 56 per cent Merlot, 27 per cent Cabernet Franc and 17 per cent Cabernet Sauvignon; Grand Tertre was 59 per cent Merlot, 34 per cent Cabernet Franc and only 7 per cent Cabernet Sauvignon.

'Château Le Bory Rollet' labels have graced wines produced in Juillac. The reds (including 'Vin de Minuit') came from planting which, in 1993, comprised 66 per cent Merlot and 34 per cent Cabernet Franc; the whites were made from Sémillon (51 per cent of total planting), Sauvignon blanc (27 per cent), Muscadelle (18 per cent) and Ugni blanc (4 per cent).

Changes have also been made in the exploitable areas of each estate since 1990. Grand Tertre, which was expected to produce 55,000 bottles from seven hectares in 1993, was being listed in 2012 with an output of 80,000 bottles from 12 hectares; Vieux Guinot was credited with 68,400 bottles in 1992 (from ten hectares) and 72,000 from twelve hectares in 2012. Château Fourney, the largest of the Rollet vineyards, was claimed to have an annual yield of 138,000 bottles in 2012.

The St-Émilion vineyards owned by Vignobles Rollet show a marked increase since the 1990s in the planting of Merlot vines at the expense of the two Cabernet varieties. This trend is just as obvious in other parts of France, intensified by ever-increasing international competition. But among collateral damage of these 'vine economics' has been a reduction in the use of *Petit Verdot* (Bordeaux, 896 hectares in 2010), deemed to ripen too late to be reliable; *Poulsard* (Jura, 307 hectares), which often buds too early to avoid frost damage; *Savagnin blanc* (Jura, 483 hectares), which ripens late and needs gravelly soil; and *Altesse* (Savoie, 359 hectares), resistant to rot but difficult to grow. All of these grapes can produce wonderfully distinctive wine, but output may a quarter of that of Merlot or Cabernet Sauvignon, or a tenth of Aramon and Villard noir.

To the output of large-scale viticulteurs and négociants must be added that of countless thousands of individuals. In Bordeaux alone, more than twelve thousand vine-growers could be counted in 2010. Many of these sent the output of tiny vineyards, often less than a hectare, directly to local co-operatives making about a quarter of all wine bottled in Bordeaux; others simply bottled and sold their produce locally. But there has been a surge of interest in *garagistes*—a term once used contemptuously, but now recognition that fine wines can be made in unpromising environments.

The so-called 'recreational winemakers' have been largely responsible for renewal of production in districts on the margins of viability, where the demise of

viticulture and the march of phylloxera had once gone hand-in-hand. Bretagne (Brittany), Normandie and Picardie have yet to been granted *Appellations* of their own, but this may simply be a matter of time if the much-contested changes in climate warm the land. Attempts have even been made to rescue abandoned Franco–American vines, proscribed by the French authorities in 1934. Planting American-derived vines (specifically Clinton, Herbemont, Isabella, Jaquez, Noah and Othello) had been officially restricted to existing vineyards, which were allowed to continue making wine for 'family use'. Consequently, work continued in remote rural districts long after the end of the Second World War.

In 1993, a group of enthusiasts discovered a derelict site in the Ardèche where Jaquez vines were still clinging to life. Wine made from these grapes has suggested to some observers that the allegedly poor qualities of the original American wines are not as obvious as had been widely claimed in the 1870s. The inference is clearly that the French wine-making establishment was set against the imports from the outset. But the enthusiasts are still trying to reverse the French and EU regulations that exclude Jacquez from the list of permitted wine-making varieties.

THE SUBTLETIES OF LABELLING

French wine-bottle labels include many terms, unfamiliar to English-speakers, which give the enthusiast vital clues to origin and quality. *Mis en bouteille*, for example, 'placed in the bottle', indicates the agency or place where bottling occurred. This can be within the boundaries of the vignoble, revealed by the phrases AU CHÂTEAU, AU DOMAINE, or À LA PROPRIÉTÉ.* The word *par*, 'by', or the phrase *dans la région de production* usually indicates that the bottling was undertaken elsewhere by an intermediary—a specialist bottler, for example, or a négociant. In this connexion, *dans nos chais* ('in our wine store') and *dans nos caves* ('in our cellars') can also suggest bottling somewhere other than the vineyard.

The phrase *Vigneron indépendant* has come to signify the specialist artisanal or craft winemakers who are keen to distance themselves from industrialised co-operatives or 'big business'. Their output will often prove to be from small organic vineyards, or from vines with historic associations. And it can be very good indeed.

Identification of *cépage*, or grape variety, was restricted prior to 2012 to vin de pays (the restrictions were abandoned when vins de table and vins de pays were consolidated as 'Vins de France'). A single variety can be claimed only if this provides more than 85 per cent of the grapes; two or more varieties must be identified in descending order of importance. The remaining fifteen per cent content of single-variety wines can include any grapes the winemaker deems to be beneficial: indeed, some of the leading brands are blended from ten or more varieties. If more than one type of grape has been identified on a label, however, only the specified grapes can be included.

Appellation Contrôlée regulations insist that labels must include the name of the producing agency, vignoble, bottler or dealer. Though the departmental system introduced in 1791 continues to be used with surprisingly little change,† the introduction of a coding system for addresses, which took place in 1964 to assist the mechanisation of the postal services, can give a clue to the date of a label if no vintage is specified; the still-current five-digit codes date from 1972. Information of this type can identify wine which has been shipped to Belgium or Germany, as the bottlers' codes will begin 'B-' or 'D-' respectively.

A wide variety of abbreviations will be found on the labels, usually indicating the financial or corporate structure of the producing agency. Substantial quantities of wine have always been produced by associations or co-operatives of individual viticulteurs for whom the ability to pool resources keeps costs to a minimum.

Prior to the Second World War, the presence of a co-operative was usually readily detectable on labels. Later marks include CCV, for *Cave Coopérative de Vinification* ('wine-making cellars of the co-operative'); EARL, *l'Exploitation Agricole à Responsibilité Limitée* (introduced in 1985); GAEC, *Groupements Agricole d'Exploitation en Commun* (1962); SA, *Société Anonyme*; SARL, *Société à Responsibilité Limitée*; SCA, *Société Coopérative Agricole* (1947); SCEA, *Société Civile d'Exploitation Agricole*; SICA, S*ociété d'Intérêt Collectif Agricole* (1947); and SNC, *Société en Nom Collectif.* Most of these marks indicate a grouping of people determined to limit their individual responsibilities, though the precise nature

* This can include co-operatives bottling wine made from grapes taken from vines on land they own or control, even if the winery is elsewhere. In 2010, thirty per cent still came from co-operatives.
† Minimal changes have been made to the system, excepting that Seine-et-Oise (number 78), one of the *Départements* enveloping Paris, fragmented in 1968 to create Yvelines (78), Hauts-de-Seine (92), Seine-Saint-Denis (93), Val-de-Marne (94) and Val-de-Oise (95). The 2016 changes to regional structure, which scarcely affect the wine-producing areas, are described in detail on page 102.

Above: *when this label was printed in Poitiers in the early 1930s, vast quantities of poor-quality wine were being made. Most of this was sold cheaply as Vins de Table, but substantial quantities were distilled to create brandy (including Armagnac and Cognac). Eau de Vie de Vin, used by itself, usually signifies an inexpensive spirit destined for undiscerning drinkers. This label is a two colour lithograph, in black and gold, but gives no clue to its origins other than the printer's name. Details of the seller and the vintage—if appropriate—often appeared on a separate bottle collar.*

of each classification, usually defined in French commercial law, allowed far greater flexibility.

Among the explanatory terms used to describe *La Propriété* on labels, 'château' probably carries the most weight. Many of these buildings are truly impressive, though it should be remembered that, at least according to *The Times* in 1998, more than forty thousand properties in France claimed the distinction and it is not uncommon for a 'château' to be nothing other than a small farmhouse. And while the same can also be true of many *Domaines*, the

***** These are often considered to be interchangeable. However, *cloître* derives from the verb *cloître*r, 'to cloister, or shut-away', and *clos* from *clôturer*, 'to enclose [a field]'.

finest of these partricular estates can have grand houses to rival any château. Religious origins are obvious in terms such as *les Cloîtres des Moines* ('cloisters of the monks'), whereas *Clos* and the obsolescent *Clot* signify an enclosure.* A *Mas*, rarely encountered on labels (except in the south-west, e.g., Mas de Bicary in Gaillac), is a farm with living accommodation on one side of an enclosure or courtyard, and walls, barns and outbuildings on the others.

The use of 'château' as a marketing tool occurs surprisingly frequently, seducing the unwary purchaser into believing that the wine is from a 'great estate' when it can be little more than the product of a négociant's imagination, graced with a fine-sounding name (sometimes a registered trademark) or a depiction of 'the house' on the label. Tracing a name of this class is not always easy as there are few accessible listings of Châteaux de France, whether claiming to be a vignoble or not. The wine may be perfectly acceptable, of course, but the

Below: *this letterpress label could hardly be simpler. Printed on a good-quality heavyweight 'laid' paper, striated horizontally, it identifies the wine as a Burgundy nd the geographical location of the Négociant…but says nothing of alcohol content or bottle size (neither being legal requirements at this time). The vintage has clearly been added to a pre-printed blank, but the '5' should be 'non-lining' and dropped beneath the baseline to align with '9'.*

marketing strategies, if understandable, are highly questionable. This is one of the few areas in which the AOC system does not provide an answer, but is by no means unique to wine…or to France. The use of 'fake châteaux' to enhance the status of wines in the mind of the purchaser was particularly evident in the period before the introduction of Appellations d'Origine Contrôlée.

A 1930s letterhead of the Union Vinicole Coopérative du Gaillaçois, an association of '500 Propriétaires Recoltants', with a head office and winery (*chai)* in Gaillac and a much larger winery in Cahuzac 'in the centre of the vignoble', made no secret of its five brand names: Château Gayrard and Royal Cahuzac for *vins mousseux*, Haut Salettes and Cru St.-Vincent for *vins vieux*, and Super Mosac for *vin extra*.

Below: *this label (green, black and metallic-gold) graced an inexpensive Vin de Table–Blanc de Blancs intended for sale to sea-food restaurants in northern France. Note the motif within the gold rope-work circle. The postal code in the address identifies a bottler in Saint-Brandan in the Côtes-d'Armor, Brittany; 73cl bottles were abandoned when the Appellation Contrôlée regulations were revised in 1989.*

Above: *a 1960s label for Rosé de Bergerac, a district which had been granted* AOC *status in 1936. The wine was distributed by Adel Albert, still actively trading in Bordeaux in 2012. Printed by lithography in rose-pink, black and a lustrous gold, the label (a blank destined for overprinting) lacks acknowledgement of alcoholic content and bottle size. The allusion to Cyrano de Bergerac and his 'nose' was scarcely accidental!*

Many other words and phrases can be found on labels. Terms such as *Grand Vin de Bordeaux*, *Cuvée Spéciale* ('special vintage') or *Vin de Vieilles Vignes* ('wine from old vines') have no official status, however fairly they may reflect the contents of the bottle; Bordeaux Supérieur, however, is a genuine AOC producing wine that is customarily a half-degree stronger than regular Bordeaux. Some terms give a clue to style: *brut* (confined to champagne) is 'extra dry'; *sec* is 'dry'; *demi-sec*, 'half-dry'; *moelleux*, 'mellow'; *doux*, 'soft'. The labels of modern Champagne bottles also have distinctive two-letter prefixes to the bottle number (the Laurent Perrier label illustrated on page 51, for example, is clearly marked 'NM. 1048242').

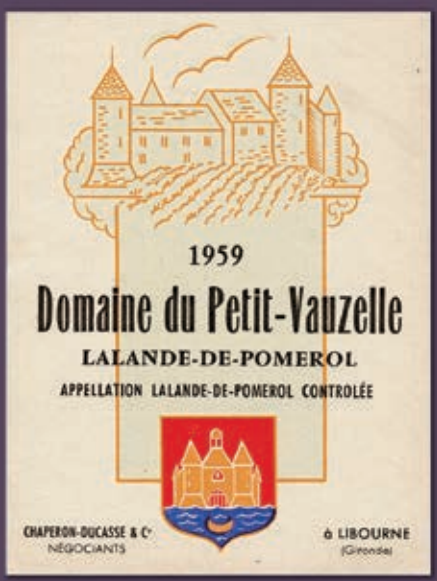
The codes hide the status of the individual promoter: CM, *Coopérative de manipulation*, a group making wine for growers who are also members; MA, *Marque d'acheteur* (or 'Marque auxiliare'), usually denoting a brand name owned by a distributor; ND, *Négociant distributeur*, a merchant selling under his own name wine which has been made elsewhere; NM, *Négociant manipulant*, a merchant who buys grapes and then makes his own wine; RC, *Recoltant coopérateur*, a member of a co-operative selling wine under his own name; RM, *Recoltant manipulant*, a producer who makes wine from his own grapes (up to five per cent of the total may be 'bought in' provided only that they conform with *Appellation* regulations); and SR, *Société des recoltants*, any association of growers which pools their resources but is not defined in law as a co-operative.

Wines described as *sur lie*, 'on their lees', have gained additional subtleties of flavour from contact with the sediment that would otherwise have been decanted; *Séléction de Grains Nobles* identifies sweet wine made from grapes affected by botrytis cinerea, noble rot (which is beneficial only if the climatic conditions are suitable: otherwise, grapes simply rot away!); *Vendange tardive* indicates inclusion of late-harvest grapes. *Bâtonnage*, stirring of wines which had been fermenting in barrels to break the 'cap of skins' which can encourage growth of acetic bacteria should it dry out, was traditionally undertaken in Bourgogne with wooden staves…but is regularly undertaken elsewhere, anonymously, with assistance from mechanically-driven paddles and recirculating pumps in the fermentation tanks.

Sparking wines, the *vins pétillants* or *vins mousseux*, can also be labelled *Méthode champenoise* ('champagne method', now restricted to the products of Champagne) or many versions of *Méthode traditionnelle*. The grapes are fermented normally, and then the 'still' wine is re-fermented in the bottle for at least nine months. A sparkling wine labelled *Blanc de blanc* must be made entirely of Chardonnay grapes. One labelled *Blanc de noir*, conversely, will be made of the red grapes permitted in the Champagne region: Pinot noir and Pinot meunier (and, on rare occasions, any of the several local varieties which still have official approval).

Wines described as *Méthode ancestrale*, *Méthode rurale* or *Méthode gaillaçoise* ('Gaillac method') ferment entirely in the bottle—the original way of making sparkling wine, said to have originated in central France during the Roman period. The phrase *élevé en fûts de chêne* means 'matured in oak barrels'; *vieilli en chêne* is simply 'aged in oak'.

Printed in Bordeaux, this label was applied to wine imported and distributed in the 1930s by a Négociant in Château-Gontier in Mayenne. Wholesale planting of vines in Morocco had been undertaken in the nineteenth century by French viticulteurs desperately seeking to recover from financial ruin attributable to the phylloxera louse. The illustration, compromised by the clumsy overprint, shows that attractive artwork could be associated with even the cheapest wines.



A selection of traditional-style Appellation Contrôlée wine-bottle labels. The Château Jacquemineau example, printed in a single colour, was commissioned by a distributor. The Domaine de Lardy label, printed in black and red on cream stock, also bears the name of a négociant—as does that of Domaine de Petit-Vauzelle. The Côtes du Rhône label is generic, with the name of the bottler but not the vignoble. The 'Arms', applied in gold, are simply an adopted trademark.

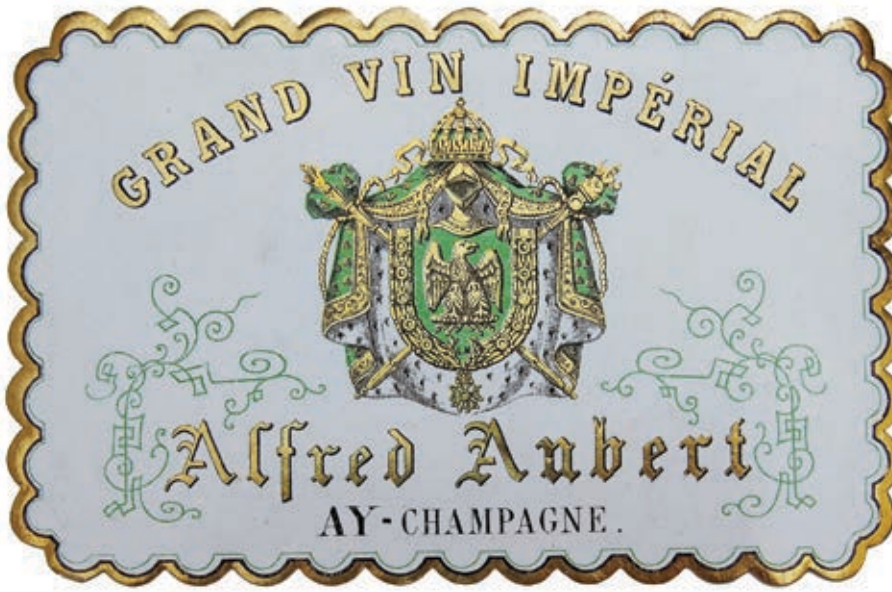
PRINTING TECHNIQUES

Wine-bottle labels may seem simple, but unexpected subtleties may be found if a closer look can be taken. This may arise from the era in which they were made, or in manufacturing techniques. The history of printing is comparatively well known, and only its barest essence will be repeated here. Reliance on carved-wood blocks soon gave way to movable cast-metal type and wood-block illustrations which could be pressed onto paper by suitable printing machinery. Known as *letterpress*, this method remained the most common form of printing until, in the middle of the twentieth century, offset lithography steadily increased in favour. Good-quality boxwood illustration-blocks could hold surprisingly fine detail, though the introduction of copper printing plates in the eighteenth century increased the importance of incised or 'intaglio' printing (see below).

When the First World War began in Europe in 1914, the letterpress process had been brought to near perfection. One of the principal advantages was the ease with which material—type-matter in particular—could be taken from a handwritten draft to a printed page, and the ease with which elements of design could be changed. The ability to mix lettering and illustrations was another attractive feature.

Letterpress can usually be recognised by a combination of sharpness of line and evidence of pressure on the reverse of paper or thin card. Screened images and colour blocks, as well as large-scale display type, also have a characteristic 'edge'; the density of ink was often less in the middle of a surface than at the margins, and this can be detected even in the dots of a screened half-tone. Wine-bottle labels printed prior to the 1960s will often show letterpress characteristics, though these are sometimes limited to overprints on lithographed blanks.

Though otherwise broadly comparable with letterpress methods, *intaglio* (or 'gravure') type-matter and illustrations were incised instead of cut in relief. Ink was spread over the forme and then wiped away by the 'doctor blade', which left ink in the incisions but cleaned the remainder. Pressure applied during the impression stroke then forced the surface of the paper into the grooves, transferring ink. Intaglio printing, confined initially to fine-art prints, quickly became very popular for journals and periodicals (though rarely associated with bottle labels). It has none of the sharpness of letterpress, showing soft lines when viewed with a magnifying lens, and pressure applied during the



Above: *this decorative label was lithographed for Alfred Aubert, Négociant, in the 1920s. It is notable or extensive use of bright gold ink on the border, the titling and the pavilioned coat of Arms. The suggestion of three dimensions has been achieved without requiring an embossing die, but makes the die-cut label difficult to photograph or scan: the background is actually creamy-white.*

impression stroke may be difficult to determine. Screened intaglio images show soft-edged 'dots', which are really individual cells, and dots may merge at the edge of thin-wall cells.

Perhaps the most interesting of all printing methods, once very popular, *collotype* originated in French Patent 24593, 'procédé de gravure par la lumière dit hélioplastie', granted on 4th November 1855 to Alphonse-Louis Poitevin, *ingénieur de salines* of Gouhenas in Haute-Saone. However, commercial success awaited a Bavarian photographer, Joseph Albert of München, whose Albertypy (patented in 1868) popularised the use of glass plates and an intermediate bonding layer. Collotype could convert virtually any continuous-tone original to a finely-detailed granular half-tone image without intermediate screening, giving an unmistakable signature; viewed under a magnifying glass, collotype prints display granulations in the form of short irregular strands and swirls instead of regimented process dots.

This composite illustration shows both sides of the label of a 1980s CAVES DE LA BOULE BLANCHE *table wine, recording the alcohol strength but neither the bottle size nor a vintage of any type. This suggests that despite the good-quality printing—and the use of a well-cut embossing die (clearly visible in the rear view)—the wine did not claim to be anything other than 'made from the best varieties [of grape]'.*

Above: *there has always been enthusiasm for the mediaeval-scroll'label. Two of these are straightforward, even though they have AOC status; but the Chanteseve example has been specially die-cut to shape (the seal-strip was attached separately).*

In theory, the process will reproduce the finest line in a way that screen process cannot, and the detail on collotype images is often unbelievably precise. But there were important drawbacks. Output was very slow, and the special geleatine-membrane plates lacked durability; nor could they be stored for long periods without deteriorating. The need for huge quantities of wine-bottle labels made collotype a poor choice, even if many labels could be printed on a single sheet of paper. It is possible that a few labels were printed by this particular process, with vintages added by letterpress overprints, but none could be found for examination; conventional lithography proved to be much more appropriate.

Lithography was devised by Johann Aloys Senefelder in 1795–8, based on the mutual repulsion of oil and water-based ink. A design was drawn in ink on a specially prepared block of Jura Limestone (calcium carbonate) and then carefully dried before re-inking. Ink transferred when a sheet of paper was pressed onto the image, relying on the wetted surface of the stone to repel ink to give an unblemished background. Senefelder also noticed that an image drawn on paper in special greasy ink could be transferred to one or more specially-prepared stones before the ink dried.

Lithography had spread throughout Europe by the 1820s, championed particularly by artistic communities; the ease with which designs could be drawn directly onto printing stones was genuinely creative. Even the most delicate hand-drawn images could be transferred to a stone or plate, encouraging printers to lay down colours—usually characterised by irregular dots and dashes—before adding detail by letterpress, gravure or collotype.

One of the first successful cylinder-type lithographic presses was patented in 1875 by an English tin-printer, Robert Barclay, seeking an easier way of decorating sheet-metal plates than the laborious transfer system. Barclay discovered that a rubberised cotton blanket held a much better image than card, and offset-lithography machines continued to be used by the tin-printing industry for many years. Trials with small cylinder-type presses were made in the 1890s, but not until an appropriate combination of flexible metal plates, ink and damping fluid was discovered in 1904, by American Ira Rubel, did offset lithography challenge letterpress. It had eclipsed its rival by the 1960s.

Offset lithography has many advantages—sheet-metal plates were easy to store—and few notable drawbacks, though the removal of an impressed image can sometimes give a lifeless appearance. When viewed under a magnifying

glass, work of this type customarily has sharp edges to type-matter and dots that display uniform density or colour across their width.

Many wine-bottle labels are still being printed in this way, but it will be interesting to see what effect digital printing will have in the future. One of the biggest problems of laser- and ink-jet systems lies in the ink, which is not generally as waterproof as traditional printers' inks, though varnish or lamination provides a way in which this drawback can be overcome.

The need to compete effectively in the market-place has persuaded wine-label printers to make good use of decorative *finishing processes*. These include *die-cutting*, undertaken manually or in a platen-type printing machine, where the sharp edge of a suitably bent sheet-metal strip shapes the printed sheet. *Embossing* involves placing the finished article in a die, then pressing a pattern into the paper either to follow a pre-printed image or onto the unprinted field ('blind work' or blind embossing). Complexity of design is limited only by the skill of the die-cutter. The technique has often been used to give a three-dimensional effect to coats of Arms, seals, medals and even lines of type.

Undertaken with specially adapted printing presses or die-stamping machines, *foil-stamping* relies on the application of pressure (and sometimes also heat) to transfer metallised foil onto an image. The process is commonly encountered on labels, particularly those printed by comparatively lifeless offset lithography, as its reflectivity cannot be matched by metallised inks.

Thermographic printing, rarely found on labels, uses a special powder-laden ink. An oven or a special heater swells the powder until the printed image gains a raised glossy surface. Though the results can be comparable with embossing, the rear surface of thermographed images is characteristically puckered.

In the years before use of plastic laminating film became commonplace, *varnishing* could be used to protect printed images. Customarily applied across the entire label surface, varnish could also be applied to individual components with a special printing block. Spot-varnishing of can usually be detected by turning the card to catch the light.

Labels were once invariably printed on ordinary paper, held to the bottle either by a separate coat of paste or a dry-paste back which required moistening. This often still applies, even though labels may be made of plasticised paper or thin plastic sheet in search of water resistance. Large-scale producers may use rolls of self-adhesive labels (*papier autocollant*), which are ideally suited to automated bottling machines.

The prestige associated with Champagne has favoured the use of metallised ink, foil blocking and die-cutting on labels and collars.

Above: *not all AOC wines are sold with classically understated labels. This Morgon (Beaujolais), bottled by Henri Gonard of La-Chapelle-de-Guinchay in the 1990s, displays a vibrant approach compromised only by the lettering—an improvement could be made, perhaps, by extending the first and last capitals downward to bracket 'Appellation Morgon Contrôlée'.*

ELEMENTS OF DESIGN

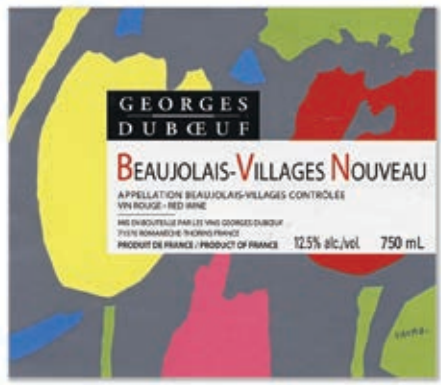
If printing techniques are comparatively easy to define, the principles of design are not. 'Good design' is all too often subjective, depending more on individual preferences than finite rules.

Marks painted directly onto bottles and hand-printed 'name and vintage' labels gave way to surprisingly complicated designs. But the combination of efficient machine-driven printing presses, reliable methods of processing colours, and an ability to mass-produce bottles sometimes encouraged quantity at the expense of quality. By 1900, not merely the leading viticulteurs but also enterprising Négociants were devising labels which could include multi-colour

illustrations; grand-quartered coats of Arms; reproductions of exhibition medals and prizes in gold, silver and bronze; and a variety of gloriously decorative fonts.

Marketing has always had elements of competition, however, and this has become more obvious in recent years as the influence of electronic media has increased the ease with which public attention can be gained. And yet,

Below: *bright colours are generally associated with Beaujolais Nouveau and other 'en Primeur' wines sold when only a few weeks old. The purchasers, often young, are supposedly attracted by this type of marketing; and virtually everyone associated with these wines uses labels which can make traditionalists shudder. Georges Dubœuf of Romanèche-Thorins in Saône-et-Loire is among the best-known promoters. The difficulties of scanning foil-stamped material means that the illustrations do not do proper justice to the jewel-like brilliance of his labels. The leaves of the label shown below left are depicted individually in gold foil, and the background of the label below right is printed in matt-silver ink.*



Above:
the labels used by Château Cantenac-Brown are elegantly understated. Printed in a very dark purple on gold coloured self-adhesive paper, this 2003 example shows the simplicity of the line drawing to good advantage.

ironically, taken as a group, the labels of the leading French winemakers remain unadventurous. Too many rely on a monochrome depiction of the 'château', often an old engraving (or a modern drawing inspired by an engraving!), and typography still relies far too heavily on black-letter or cursive formal scripts. In addition, the use of too many fonts of wildly different characteristics can affect

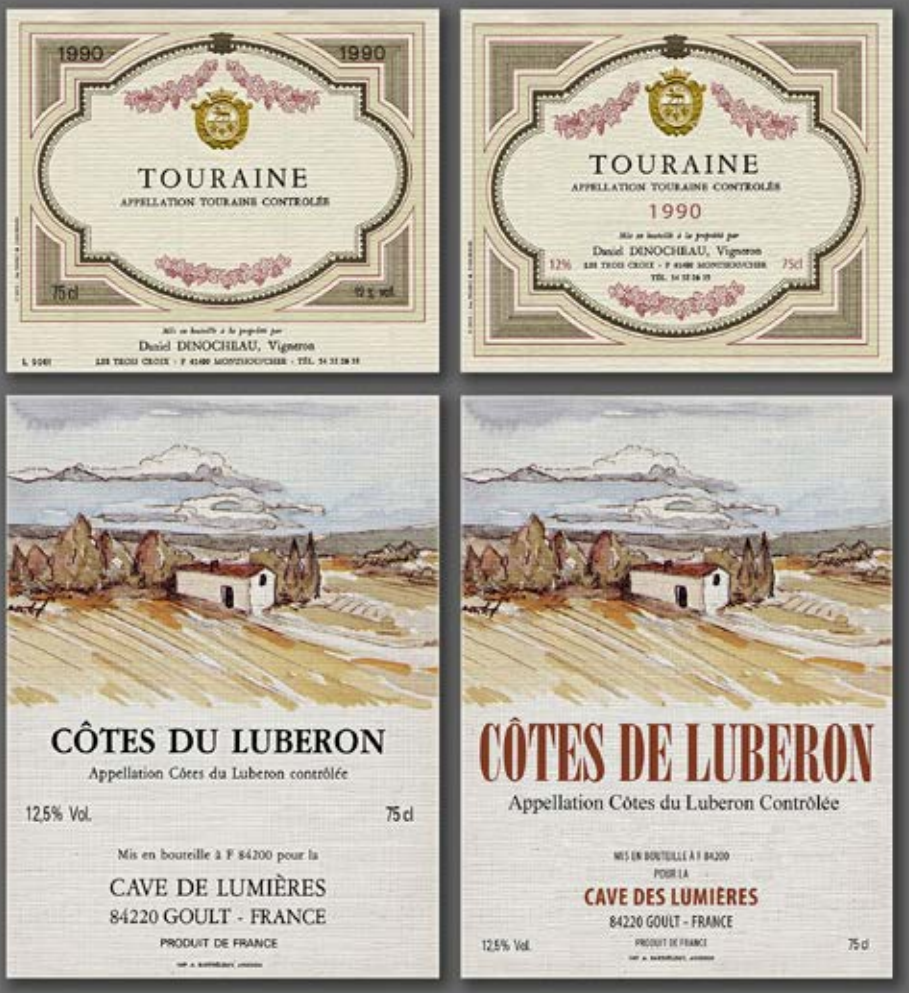
Above: *this Château Léoville-Barton label is a clever design, using the gates and the coloured illustration of the mansion to create the sense of perspective that entices a purchaser to enter. The lettering is restrained, and the 'security strip' is cleverly disguised by overprinting the central doorway. An improvement could be made by digitally manipulating the titling so that the downstrokes are truly vertical, paralleling the bars of the gates, but this is a very minor criticism!*

coherence. Very little use has usually been made of colour, though limited amounts of metallic-gold printing or foil stamping have occasionally relieved what would otherwise be very plain results.

Simplicity, of course, can be very effective in its purest form. But it does not work if individual design elements are out of balance or if space is badly handled. Among praiseworthy exceptions to the foregoing remarks is the label of Château Marsau (Bordeaux–Côtes de Francs AOC), which makes excellent use of space; the typography is interesting, mixing a formal script with a shaded-and-shadowed titling font, and restricts colour to a simple attenuated maroon triangle. The exceptionally traditional 'cover-all' labels used by Château Pichon-Longueville (showing an engraving of Arms within a garlanded border) and 2e Cru Classé Sauternes Château de Myrat (depicting the house within a wreath on a broad line-shaded border), also wrap well around their bottles.

Among the best 'views of the château' labels are the architectural-drawing style of Château Cantenac-Brown (3e Cru Classé, Margaux AOC) and Château

Below: *the label for this Dubœuf Côtes-du-Rhône, a red wine, combines a stylised landscape—the river, the valley uplands—with a die-struck representation of the Roman ruins that provide the area with an important tourist attraction.*



Printers with no formal training in typography and clients who 'knew what they wanted', even when they were wrong, have traditionally contributed to poor label design. These two have been selected to show what can be achieved with minimal extra care. Neither is a particularly bad design: the Touraine example has a pleasing symmetry (though it would look better without the pink swags of grapes!), and the impressionistic painting on the Luberon label is attractive. The major drawbacks concern the use of type. The subsidiary details look best within the border of the first label; and greater emphasis on the titling in the second has been helped simply by 'picking' the colour from the roof of the building.

The promoters of more than one type of wine must find ways to distinguish them. The Vignes de Féchy (above), from Savoie, rely on differently coloured borders and titling, and also on the cépage descriptors—including the lesser-known Mondeuse and Chasselas varieties—that are flanked by the vintage. The well-designed labels of the wines from La Société des Producteurs in Eguisheim in Alsace (right) are identical in all respects other than the identification of cépage. But such similarity has a serious drawback: though it promotes 'brand identity', individual wines are difficult to identify. Changing the base colour of the labels would have been less confusing; so, too, could varying the colour of the corners.

Nenin (Pomerol AOC); the foil-blocked house, vineyard and scroll device of the Margaux AOC 3e Cru Classé Château Palmer (eliminating the current double-line border and squaring the label would be improvements); the white-on-blue Château de Lussac (Lussac–St.-Émilion AOC); and Château La Garde (Pessac–Léognan AOC), which bravely opts for nothing but a drawing of the entrance door flanked on each side by a window.

Another of my personal favourites is the white label of Château Léoville-Barton (2e Cru Classé, St-Julien AOC), with a delicately coloured illustration of

the house flanked by slender sections of gate inviting the onlooker to enter. And one of the few to depart entirely from tradition is Château Teyssier (St-Émilion Grand Cru AOC), with a label containing only the capital of a Corinthian-style column, the signature of the owner, and the necessary details banished to a basal strip.

Ironically, some of the best designs (and many of the worst!) will be found in the cheapest groups. The most satisfying illustrations can grace the labels of most unpromising wines, and are often poster-art in miniature. The classic approach employed by the makers of the finest wines, which would sell regardless of what the label may contain, rarely works as well for *Vins de Table* or *Vins de Pays*—and possibly not at all for Beaujolais Nouveau and the *Primeurs*, where brash styles seek to seduce the casual purchaser.

Strong competition, the employment of professionally-trained artists and graphic designers, the emergence of brand-identity and the advent of image-manipulating computer software has freed the promoters of mass-market wines from shackles imposed by traditionally-minded printers. The best results are colourful and often strikingly beautiful; indeed, Georges Dubœuf, a leading

populariser of Beaujolais Nouveau, has even commissioned neckties with the same pattern as his 'label of the year'! But the worst results are truly awful…

Problems have sometimes been posed by a rise in interest in the contents of the bottle, answered with tasting notes or gastronomic suggestions; by government regulations, including dire warnings of the dangers of drinking, definitions of 'safe' consumption levels or to draw attention to the presence of chemicals; and in the advent of bar-codes or security tags. Most of these can be relegated to a secondary label on the bottle-back, freeing the designer of the principal label from additional clutter. However, where costs dictate and an otherwise obtrusive bar-code must be incorporated with details of *cru*, *millésime* and *cépage*, it is just about possible to devise an acceptable compromise.

Above:
this modern interpretation of a traditional style graces a Dubœuf Juliénas AOC red wine. Though the layout combines several different fonts (and lacks details of either a vintage or alcoholic content), it remains neat, well balanced and uncluttered. The restrained use of colour in an illustration rendered in an almost architectural style is also highly commendable.

Left: labelling elements. All labels must display the classification group (1), which, prior to the beginning of 2012, ran upward in quality from *vins de table* to *vins de pays*, *vins délimité de qualité supérieur* (VDQS) and *vins d'Appellation d'origine contrôlée* (AOC).

Vins de Table can show nothing but a brand name (3), the name of the bottler or promoter (4), acknowledgement of French origin (6), the alcoholic strength (7) and capacity of the bottle (8).

Vins de Pays must show all of these details, together with an optional acknowledgement of geographical origin (2) and *cépage*, the type(s) of grape used (5).

VDQS and AOC wines must show the district of origin (1), a brand name (3, often simply the name of a château, commune or *lieu dit*). Cépage (5), optional and once rarely seen, has recently become much more popular.

Some labels will now also include indications of certified organic origin (9).

LABEL 1

The label for CHÂTEAU MALAMOUSQUE gives every indication of age: the design is redolent of the pre-1914 *Belle Époque* in its use of decorative typematter, and simplicity suggests that the market was still easy to satisfy. The label clearly pre-dates the introduction of Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée, and attention drawn to the age of the vines—with the accompanying claim that they were French (i.e., not Franco-American hybrids)—suggests that they had pre-phylloxera origins…or was simply to persuade prospective purchasers to infer the same!

The label was printed in a single colour, a very dark greenish blue, on a beige-coloured stock. The hand-cut shading and the sharp edges of the lettering suggest that it is a lithograph.

Possibly 1920s, 119mm × 86mm, landscape.

LABEL 2

Printed in Pouilly-sur-Loire, the label for this Sancerre is crude for an Appellation Controlée wine. It suggests that Mme Bouillot, trading from Place de l'Église in Ménétréol-sous-Sancerre, was selling white wine locally. The drawing of the church has a naive charm, but the position of the lettering is unfortunate: merely moving the titling to the right to avoid overrunning the church-spire would have been an improvement.

The label was printed in two colours on cream-white single-sided stock, by offset lithography. A low-lustre olive-gold was used for the drawing; and black for all the lettering.

Possibly early 1970s (note the absence of a post-code in the address), 120mm × 90mm, landscape.

LABEL 3

This garishly-coloured label of a wine bottled by Le Cellier des Compagnons in 'F. 94230', in the Paris district well away from the Bergerac AOC in south-west France (formed in 1936), also confirms the cépage—Sauvignon [blanc], revealing the wine to have been white. The simplicity of the design suggests, despite the presence of an AOC identifier, that the contents had few pretensions to subtlety.

The label is printed on glossy creamy-white stock which has been overprinted in yellow to give the field, and then in black to add the detail. The lack of pressure indications and the flatness of the typematter reveals that the printing method was offset lithography. This alone suggests comparatively modern origins, which the presence of a 94000-series postal code confirms.

1980s, 120mm × 90mm, landscape

LABEL 4

Château morin, in the Saint-Estèphe aoc (founded in 1936), was owned by Établissements Sidaine when this label was printed. The style is traditional: a combination of decorative type recalling the *Belle Époque* of the early 1900s with cursive type, a line-engraving of the *Propriété*, and sparingly-used colour. The illustration of the house and its surroundings offer good quality: many other examples of this particular genre can be crude.

The label is printed on glossy stock in a glossy black, with an overprint in red indicating that the wine was bottled on the property. Traces of pressure visible on the reverse, particularly behind the 'Château Morin' titling, confirm the printing process to have been letterpress.

1982 vintage, 128mm × 90mm, landscape

LABEL 5

The Pouilly-sur-Loire AOC, formed in 1937, has few of the pretensions of Bourgogne's Pouilly-Fouissé. Its low status is reflected in this label, applied to wine bottled on the property of Gilles Chollet of Pouilly-sur-Loire. The style is unbalanced, undistinguished typographically, and illustrated by an unattractive monochrome photograph. This was clearly another mass-market wine; too much expenditure on promotion would never be recouped.

The label is printed on glossy single-sided white stock in black (illustration only), dark brownish-red (the typematter), and a mid-green for APPELLATION CONTROLÉE only. The inking of individual letters, stronger at the edges than in the centre, shows the process to have been letterpress.

Probably from the late 1960s, 120mm × 91mm, landscape

LABEL 6

A label for SOIRÉE GOURMANDE, a sparkling rosé wine made by the 'Champagne Method' in the Touraine AOC (founded as Coteaux de Touraine in 1939, renamed in 1953). The producer is named as J.M. Monmousseau of Montrichard in Loir-et-Cher, but gives no details of the bottler or cépage. The most interesting feature undoubtedly lies in the printing!

The paper has been plasticised, with a bright gold-foil finish. This has been overprinted with the vine-and-cornucopia design, in brown, using matt varnish panels to give additional contrast to the bordering on the label-edge and around the yellow-printed main titling. The three-dimensional effect has been heightened by the use of a low-relief die, which also highlights the fleur-de-lys Arms.

1980s, 120mm × 95mm, landscape

LABEL 7

The GRAND VIN DU CHÂTEAU PHÉLAN SÉGUR, a high-quality red 'bottled on the estate', comes from the St-Estèphe AOC. The label is to be commended for its simplicity, though this specimen lacks the details of vintage date, bottle capacity and alcoholic strength that will add complication. The use of a monogram is comparatively unusual.

The 'laid' paper is yellow, single-sided with a pasted back. Printing in red and black has been undertaken by offset lithography.

1980s, 125mm × 95mm, portrait.

LABEL 8

This expansive, elegant, traditionally designed label once graced a large (1·5 litre) bottle of POL DRAVIÈRE extra-dry ('Brut') champagne marketed by Champalud, a co-operative working in Ludes in the Département de Marne (see illustration, page 25).

Printed on a what seems to be a thin paper-like plastic sheet, this is basically two-colour lithography in black and gold. The grey—including the horizontal lines designed to give the appearance of laid paper—has been made simply by employing a tint of black.

Late 1990s/early 2000s, 149·5mm × 100mm, landscape.

LABEL 9

La croix s. vincent, a red wine bottled by l'Union Saint-Vincent of St-Vincent-de-Pertinas in the Gironde (Bordeaux aoc), has little pretence to great-estate status. However, the understated style of its label, doubtless adopted to suggest good quality, succeeds surprisingly well in its aims even though the border is a pencil drawing instead of the engraving that would have graced an earlier epoch.

The label has been printed by offset lithography in greyish-brown ink on white 'laid' stock, with the striations running vertically. The brand-name, the vintage and bordeaux *have been added in dark green to what is otherwise essentially a label-blank.*

2007 vintage, 110mm × 86mm, landscape

LABEL 10

The label of CHÂTEAU PALMER, a red wine bottled 'at the château' in the AOC community of Margaux in the Médoc, in the Bordeaux region, is exceptionally simple. The illustration—simple and strong, flanked by vines, surmounting a decorative scroll—is ideally suited to the manufacturing process described below.

The label has simply been stamped in gold foil on black-printed white paper, with sufficient pressure to give the hint of a three-dimensional image. The rounded corners are achieved by die-cutting. Labels of other vintages may have borders with corners of a different radius to the label-edges, which looks very odd; square labels without the bordering could be more effective.

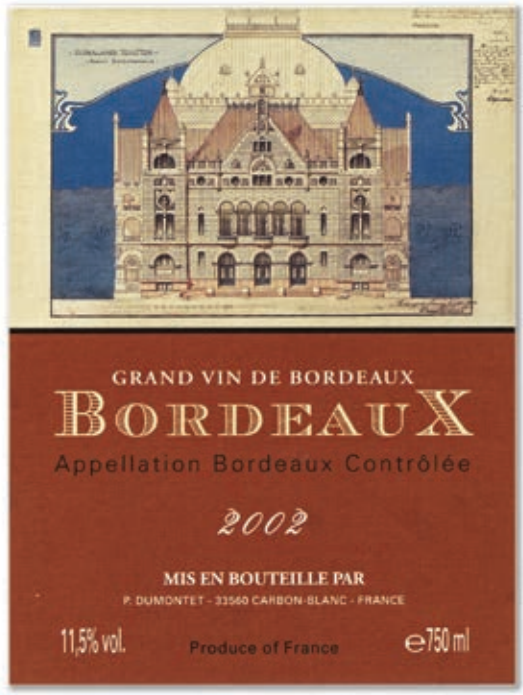
1979 vintage, 117mm × 90mm, landscape

LABEL 11

The label of this CHÂTEAU DE POMMARD, a red wine bottled 'on the estate' in Pommard AOC (Côtes d'Or), re-creates an historical style. Its simplicity belies the care with which it has been conceived—note the baroque execution of the cartouche and the antique quality of the lettering, with swash capitals on the *Appellation* identifier. Bottle capacity and the alcoholic content are subtly enveloped by scrollwork.

The label, on textured oatmeal-colour paper, has three-dimensional qualities. Close inspection suggests letterpress, but also that two line blocks have been used, one for the dark-brown cartouche and the other for the red-brown titling. The whole has then been die-cut.

1988 vintage, 108mm × 99mm, landscape



LABEL 12

The label of this Grand Vin de Bordeaux, bottled by Dumontet of Carbon-Blanc, is remarkable not for its content—standard Bordeaux AOC red wine—but for the illustration: architect Onni Tarjanne's drawing of the *Suomen Kansallisteatteri*, the state theatre erected in Helsinki in 1902. The wine was supplied to commemorate its centenary.

The label is good-quality single-side coated stock, printed by four-colour offset lithography.

2002 vintage, 120mm × 90mm, portrait.

LABEL 13

The label of a Saint-Estèphe AOC red wine, selected and bottled by a co-operative, les Producteurs Réunis ('United Producers') of Saint-Estèphe in the Gironde.

The label is single-side coated white stock, printed by offset lithography. The base colour, a pale beige, is made of dots from the red and blue plates, with additions in black (the drawing of the church, most of the wording) and gold (the lines, PRODUCE OF FRANCE, *and the château logo).*

1986 vintage, 140mm × 90mm, portrait.

LABEL 14

The label of DOMAINE L'ABBAYE SAINTE-RADEGONDE, a white wine from Muscadet Sèvre et Maine AOC, reveals that the contents of the bottle have been allowed to mature 'on their lees' (*sur lie*). It also names the bottler 'at the domaine': Jean Guilbeault of Le Loroux Bottereau in Loire-Atlantique.

Printed in green and black by offset lithography, the effect of this circular label is compromised by poor typography: particularly the main titling, where the initial letters lie uneasily against the remainder. The circular shape was pre-cut into self-adhesive sheets with protective backing.

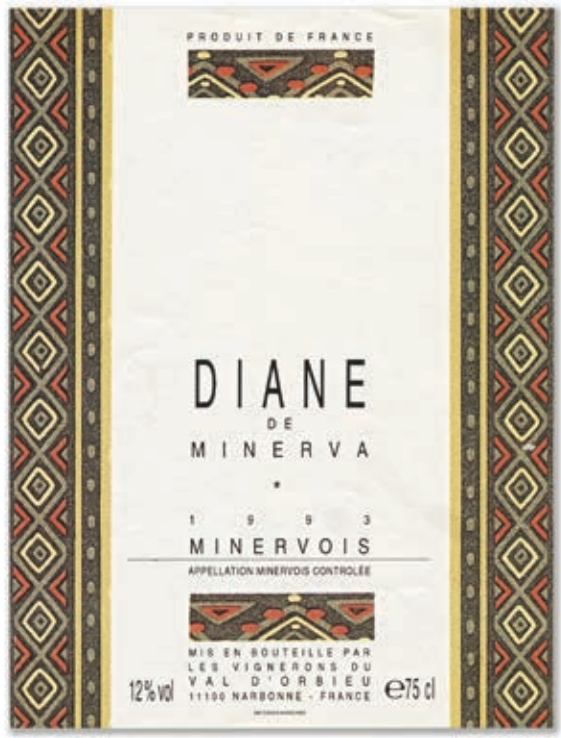
1993 vintage, 120mm diameter, circular

LABEL 15

This unusual label graced a red Côtes du Rhône wine from the Chusclan AOC, destined for the *Compagnons dépanneurs* (a society of mechanics and repairmen). Though clearly marked as a product of France, bottling was undertaken in Belgium by Delhaize Le Lion. Illustrations of the 'tools of the trade' are commonly associated with wine supplied to meetings of trade- or business groups.

Matt-coat white paper, printed on one side by offset lithography, in darkish cream, provides a ground for the maroon panel. Excepting the title and the vintage, which are reversed out of the colour-block, the wording has been overprinted in black. The darker outline of the tools arises from a combination of maroon and a tint of the black.

2001 vintage, 120mm × 89mm, landscape



LABEL 16

The label of DIANE DE MINERVA, a red wine from Minervois AOC, relies on repetition of the decorative elements in the border to achieve a pleasing symmetry. Arrangement of the typematter *en bloc*, and precise placement of bottle capacity and alcoholic strength testify to the care with which the label has been created.

The label is good-quality single-side coated stock, printed by four-colour offset lithography.

1993 vintage, 120mm × 90mm, portrait.

LABEL 17

La clef d'or was a simple table wine, 'selected from amongst the best [grape] varieties' by Dereix of Dignac in the Charente—though the comparatively low alcoholic strength weakens the claim). Printed in Angoulême, the label was clearly intended for the mass-market, but is well executed—particularly the key-and-grapes illustration.

Very crisply printed in black and orange on white single-sided paper. The absence of pressure suggests conventional lithography.

1950s? 120mm × 90mm, portrait.

LABEL 18

This SAINT-AMOUR red wine bottled by Maison Thorin was selected as 'worthy of particular recommendation' by the *Grumeurs de la Confrérie des Compagnons de Beaujolais* (one of more than two hundred Fellowships of Bacchus in France) founded in 1948 by the amalgamation of two smaller societies. The mock-mediaevalism, unconvincing typographically, is typical of labels of this class; the simulated seal bears the Arms of the Compagnons du Beaujolais.

White paper, printed on one side by four-colour offset lithography. The cream background is a tint of the colours. Detailing on the arcaded decoration, 'Confrérie' and 'des Compagnons…du Beaujolais' have all been added in a separate run of gold.

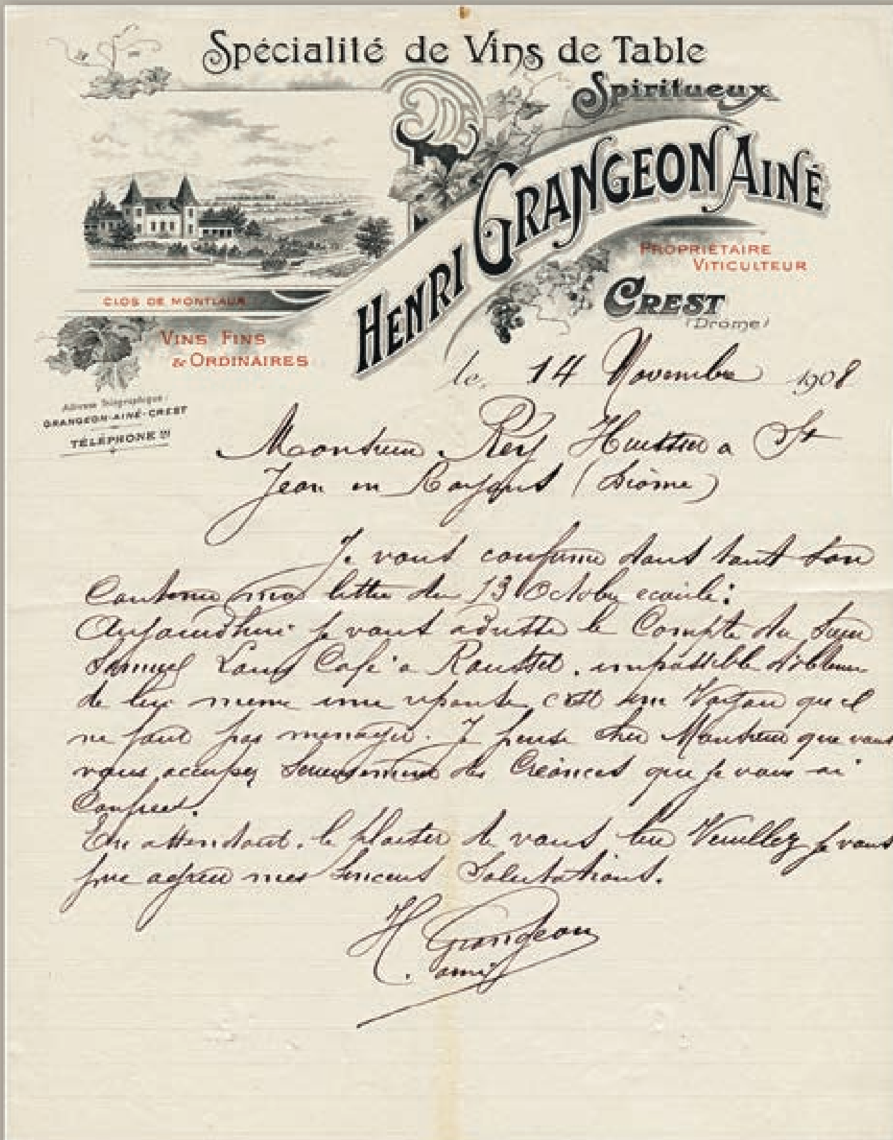
1980s/1990s, 120mm × 90mm, landscape

LABEL 19

This Burgundy, GRANDE RÉSERVE DE L'HERMITIÈRE, claims to have been selected by the Comte de la Rochefoucauld and bears a representation of the seventeenth-century family Arms on a seal. However, the shield should have been barred alternately silver and blue. The topmost of the three red chevrons should be flat-topped to expose the first silver bar in its entirety, and the mermaid in the crest should not only have two tails but be shown looking into a mirror carried in her right hand—difficult, but not impossible to convey.

The label seems to have been printed partly by conventional lithography in gold, black, red and blue-grey (the illustrative material) before the type excepting MARQUE DÉPOSÉE *was added by letterpress.*

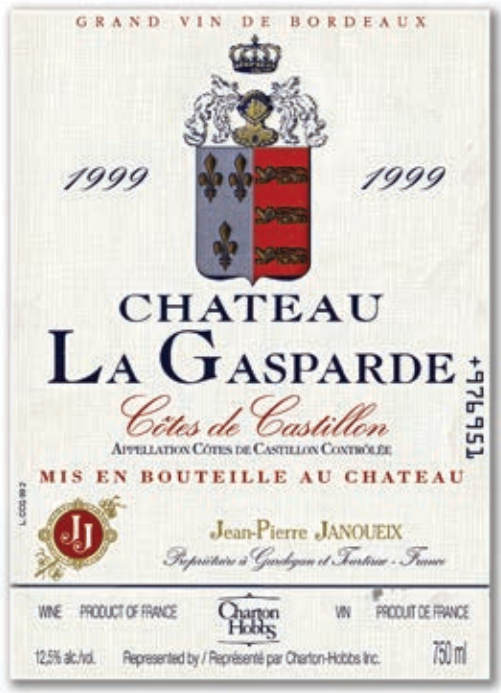
1955 vintage (dated by the separate collar),
130mm × 92mm, landscape.



Spécialité de Vins de Table
Spiritueux
HENRI GRANGEON AINÉ
PROPRIÉTAIRE VITICULTEUR
CREST (Drome)
CLOS DE MONTLAUR
VINS FINS & ORDINAIRES
Adresse Télégraphique: GRANGEON-AINÉ-CREST
TÉLÉPHONE

le 14 Novembre 1908

Sent in 1908 by Henri Grangeon Aîné ('the elder') of Crest in the Département de Drôme, this typifies ephemera dating from the years immediately prior to the First World War. Letterheads can provide evidence of the location of individual vineyards, and identify their products. However, the tendency of Propriétaires and Négociants to exaggerate should always be borne in mind when assessing advertising material!



LABEL 20

Château la gasparde, in Côtes de Castillon aoc, now owned by Joseph Janoueix, makes fine red wines. The label mixes heraldry with too many types of lettering to convince; enlarged initial letters rarely succeed if they share the base-line, especially when they are noticeably bolder than their companions.

Good-quality creamish linen-finish paper has been printed in blue, red, black and gold. An embossing die gives height to the crown, the helmet and the charges on the shield.

1999 vintage, 125mm × 90mm, portrait.

LABEL 21

Despite the stern warning—'this wine is not a medicine'—QUINA-GUILLOT was advertised by Guillot of Blanzac in the Charente as an apéritif, tonic and pick-me-up. It consisted largely of wine, which was unlikely to be the 'Grand Cru' claimed on the label, and additives such as *quinquina* (quinine). This created a palatable drink with anti-malarial qualities, which were particularly beneficial in the French colonies.

The work of Max Sidaine of Bordeaux, this is a two-colour lithograph.

possibly 1920s, 110mm × 92mm, portrait.

LABEL 22

'Golden budgerigar' fortified white dessert wine was marketed by Grands Chais Saint-Michel of Bordeaux. The title suggests no great quality, supported by the recommendation that 'this wine should be drunk very fresh', and by the absence of quality-control marks.

The label has been varnished, masking the printing characteristics. It seems to have been a blank printed by four-colour letterpress, overprinted in black (description and address) and red (the bottom line).

possibly 1950s, 130mm × 90mm, portrait.

LABEL 23

Vin de colombo, though marketed in France, was cheap Spanish red wine mixed with herbs and probably one or two 'mystery ingredients' to serve as a stomach tonic. The restrictions on the manufacture and distribution of wine introduced in the mid 1930s put an end to many a 'wine' in which grape-content was minimal.

Printed slightly out of register, in black and pale blue. Spotting in the background and the absence of pressure suggests lithography.

1930s, 113mm × 77mm, portrait.

LABEL 24

VIN DE VIANDE, 'meat wine', was promoted by Laboratoires Spécialisés pour Vins Médicamenteux of Frontignan for its restorative properties. It usually consisted of low-grade wine, white or red, mixed with additives such as 'muscle juices of meat', blood orange, cola and small amounts of *quinquina* (quinine). The label draws attention to its benefits as a remedy for 'exhaustion, weakness of the blood and the nerves'.

Lithographed in Bordeaux, the label is orange, red and black

1930s? 134mm × 99mm, portrait.

LABEL 25

Domaine be la bigarrière was a rosé wine bottled by Claude Boureau of Saint-Martin-le-Beau in the Touraine aoc. The label shows that Propriétaire Boureau believed his name to be more important than that of his *vignoble*, even though claiming to have been personally responsible for harvesting the grapes. The wine was *Demi-sec*, 'medium dry'; 'Traditional Method' shows that it was also sparkling.

The label has been printed on white paper by offset lithography, in black and red. Detailing—some of the lettering, the base-strip, and parts of the logo—have been added in gold. The raised semi-circle around val de loire *has been achieved by die-cutting.*

c. 1980, 120mm × 95mm, landscape

LABEL 26

The label of this red wine bottled by Société Vinicole de Saint-Estèphe (a co-operative working in Saint-Estèphe AOC in the Bordeaux region) typifies the ease with which 'personalisation' could be achieved. Wines were supplied by intermediaries to the orders of individual cafés, restaurants, bars and societies of all kinds. Quantities could range from very small (these labels usually prove to be overprinted blanks) to sizeable corporate contracts.

The label, an undistinguished design in two-colour offset lithography on cream 'laid' stock, is remarkable more for association with the world-renowned Maxim's of Paris than any other qualities. The illustration is a poor attempt to copy the style of nineteenth-century engraving.

1970s, 120mm × 89mm, landscape

LABEL 27

The label of this red Grand Vin des Côtes du Rhône, from DOMAINE DE LA MAURELLE in the Gigondas AOC, shows that the wine was bottled by Vignerons de Vacqueyras 'at the property'. Using paper-colour to highlight the walls of the house and tinting the red lettering to highlight the roof-tiles are clever ways of economising, but simultaneously improving the design. There are, however, too many styles of lettering and too much clutter at the bottom of the label.

The label is printed in a pale olive-green on cream laid stock, overprinted in black and red, with gold lining used to highlight the black GIGONDAS *title.*

2001 vintage, 120mm × 90mm, landscape

LABEL 28

The labels of Champagne bottles are often exceptionally decorative, reflecting a high-status market in which virtually any printing technique will be used if it achieves the desired combination of elegance and exclusivity. This LACROIX example is typical, relying on rich colours and foil-stamping to catch the eye—especially when wrapped around a bottle.

The label is basically four-colour offset lithography on white single-sided glossy paper. The base was an overall block of pale ochre, overprinted with a brown cartouche and border; a tint of the brown created the sunburst rays. A black plate provided the 'leather-look' detail on the cartouche body, and a low-lustre gold ink was used for the edging and the titling (excepting the vintage). Foil stamping created the floral decoration and the crowned initial.

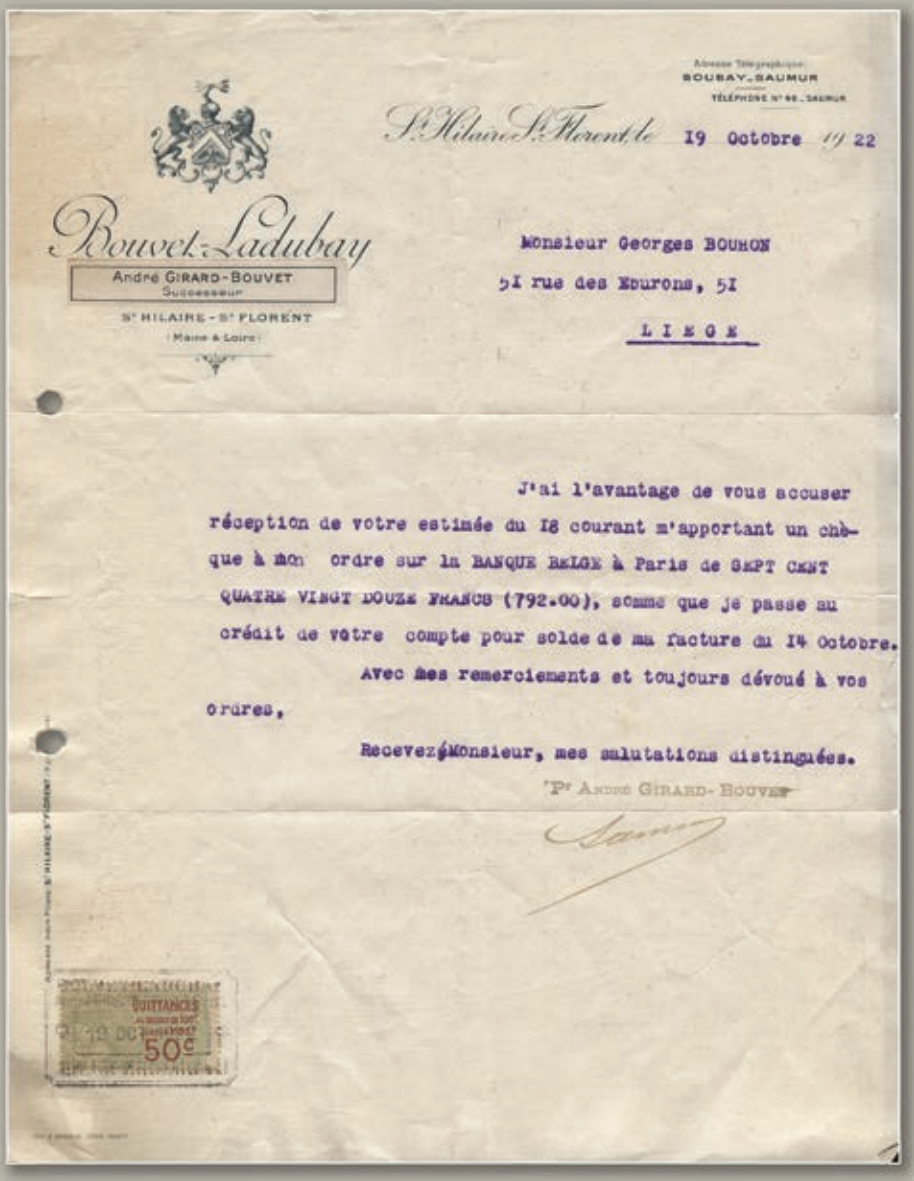
1990 vintage, 150mm × 100mm, landscape

LABEL 29

One of the finest of the fine wines produced in Saint-Émilion, CHÂTEAU CHEVAL BLANC (one of only two 'A'-status Premier Grand Cru Classé estates in the *Appellation*) is customarily marked with an unusually simple label. The design emphasises the prize medals (not specifically identified) and the status of the vineyard. It would be marginally improved by centering 'Mis en bouteille...' and placing '12,5% BY VOL.' in the bottom-left corner.

The label is printed by offset lithography in dark brown (text and medallions) and red ('Mis en bouteille au Château' only) on a glossy white self-adhesive blank.

1997 vintage, 120mm × 95·5mm, landscape.



Adresse Télégraphique
BOURAY-SAUMUR
TÉLÉPHONE N° 40 - SAUMUR

St Hilaire St Florent le 19 Octobre 1922

Bouvet-Ladubay

André GIRARD-BOUVET
Successeur

St HILAIRE - St FLORENT
(Maine & Loire)

Monsieur Georges BOUHON
51 rue des Mburons, 51
LIEGE

J'ai l'avantage de vous accuser réception de votre estimée du 18 courant m'apportant un chèque à mon ordre sur la BANQUE BELGE à Paris de SEPT CENT QUATRE VINGT DOUZE FRANCS (792.00), somme que je passe au crédit de votre compte pour solde de ma facture du 14 Octobre.

Avec mes remerciements et toujours dévoué à vos ordres,

Recevez Monsieur, mes salutations distinguées.

P^r André GIRARD-BOUVET

QUITTANCES
50c

A letter sent to in 1922 to a Belgian négociant by Bouvet-Ladubay, at a time when the business was owned by André Girard-Bouvet (son-in-law of Étienne Bouvet-Ladubay). Note that the Arms on the letterheading are duplicated on the bottle-label shown on the next page. However, ownership of Bouvet-Ladubay, badly hit by the Great Depression, passed to Justin-Marcel Monmousseau in 1932,

LABEL 30

Clearly intended for the English-speaking markets, this Bouvet-Ladubay 'Still Anjou' white wine was sold in a bottle with the unusual capacity of 30 fl.oz (1½ pints imperial measure), or 85cl. The colours of the Arms are something of a simplification, as, according to the blazon, the supporting lions should have been silver. The pattern of hatching on the letterhead version (left) suggests that the shield was actually blue above the gold chevron, but red below.

The label is a straightforward letterpress production on a cream laid paper, in four colours: gold, blue, red and black.

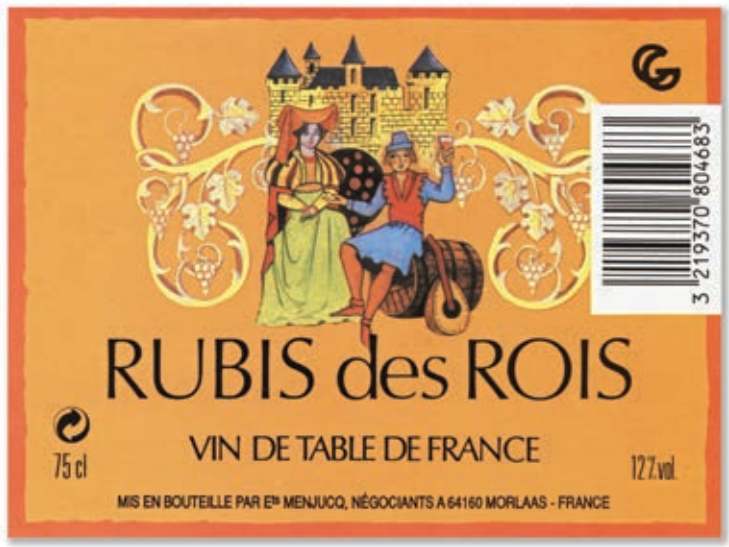
1930 vintage, 114mm × 90mm, landscape.

LABEL 31

The product of an estate in Tallone, in Corsica, CHÂTEAU DE PIANICCIA is an uncomplicated red wine from the 'Vin de Corse' Appellation.

The label has been printed by offset lithography in black, red and gold on single-sided paper with a printed pale-cream surface. The texture seen in the illustration has arisen simply by removing the label from a bottle.

1986 vintage, 119·5mm × 100mm, portrait.

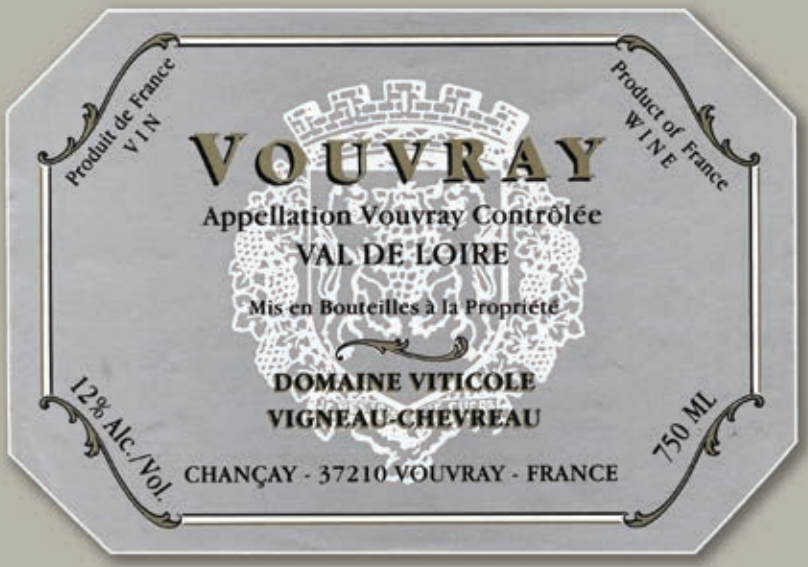


LABEL 32

The label of RUBIS DES ROIS ('ruby of the kings'), a red Vin de Table promoted by a distributor, Établissements Menjucq of Morlaas, has an attractive illustration and a symmetrical layout that is horribly compromised by the bar code—particularly where it cuts into the decorative swags on the right side. The design would have looked so much better if it had been orientated vertically, with the bar-code centred at the base!

The label has been printed by conventional four-colour offset lithography on single-sided glossy white paper.

1990s, 120mm × 90mm, landscape.



Neither of these examples is particularly inspiring. There is nothing wrong with placing a 'ghost image' behind the main title or illustration, but it must be pale enough not to interfere with legibility; the grey of the Chevreau label is much too dark for its purpose. The Le Mont label has the potential to be good design, but the illustration is too dense for the overprints to be read easily. This is particularly true of the diagonal line reading MIS EN BOUTEILLE À LA PROPRIÉTÉ.

LABEL 33

This was applied to a *Primeur*, a wine, red in this instance, produced so soon after the grapes had been harvested that the year of vintage and the year of sale were the same. The need to distribute these wines as quickly as possible, often in the guise of a race, usually leads to packaging which is designed to catch the eye of prospective purchasers. Understandably, bright and cheerful designs usually predominate.

The label has been printed by four-colour process offset lithography on glossy white single-sided paper, possibly as a blank, and then overprinted in a pink-red. The lack of dots in PRIMEUR *shows that the word was printed in a separately-mixed individual colour.*

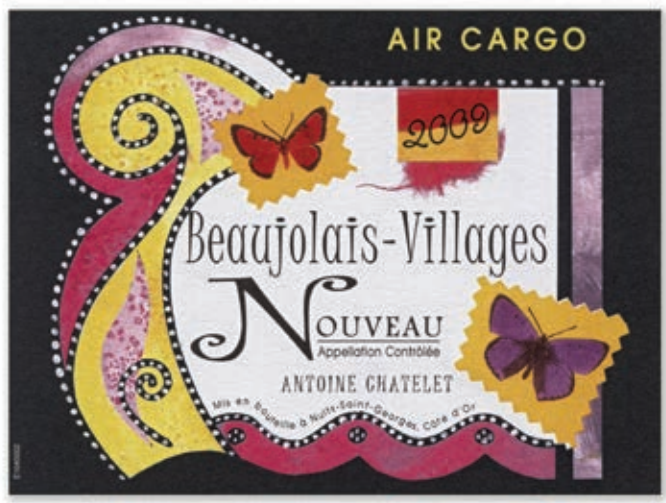
1994 vintage, 114mm × 90mm, landscape.

LABEL 34

Identifying AOC Pomerol red wine from the Janoueix estate, intended for export to North America, this CHÂTEAU LA CROIX label (overladen at the base with 'additional information') bows to tradition: a coat of Arms, a château, and black-letter titling.

Printed by offset lithography on white glossy single-sided stock.

1989 vintage, 161·5mm × 110·5mm, portrait.

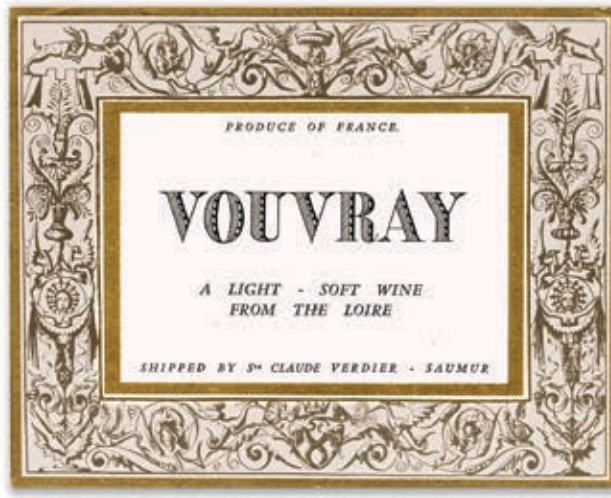


LABEL 35

Some of the most interesting labels are associated with Beaujolais and BEAUJOLAIS-VILLAGES NOUVEAU, released on the third Thursday of November to a fanfare. Consignments are then rushed all over the world (hence the AIR CARGO on this label) in a quest to be 'first on the table'. This frantic publicity-conscious campaign is reflected in the labels: brash, gaudy, colourful…never classically understated! But they are among the most interesting designs of all, ranging from Toulouse-Lautrec posters in miniature to abstract flowers. This Chatelet version is typical of the genre.

The label is printed by four-colour process offset lithography. The absence of confirmation of alcoholic strength and bottle capacity suggests either that it is a blank awaiting overprinting or that a secondary label was also used.

2009 vintage, 120mm × 90mm, landscape

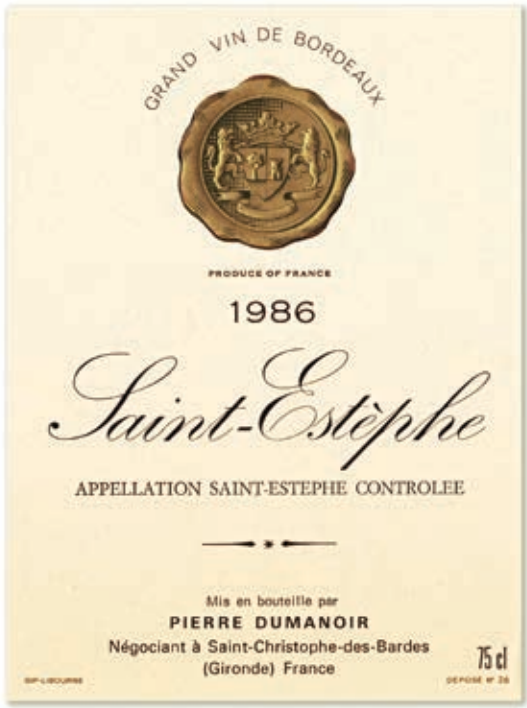


LABEL 36

This VOUVRAY label offers little information other than a general description of the contents of the bottle, the name of the shipper—Verdier of Saumur—and an acknowledgement that it was produced in France. Consequently, this is an obvious representative of Vins de Table, the lowest grade of *Appellation*, intended for export to Britain.

The single-sided paper is whitish-cream, overprinted in two shades of grey (creating the decorated border), black for the wording, and gold for the inner and outer bordering. The absence of any visible pressure-marks and the use of the two greys (no dot-screen has been employed) suggest that this is a lithograph. But the date is hard to gauge!

Possibly late 1950s/early 1960s, 114mm × 90mm, landscape.



LABEL 37

This Grand Vin de Bordeaux, emanating from St-Estèphe AOC in the Médoc, was red. The label records the name of the bottler but not a producing estate, which suggests less than top class. Specifying alcohol content did not become obligatory until May 1988.

The label is good-quality single-side coated stock, lithographed in pale cream with a black letterpress overprint. The metallic gold medallion relies on an embossing die to give a three-dimensional effect.

1986, 120mm × 90mm, portrait.

THE APPELLATIONS

Brief details of individual *Appellation* within the AOC/AOP system follow. They seek only to give dates of establishment and important changes in name, which could help to date an individual label. Of course, a major difficulty lies in the many ways in which information can be presented. Sources can include *sous-régions*, *communes d'origine*, *locales* and sometimes *lieu-dits*, even though a few of them lack independent AOC/AOP status; other sources fail to draw consistent geographical distinctions. However, visits to the highly informative website *www.vinsvignesvignerons.com* usually resolved my problems.

Appellations have been grouped on the basis of established geography, generally conforming with French official regions. However, several of the smaller districts have been considered together (e.g., Bugey and Savoie); the solitary Lorraine AOC has been grouped with those of Alsace as 'Alsace-Lorraine'; and COTEAUX LYONNAIS is included with the *Appellations* of Beaujolais.

The regional structure which passed into law on 2nd March 1982, though modified only in detail prior to 2010, was subjected to a wide-ranging review in 2014. This reduced 27 regions to only eighteen, which meant that the metropolitan regions (those within the borders of France) shrank in number from 22 to thirteen.

The plan was implemented on 1st January 2016, leading, controversially, to the disappearance of several well-established names. Each new region was given an 'interim name', but could choose an alternative as long as this could be confirmed by the Conseil d'État not later than 30th September 2016.

Districts such as Île-de-France, Bretagne and Pays de la Loire retained their original names—but elsewhere, for example, Aquitaine, Limousin and Poitou-Charente regrouped as 'Nouvelle-Aquitaine'; Alsace, Lorraine and Champagne-Ardenne became 'Grand Est'; Languedoc and Roussillon were amalgamated with Midi-Pyrénées as 'Occitanie'; and Nord, Pas de Calais and Picardie are now 'Hauts-de-France'. Generally, however, these changes have yet to impact on any of the major French wine-producing districts, which retain their traditional delineators.


PARIS 1903
REIMS 1903
CHARLEROI 1911
LIÈGE 1905
Châteauneuf-du-Pape
APPELLATION CONTROLÉE


THE FRENCH WINE REGIONS
Champagne
Lorraine
Alsace
Val de Loire
Bourgogne
Jura
Savoie et Bugey
Bordeaux
Vallée du Rhône
Sud-Ouest
Provence
Corse
Languedoc-Roussillon

ALSACE-LORRAINE

Officially part of Germany from 1871 to 1919, this region has always made predominantly white wine from (among others) Riesling, Gewürztraminer, Pinot blanc and Pinot gris grapes; less-common reds are based on Pinot noir. It is the most easterly of the French wine-making districts.

ALSACE, created in 1962*
or "Vin d'Alsace"; may be labelled optionally with the cépage, restricted to Chasselas, Gewürztraminer, Muscat, Klevener, Klevener de Heiligenstein, Pinot blanc, Pinot gris, Riesling and Sylvaner (for white wine), or Pinot noir (red wine); and also optionally with the name of the sous-région, commune or locale
ALSACE EDELSWICKER, created in 1962
ALSACE GENTIL, created in 1962
ALSACE GRAND CRU, created in 1975
must be accompanied by the name of one of the 51 individual 'Terroirs', each of which was recognised as an Appellation in 2011
CRÉMANT D'ALSACE, created in 1976
CÔTES DE TOUL, created in 1998
the only AOC in Lorraine, sometimes listed as part of the Eastern Region (Région Est)

* Some sources list the foundation date of the Alsace AOC as 1945; it is suspected, therefore, that 1962 marks a substantial reorganisation of the region.

BEAUJOLAIS

Sometimes considered to be part of Bourgogne, Beaujolais occupies the district between Bourgogne to the north and Lyon to the south. Though white and rosé wines are made, Beaujolais is best known for reds made from the Gamay grape. These include 'Beaujolais Nouveau' bottled to be drunk very young.

Note: in 2009, with the exceptions of 'Beaujolais' and 'Beaujolais-Villages', all these appellations were reduced to the status of 'appellations communales', to be appended to either of the remaining two; CRU DE BEAUJOLAIS *can also be used optionally*

BEAUJOLAIS, created in 1937
may be optionally accompanied by the name of the "commune d'origine".
BEAUJOLAIS-VILLAGES, created in 1937
BROUILLY, created in 1938
CHÉNAS, created in 1936
CHIROUBLES, created in 1936
COTEAUX DU LYONNAIS, created in 1984
now generally considered as part of the Lyonnais region
CÔTE DE BROUILLY, created in 1938
FLEURIE, created in 1936
JULIÉNAS, created in 1938
MORGON, created in 1936
MOULIN À VENT, created in 1936
RÉGNIÉ, created in 1988
SAINT-AMOUR, created in 1946

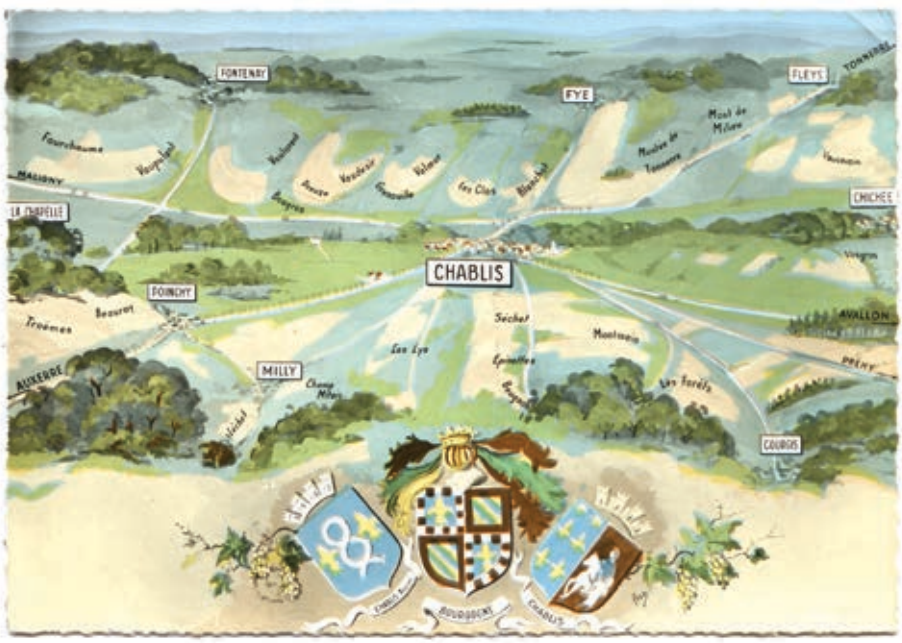
BORDEAUX

This district has long been famous for its red wines (including 'claret'), though a few whites, including the world-renowned sweet Sauternes, are also made. Red Bordeaux wines are usually blended principally from Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc; whites are generally based on Sémillon and Sauvignon blanc.

BARSAC, created in 1936
BLAYE, created in 1936
BORDEAUX, created in 1936
BORDEAUX CLAIRET, created in 1936
BORDEAUX CÔTES DE FRANCS, created in 1936
BORDEAUX HAUT-BENAUGE, created in 1936
BORDEAUX SUPÉRIEUR, created in 1943
CADILLAC, created in 1973
CANON FRONSAC, created in 1964
formerly known as 'Côtes Canon Fronsac' (q.v.)
CÉRONS, created in 1936
CÔTES DE BLAYE, created in 1995
formerly part of 'Blaye'
CÔTES DE BORDEAUX, created in 2009
preceded by 'location géographique': Blaye, Cadillac, Castillon or Francs

CÔTES DE BORDEAUX SAINT-MACAIRE, created in 1937
CÔTES DE BOURG, created in 1936 (red wine), 1941 (white wine)
also known simply as 'Bourg' or 'Bourgeais'
CÔTES CANON FRONSAC, created in 1939
became 'Canon Fronsac' (q.v.)
CÔTES DE CASTILLON, created in 1989
CÔTES DE FRONSAC, created in 1937
became 'Fronsac' (q.v.)
CRÉMANT DE BORDEAUX, created in 1990
ENTRE-DEUX-MERS, created in 1937
ENTRE-DEUX-MERS—HAUT-BENAUGE, created in 1937
FRONSAC, created in 1976
formerly 'Côtes de Fronsac' (q.v.)
GRAVES, created in 1937
GRAVES SUPÉRIEURES, created in 1937
GRAVES DE VAYRES, created in 1937
HAUT-MÉDOC, created in 1936
LALANDE-DE-POMEROL, created in 1936
LISTRAC, created in 1957
became 'Listrac-Médoc'
LISTRAC—MÉDOC, created in 1986
formerly 'Listrac'
LOUPIAC, created in 1936
LUSSAC—SAINT-ÉMILION, created in 1936
MARGAUX, created in 1954
MÉDOC, created in 1936
MONTAGNE—SAINT-ÉMILION, created in 1936
MOULIS, created in 1938
also known as 'Moulis-en-Médoc'
NÉAC, created in 1936
PAUILLAC, created in 1936
PESSAC—LÉOGNAN, created in 1987;
formerly part of Graves
POMEROL, created in 1936
PREMIÈRES CÔTES DE BLAYE, created in 1994
formerly part of Blaye; replaced in 2009 by 'Blaye—Cotes de Bordeaux'

PREMIÈRES CÔTES DE BORDEAUX, created in 1937
may be optionally accompanied by the name of the "commune d'origine";
replaced in 2009 by 'Cotes de Bordeaux' (q.v.)
PUISSEGUIN SAINT-ÉMILION, created in 1936
SAINT-ÉMILION, created in 1936
SAINT-ÉMILION GRAND CRU, created in 1954
SAINT-ESTÈPHE, created in 1936
SAINT-GEORGES SAINT-ÉMILION, created in 1936
SAINT-JULIEN, created in 1936
SAINTE-CROIX-DU-MONT, created in 1936
SAINTE-FOY-BORDEAUX, created in 1937
SAUTERNES, created in 1936



Above: *wine-district maps in the form of decorative postcards provided a simple and inexpensive way of generating publicity, and gave printers another way of making money from the wine business. This card showing the Chablis district of Bourgogne, Topographie de Vignoble Chablisien', postmarked 1965, was the work of 'CIM'–Combier Imprimeur, Mâcon.*

BOURGOGNE (BURGUNDY)

Burgundy has the greatest number of individual AOC/AOP divisions in France, making approximately equal quantities of white wine, from Chardonnay and more rarely seen Aligoté grapes, and red wine from Pinor noir. Smaller amounts of rosé and sparkling wine are also made.

AUXEY–DURESSES, created in 1970
BÂTARD-MONTRACHET, created in 1937
BEAUNE, created in 1936
BIENVENUES–BÂTARD-MONTRACHET, created in 1937
BLAGNY, created in 1970
may be accompanied by CÔTE DE BEAUNE
BONNES-MARES, created in 1936
BOURGOGNE, created in 1937
BOURGOGNE ALIGOTÉ, created in 1937
BOURGOGNE ALIGOTÉ DE BOUZERON, 1979
now 'Bouzeron' (q.v.)
BOURGOGNE CHITRY, created in 1937
BOURGOGNE CLAIRET, created in 1937
optionally followed by the name of the sub-region, commune d'origine, climat or lieu-dit
BOURGOGNE CÔTE CHALONNAISE, created in 1937
BOURGOGNE COULANGES-LA-VINEUSE, created in 1937
BOURGOGNE CÔTE SAINT-JACQUES, created in 1937
BOURGOGNE CÔTES D'AUXERRE, created in 1937
BOURGOGNE CÔTES DU COUCHOIS, created in 1937
BOURGOGNE EPINEUIL, created in 1937

BOURGOGNE GRAND ORDINAIRE, created in 1937
may be accompanied by CÔTE DE BEAUNE; *replaced in 2011 by 'Coteaux Bouguignons'*
BOURGOGNE HAUTES–CÔTES DE BEAUNE, created in 1937
BOURGOGNE HAUTES–CÔTES DE NUITS, created in 1937
BOURGOGNE IRANCY, created in 1937
became 'Irancy' (q.v.)
BOURGOGNE LA CHAPELLE NOTRE-DAME, created in 1937
BOURGOGNE LE CHAPITRE, created in 1937
BOURGOGNE MONTRECUL, created in 1937
BOURGOGNE MOUSSEUX, created in 1943
BOURGOGNE ORDINAIRE, created in 1937
may be accompanied by CÔTE DE BEAUNE; *replaced in 2011 by 'Coteaux Bouguignons'*
BOURGOGNE ROSÉ, created in 1937
can be optionally followed by the name of the sub-region, commune d'origine, climat or lieu-dit
BOURGOGNE PASSE-TOUT-GRAINS, created in 1937
BOURGOGNE–TONNERRE, created in 1937
became 'Tonnerre' (q.v.) in 2006
BOURGOGNE VÉZELAY, created in 1937
BOUZERON, created in 1998
formerly 'Bourgogne aligoté de Bouzeron'
CHABLIS, created in 1938
CHABLIS GRAND CRU, created in 1938
followed by the name of the climat d'origine
CHABLIS PREMIER CRU, created in 1938
followed by the name of the climat d'origine and also sometimes by PREMIER CRU CHAMBERTIN, created in 1937
CHAMBERTIN–CLOS-DE-BÈZE, created in 1937
CHAMBOLLE–MUSIGNY, created in 1936
CHAPELLE-CHAMBERTIN, created in 1937
CHARLEMAGNE, created in 1937
CHARMES–CHAMBERTIN, created in 1937
CHASSAGNE–MONTRACHET, created in 1970
may be accompanied by CÔTE DE BEAUNE

CHEVALIER-MONTRACHET, created in 1937
CHOREY-LES-BEAUNE, created in 1970
may be accompanied by CÔTE DE BEAUNE
CLOS DES LAMBRAYS, created in 1981
confined to a Premier Cru vineyard once in 'Morey-Saint-Denis'
CLOS DE LA ROCHE, created in 1936
CLOS SAINT-DENIS, created in 1936
CLOS DE TART, created in 1939
CLOS [DE] VOUGEOT, created in 1937
CORTON, created in 1937
preceded by any of the 25 current climats (or dénominations géographique)
CORTON–CHARLEMAGNE, created in 1937
COTEAUX BOURGUIGNONS, created in 2011
formerly 'Bourgogne Grand Ordinaire' and 'Bourgogne Ordinaire'
COTEAUX DE LYONNAIS, created in 1984
CÔTE DE BEAUNE, created in 1970
CÔTE DE BEAUNE VILLAGES, created in 1970
CÔTE DE NUITS VILLAGES, created in 1964
CÔTES DU FOREZ, created in 2000
CRÉMANT DE BOURGOGNE, created in 1975
CRIOTS–BÂTARD-MONTRACHET, created in 1939
ÉCHEZEAUX, created in 1937
FIXIN, created in 1936
GEVREY–CHAMBERTIN, created in 1936
GIVRY, created in 1946
GIVRY PREMIER CRU, created in 1946
GRANDS-ÉCHEZEAUX, created in 1936
GRIOTTE–CHAMBERTIN, created in 1937
IRANCY, created in 1999
formerly 'Bourgogne Irancy' (q.v.)
LADOIX, created in 1970
may be accompanied by CÔTE DE BEAUNE
LA GRANDE RUE, created in 1992 (some sources give 1936)
LA ROMANÉE, created in 1936
LA TÂCHE, created in 1936
LATRICIÈRES–CHAMBERTIN, created in 1937

MÂCON, created in 1937
also known as 'Pinot-Chardonnay-Mâcon'; either name can be optionally followed by the name of the commune d'origine
MÂCON VILLAGES, created in 1937
MARANGES, created in 1989
followed by the name of the climat d'origine and/or PREMIER CRU;
may also be accompanied by CÔTE DE BEAUNE
MARSANNAY, created in 1987
MAZIS–CHAMBERTIN, created in 1937
MAZOYÈRES–CHAMBERTIN, created in 1937
MERCUREY, created in 1936
MERCUREY PREMIER CRU, created in 1936
MEURSAULT, created in 1970
may be accompanied by CÔTE DE BEAUNE
MONTAGNY, created in 1936
MONTAGNY PREMIER CRU, created in 1936
MONTHELIE, created in 1970
may be accompanied by CÔTE DE BEAUNE
MONTRACHET, created in 1937
MOREY-SAINT-DENIS, created in 1936
MUSIGNY, created in 1936
NUITS-SAINT-GEORGES, created in 1972
PERNAND–VERGELESSES, created in 1970
may be accompanied by CÔTE DE BEAUNE
PETIT CHABLIS, created in 1944
may be followed by the name of the commune d'origine
POMMARD, created in 1936
POUILLY–FUISSÉ, created in 1936
POUILLY–LOCHÉ, created in 1940
POUILLY–VINZELLES, created in 1940
PULIGNY–MONTRACHET, created in 1970
may be accompanied by CÔTE DE BEAUNE
RICHEBOURG, created in 1936
ROMANÉE–CONTI, created in 1936
ROMANÉE–SAINT-VIVANT, created in 1936
RUCHOTTES–CHAMBERTIN, created in 1937

RULLY, created in 1939
RULLY PREMIER CRU, created in 1939
SAINT-AUBIN, created in 1970
may be accompanied by CÔTE DE BEAUNE
SAINT-BRIS, created in 2003
formerly 'Sauvignon de Saint-Bris' *VDQS*
SAINT-ROMAIN, created in 1970
may be accompanied by CÔTE DE BEAUNE
SAINT-VÉRAN, created in 1971
SANTENAY, created in 1970
may be accompanied by CÔTE DE BEAUNE
SAVIGNY-LÈS-BEAUNE, created in 1970
may be accompanied by CÔTE DE BEAUNE
TONNERRE, created in 2006
formerly 'Bourgogne-Tonnerre' (q.v.)
VINS FINS DE LA CÔTE DE NUITS, created in 1964
VIRÉ–CLESSÉ, created in 1999
created from 'Mâcon-Clessé' and 'Mâcon-Viré', parts of the Mâcon *AOC*
VOLNAY, created in 1937
VOLNAY SANTENOTS, created in 1937
VOSNES–ROMANÉE, created in 1936
VOUGEOT, created in 1936

CHAMPAGNE

Renowned for the eponymous sparkling wine, white or sometimes rosé, made largely from Pinot noir, Pinot Meunier and Chardonnay grapes. A northerly situation makes it one of the coldest winemaking districts.

CHAMPAGNE, created in 1936
COTEAUX CHAMPENOIS, created in 1974
ROSÉ DES RICEYS, created in 1971

JURA, SAVOIE & BUGEY

Jura is best known for *Vin Jaune* ('yellow wine') and *Vin de Paille* ('straw wine'), often sold in a unique 62cl bottle which survived changes to AOC rules in 1979. The cépage includes Savagnin and Poulsard alongside the ubiquitous Chardonnay. Most of the wines of Savoie, close to the Alps, are white—but the grapes can include the little-known varieties Chasselas, Jacquère and Roussette. Red wines are usually made from Gamay and Pinot noir. Bugey, recently upgraded from VDQS status, makes wine from Chardonnay (white), Pinot noir and Gamay (red).

ARBOIS (Jura), created in 1936
ARBOIS-PUPILLIN
BUGEY, created in 2009
ROUSSETTE DU BUGEY, created in 2009
CHÂTEAU-CHALON (Jura), created in 1936
CÔTES DU JURA, created in 1937
CRÉMANT DU JURA, created in 1995
CRÉPY (Savoie), created in 1948
L'ÉTOILE (Jura), created in 1937
ROUSSETTE DE SAVOIE, created in 1973
SEYSSEL (Savoie), created in 1942
VIN DE SAVOIE, created in 1973

LANGUEDOC–ROUSILLON

This region was once associated with inexpensive, but unimpressive *Vins de Table* but great progress has recently been made with *Vins de Pays d'Oc*. Quality has improved greatly, using traditional red-grape varieties such as Carignan, Cinsaut and Mourvèdre alongside Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Syrah; whites are made from Marsanne and Rousanne alongside Chardonnay, Chenin blanc and Sauvignon blanc.

BANYULS, created in 1936
BANYULS GRAND CRU, created in 1962
BLANQUETTE DE LIMOUX, created in 1981
BLANQUETTE MÉTHODE ANCESTRALE, created in 1981
CABARDES, created in 1999
previously 'Côtes du Cabardès et de l'Orbiel' VDQS
CLAIRETTE DE BELLEGARDE, created in 1949
CLAIRETTE DU LANGUEDOC, created in 1948
usually accompanied by the name of the individual commune d'origine
COLLIOURE, created in 1971
CORBIÈRES, created in 1985
CORBIÈRES-BOUTENAC, created in 1985
COSTIÈRES DE NÎMES, created in 1986
COTEAUX DU LANGUEDOC, created in 1985
became 'Languedoc' (q.v.) in 2007
CÔTES DU ROUSSILLON, created in 1977

CÔTES DU ROUSSILLON VILLAGES, created in 1977
may be optionally accompanied by the name of the climat or lieu-dit
CRÉMANT DE LIMOUX, created in 1990
FAUGÈRES, created in 1982
FITOU, created in 1948
GRAND ROUSSILLON, created in 1957
LANGUEDOC, created in 2007
previously known as 'Coteaux de Languedoc' (q.v.); may be optionally accompanied by the name of the locale géographique, currently totalling fifteen individual sites
LIMOUX, created in 1938
originally for white 'mousseux' wines; extended to 'still' white in 1959 and to red in 2004
[CÔTES DE LA] MALEPÈRE, created in 2007
MAURY, created in 1936
MINERVOIS, created in 1985
MINERVOIS–LA LIVINIÈRE, created in 1999
MUSCAT DE FRONTIGNAN, created in 1936
MUSCAT DE LUNEL, created in 1943
MUSCAT DE MIREVAL, created in 1959
MUSCAT DE RIVESALTES, created in 1956
MUSCAT DE SAINT-JEAN DE MINERVOIS, created in 1949
RIVESALTES, created in 1936
SAINT-CHINIAN, created in 1982

VAL DE LOIRE

La Vallée de la Loire, 'the Loire Valley', runs approximately east to west across the centre of France, ending in Anjou (now sometimes considered to be an independent winemaking region). Virtually every type of wine is made, from Sancerre (white) in the east through Touraine (white Vouvray, often sparkling, red Bourgueil and Chinon) to Saumur (red). Anjou wine is predominantly white, and includes the sweet Muscadet made from Melon de Bourgogne grapes. Red-grape varieties include Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Gamay and Pinot noir; white grapes can be Chardonnay, Chenin blanc or Sauvignon blanc. Several local varieties are also used.

Note: virtually all Loire wines may optionally be accompanied by VAL DE LOIRE

ANJOU, created in 1936
ANJOU–COTEAUX DE LA LOIRE, created in 1946
ANJOU–GAMAY, created in 1936
ANJOU MOUSSEUX, created in 1938
ANJOU VILLAGES, created in 1987, not activated until 1991
ANJOU VILLAGES BRISSAC, created in 1998
BONNEZEAUX, created in 1951
BOURGUEIL, created in 1937
CABERNET D'ANJOU, created in 1964
CABERNET DE SAUMUR, created in 1964
CHÂTEAUMEILLANT, created in 2010
CHAUME, created in 2006

CHAUME PREMIER CRU DES COTEAUX DU LAYON, created in 2003
a designation within 'Coteaux du Layon'; annulled in 2009
CHEVERNY, created in 1993
CHINON, created in 1937
COTEAUX DE TOURAINE, created in 1939
became 'Touraine' (q.v.)
CÔTE ROANNAISE, created in 1994
COTEAUX D'ANCENIS, created in 2011
upgraded from VDQS status
COTEAUX DE L'AUBANCE, created in 1950
may be optionally accompanied by the name of the commune d'origine
COTEAUX DU GIENNOIS, created in 1998
COTEAUX DU LAYON, created in 1950
COTEAUX DU LOIR, created in 1948

Above: *a map by Jacques Liozu of the Loire valley, geographically the largest of the French wine-producing districts but grouped in several individual districts spread across hundreds of kilometres. Consequently the qualities of Val de Loire wines can vary considerably, depending on grape varieties and Terroir. From a postcard published by 'Jean-Pierre', Avenue Reille, Paris.*

COTEAUX DE SAUMUR, created in 1962
COTEAUX DU VENDÔMOIS, created in 2001
CÔTES D'AUVERGNE, created in 2011
may be optionally followed by the name of the sous-région
CÔTES DU FOREZ, created in 2000
COUR-CHEVERNY, created in 1993
CRÉMANT DE LOIRE, created in 1975
FIEFS-VENDÉENS[-BREM], created in 2011
upgraded from VDQS status
HAUT-POITOU, created in 2010
upgraded from VDQS status
JASNIÈRES, created in 1937
MENETOU-SALON, created in 1959
may be optionally accompanied by the name of the commune d'origine
MONTLOUIS-SUR-LOIRE, created in 1938
known simply as 'Montlouis' prior to 2002
MONTLOUIS-SUR-LOIRE MOUSSEUX, created in 1938
known simply as 'Montlouis' prior to 2002
MONTLOUIS-SUR-LOIRE PÉTILLANT, created in 1938
known simply as 'Montlouis' prior to 2002
MUSCADET, created in 1937
MUSCADET—COTEAUX DE LA LOIRE, created in 1936
MUSCADET—CÔTES DE GRANDLIEU, created in 1994
MUSCADET—SÈVRE ET MAINE, created in 1936
also known as 'Muscadet de Sèvre et Maine'
ORLÉANS, created in 2006
ORLÉANS-CLÉRY, created in 2006
POUILLY-FUMÉ, created in 1937
occasionally identified as 'Blanc Fumé de Pouilly'
POUILLY-SUR-LOIRE, created in 1937
QUARTS DE CHAUME, created in 1954
QUINCY, created in 1936
REUILLY, created in 1937
ROSÉ D'ANJOU, created in 1936
ROSÉ DE LOIRE, created in 1974
SAINT-NICOLAS-DE-BOURGUEIL, created in 1937

SAINT-POURÇAIN, created in 2009
SANCERRE, created in 1936 (white) and 1959 (red, rosé)
SAUMUR, created in 1936
SAUMUR BRUT, created in 1936
became 'Saumur-Champigny'
SAUMUR-CHAMPIGNY, created in 1957
SAUMUR MOUSSEUX, created in 1976
SAUMUR—PUY-NOTRE-DAME, created in 2009
SAVENNIÈRES, created in 1952
SAVENNIÈRES—COULÉE-DE-SERRANT, created in 1952
currently inactive (2014), pending reorganisation
SAVENNIÈRES—ROCHE-AUX-MOINES, created in 1952
currently inactive (2014), pending reorganisation
TOURAINE, created in 1953
formerly 'Coteaux de Touraine' (q.v.)
TOURAINE—AMBOISE, created in 1953
TOURAINE—AZAY-LE-RIDEAU, created in 1953 (white) and 1976 (rosé)
TOURAINE—MESLAND, created in 1939
TOURAINE MOUSSEUX, created in 1946
TOURAINE NOBLE JOUÉ, created in 2001
VALENÇAY, created in 2004
VOUVRAY, created in 1936
VOUVRAY MOUSSEUX, created in 2006
VOUVRAY PÉTILLANT, created in 1936

PROVENCE–CORSE

Provence makes predominantly red wine from Mourvèdre grapes, alongside some rosé. Corse (Corsica) makes red wine from Carignan, Cinsaut and Grenache alongside the indigenous Niellucio and Sciacarello varieties; white wine is made from Vermentino.

AJACCIO (Corse), created in 1984
previously VDQS (1971), then included within 'Corse' AOC (1976) as 'Ajaccio' or "Coteaux d'Ajaccio"
BANDOL (Provence), created in 1941
BELLET (Provence), created in 1941
CASSIS (Provence), created in 1936
CORSE, created in 1976
also known as 'Vin de Corse'
COTEAUX D'AIX-EN-PROVENCE, created in 1985
COTEAUX DE PIERREVERT (Provence), created in 1998
became 'Pierrevert' in 2009
COTEAUX VAROIS (Provence), created in 1993
CÔTES DE PROVENCE, created in 1977
LES BAUX-DE-PROVENCE, created in 1995
formerly part of 'Coteaux d'Aix-en-Provence'
PALETTE (Provence), created in 1948
PATRIMONIO (Corse), created in 1984
formerly part of 'Corse' or 'Vin du Corse'
PIERREVERT, created in 2009
formerly 'Coteaux de Pierrevert'

VALLÉE DU RHÔNE

La Vallée du Rhône, running approximately north to south along the river, still makes predominantly red wine from a wide selection of grapes which can include Syrah. White wines are usually based on Condrieu, Rousanne and Viognier.

BEAUMES DE VENISE, created in 2005
originally part of Côtes du Rhône Villages
CHÂTEAU-GRILLET, created in 1936
CHÂTEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE, created in 1936
CHÂTILLON-EN-DIOIS, created in 1975
CLAIRETTE DE DIE, created in 1942
CONDRIEU, created in 1940
CORNAS, created in 1938
CÔTE-RÔTIE, created in 1940
COTEAUX DE DIE, created in 1993
COTEAUX DU TRICASTIN, created in 1973
became 'Grignan-les-Adhémar' in 2010
CÔTES DU LUBERON, created in 1988
became 'Luberon' (q.v.) in 2009
CÔTES DU RHÔNE, created in 1937
CÔTES DU RHÔNE VILLAGES, created in 1966
may be found optionally with the name of the individual dénomination géographique, currently totalling seventeen
CÔTES DU VENTOUX, created in 1973
became 'Ventoux' in 2010

CÔTES DU VIVARAIS, created in 1999
CRÉMANT DE DIE, created in 1993
CROZES-[H]ERMITAGE, created in 1937
GIGONDAS, created in 1971
GRIGNAN-LES-ADHÉMAR, created in 2010
formerly 'Côtes du Tricastrin' (q.v.)
[L']HERMITAGE, created in 1937
LIRAC, created in 1947
LUBERON, created in 2009
formerly 'Côtes de Luberon'
MUSCAT DE BEAUMES-DE-VENISE, created in 1945
SAINT-JOSEPH, created in 1956
SAINT-PÉRAY, created in 1936
TAVEL, created in 1936
VACQUEYRAS, created in 1990
VENTOUX, created in 2010
formerly 'Côtes de Ventoux' (q.v.)
VINSOBRES, created in 2006
formerly part of 'Côtes du Rhône Villages';
current status uncertain (2014)

SUD-OUEST (SOUTH-WEST FRANCE)

This name is now given to disparate vine-growing areas around Bordeaux: Bergerac, the Garonne, parts of Gascogne, Béarn, and even parts of the Basque country in the south-west. Some districts specialise primarily in red wine; others in white, dry and sweet. Grapes can range from Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Carmenère, Colombard, Duras, Jurançon and Merlot (all red), to Ondenc, Petit Manseng and Sauvignon blanc (all white).

BÉARN, created in 1975
BERGERAC, created in 1936
BRULHOIS, created in 2012
BUZET, created in 1986
formerly 'Côtes de Buzet' (q.v.)
CAHORS, created in 1971
COTEAUX DU QUERCY, created in 2011
upgraded from VDQS
CÔTES DE BERGERAC, created in 1936
CÔTES DE BERGERAC BLANC, created in 1936
CÔTES DE BUZET, created in 1973
became 'Buzet' (q.v.)
CÔTES DE DURAS, created in 1937
CÔTES DU FRONTONNAIS, created in 1975
became 'Fronton' (q.v.)
CÔTES DE MILLAU, created in 1975
upgraded from VDQS in 2011
CÔTES DE MONTRAVEL, created in 1937

CÔTES DU MARMANDAIS, created in 1990
ENTRAGUES—LE FEL, created in 1965
upgraded from VDQS in 2011
ESTAING, created in 1965
upgraded from VDQS in 2011
FRONTON, created in 2005
GAILLAC, created in 1938 (white) and 1970 (red, rosé)
GAILLAC PREMIERES CÔTES, created in 1938
HAUT-MONTRAVEL, created in 1937
IROULÉGUY, created in 1970
JURANÇON, created in 1936 ('blancs moelleux') and 1975 ('blancs sec')
MADIRAN, created in 1948
MARCILLAC, created in 1990
MONBAZILLAC, created in 1936
MONTRAVEL, created in 1937 (white) and 2001 (red)
PACHERENC DU VIC-BILH, created in 1948
PÉCHARMANT, created in 1946
ROSETTE, created in 1946
SAINT-MONT, created in 1981
upgraded from VDQS in 2011
SAINT-SARDOS, created in 2005
upgraded from VDQS in 2011
SAUSSIGNAC, created in 1982
TURSAN, created in 2011
upgraded from VDQS

A CONCISE INDEX

This contains references only to individual topics, personalities and places.

The names of individual *Appellations* will be found on pages 102–25, where they are listed alphabetically by district.

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