

SÉMAPHOR

N°2 - APRIL/MAY 1995

THE NEWSLETTER OF LE VIEUX TÉLÉGRAPH AND DOMAINE LA ROQUETTE



TO BE AT VINEXPO OR NOT TO BE ?

Since the second year of Vinexpo, the world-renowned wines and spirits fair in Bordeaux, Domaine du Vieux Télégraphe and then the Brunier Vineyards, including Domaine la Roquette, have been ever-present.

By that we mean physically taking part in the most intense week's negotiating there could ever be in the wine market. Whatever role one plays in the economic life of a sector of activity, the most frustrating thing is not taking part.

So participate we did and can honestly say we were satisfied to be part of the hurly-burly of this great Bordeaux circus, which, little by little, has turned vigneron into touters of bottles. It's gratifying and reassuring, for sure, to see dozens of wine buffs and professionals jostling round your tasting table, but if wines could speak, would they be quite so overjoyed to be tasted in such conditions?

While this is going on, moreover, the great Bordeaux wines are being tasted with reverence, down in the cellars.

From one Vinexpo to the next, the big top has grown inordinately, engulfing ever further the vigneron we are in a sea of marketing and labels, and making it quite clear that our place was elsewhere.

Brunier Vineyards will not be taking part in Vinexpo 95 for the reasons mentioned above, and greatly hope that their friends who remain loyal to the Bordeaux event will not hold it against them and will understand their decision.

A bientôt, in places made for more peaceful tasting.

VATS, LARGE BARRELS AND BOTTLES

The months of March, April, May and June are traditionally when bottling takes place at the Brunier Vineyards, and therefore when the new vintages are unveiled.

From the first days of spring we imprison the rosé *vin de pays* and Châteauneuf-du-Pape white from the previous year; then, starting on 15th April, the Châteauneuf-du-Pape reds reaching their second birthday.

In March 1995, the first to undergo the "bottling-corking" operation was the 1994 Pigeoulet rosé.

This year's Pigeoulet is markedly different from its predecessors: the Cinsaults were overmature when picked (despite the harvest starting very early) and could not be part of the composition due to excessive colour.

This leaves us with a 100% Grenache, very Provençal, brilliant and slightly strong in colour; a nose of fresh fruits, something between white peaches and apricots, slightly acidulous; the mouth is vigorous and fresh, but at the same time - being a Grenache - quite rich and fat.

It isn't especially complex, but isn't its vocation more as a "thirst-quencher", to be drunk on the terrace when the fine weather returns?

In late March it was the turn of the 94 Châteauneuf-du-Pape White to show its bottle.

The 94 Roquette White, now being put on the market, is proving to be very fresh and straightforward, deliciously vigorous. It has a brilliant, silver-tinted colour. The nose is floral, with white flowers - acacias - on the palate, and the first impression is of citrus notes, grapefruit especially, which punctuate a very clean, fat ending rounded off by a touch of bitterness typical of these wines when very young.

The 94 Vieux Télégraphe white, made from old vines and whose philosophy is worlds apart, offers very different sensations: the nose

is more developed, flowery but married with notes of honey and the soil; in the mouth there is great complexity - nervous, elegant, rich and fresh - ending far away in toasty and vanilla aromas. This is a superb wine to go with a meal (as opposed to tasting or apéritif wines) reminiscent of the 90 Vieux Télégraphe White, but with a certain extra breeding...

As for the 93 Châteauneuf-du-Pape reds, currently being bottled, they can generally be compared to the 1988 vintage: La Roquette is fresh, fruity and balanced, just as we would expect.

The nose offers clear aromas of small red fruits, the mouth is straightforward without too much volume or tannins. This fine vintage will need several years' ageing before reaching a first maturity, though its harmony will do nothing to shock the corkscrew-happy.

The 93 Vieux Télégraphe has a highly interesting concentration of aromas: vinous, slightly woody, vanilla-flavoured; the rich mouth is quite typical of a Vieux Télégraphe, the tannins are in evidence but do not dry the palate; then come delicious aromas of ripe red fruits, liquorice, vanilla, rounded off by kirsch and cherry-stones. The wine is straightforward, long on the palate, well-balanced; and after the 91 and 92 its tannic structure is surprising, but it would take more than two feminine vintages for us to forget the true personality of the wines from the Plateau des Craux.

Though the 91 and 92 are ready for drinking, the 93 Vieux Télégraphe has the genes of a wine for laying down, as loved by fanatics of traditional Châteauneuf-du-Pape.



**Sémaphore*: n. (from sema- and -phore). In days gone by, an arm-waving transmitter of Claude Chappe's aerial telegraphy.

« LE VIEUX MAS DES PAPES »

Why should we feel the need to endow the Vieux Télégraphe with a second wine, rather than follow the fashion for special reserves? After all, these are rife among French appellations and sure to achieve good commercial results?

The two approaches are not contradictory and may even be extremely complementary, but through a concern for quality and respect for our partners, which constantly motivates us, the second wine has more easily found its niche.

The first aim is, of course, for blending of the Vieux Télégraphe to be as concentrated as possible, by withdrawing the yield of the young vines in particular and certain growths without the style and richness required to make a first wine. In contrast, the fruit, finesse and fullness of the latter are ideal to help make a Vieux Mas des Papes. This selection used to be done in the past, and the vats not selected were put on the bulk market. The arrival on the scene of the Vieux Mas des Papes will enable selection to be even more stringent.

The label isn't new, far from it: Jules Brunier, grandfather of

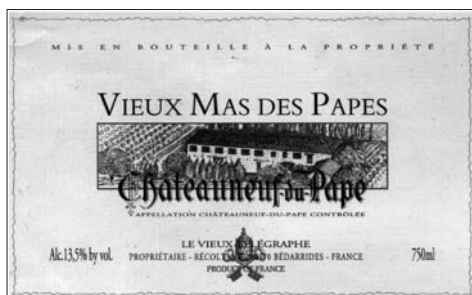
Frédéric and Daniel, created it in 1946, using it to market a very small part of the Vieux Télégraphe production for the Brasserie-Café clientèle in southern France.

The name is still borne today by the family Mas (house), built at the turn of the century in the heart of the Plateau des Craux. It currently houses the viticultural centre, and the left-hand wing is home to Daniel Brunier's family.

The first vintage to be presented is a 93 Châteauneuf-du-Pape red, made entirely from Grenache Noir vines between 10 and 20 years old. We carried out 70% destemming and vinified at regulated temperature for

about 12 days, together with the traditional daily pumping-over and cap-punching. The wine was matured in vats for 9 months, then finished by 6 months in oak barrels and bottled at 15 months in the first days of 1995.

The result is a supple wine, delicious and easily accessible, in which the Grenache expresses itself fully through its finesse, concentration and balance.



VITI-ENOLOGY

A CLEARER PICTURE OF RED WINE FILTRATION

If there's one topic that causes confusion during our get-togethers with wine-lovers, it's filtration. Allow us to take this opportunity to try and shed some light on the principle.

To serve you an impeccably clear and brilliant wine, most of us take pains to present at the table a liquid from which we have carefully and deliberately removed all signs of life. This is done, of course, using processes known in our vigneron jargon as fining, centrifugation and filtration.

It's important to know that each of these processes involves the wine being moved a great deal, most often under pressure with cellulose

plates for traditional filtering, the assembling of filtering earth for filtration with kieselguhr, or even cartridges for membrane filtration; the latter, in our opinion, shows least respect for the wine.

Following the results of a good many tastings and experiments, we noticed that non-filtrated wines had more personality, strength and structure.

But to avoid any filtration, every three or four months we must engage in a racking operation: this involves changing

the wine from one vat to another so as to draw off the sediments, more commonly known as lees, which, by gravity, slowly settle at the bottom of the vat; aeration must be kept to a minimum.

What's more, we realised that to avoid any risk in bottling without filtration, it was indispensable for the wine to be matured in vats and barrels for at least 20 months.

So why not let time take its time... it looks after things so well.



For 5 people

• Ingredients:

1 rabbit (about 1.5 kilos) - 4 or 5 fine strips of streaky bacon - 4 cloves of garlic, unpeeled - 1 large bunch of thyme - 100 ml of olive oil - 1/2 a glass of wine vinegar - Salt and pepper.

• Cut up the rabbit, roll each strip of bacon round and tie it up. • Heat the oil in a casserole, put in the rabbit pieces, the whole liver, the garlic cloves, the thyme, salt and pepper. Brown, making sure the

Rabbit Poirade

by MAGUY BRUNIER

liver doesn't touch the bottom and so remains tender. • Cook on a low heat, stirring occasionally, and half cover with the lid (for about 40 minutes). •

Take out the pieces, remove the bacon and put them on the (heated) serving dish. • Chop the liver and bacon into small pieces, deglaze the bottom of the casserole well with the vinegar and a little hot water, add the chopped liver and serve in a sauceboat, accompanied by steamed potatoes.

SÉMAPHORE

PUBLISHED BY:
Vignobles Brunier
Route de Châteauneuf-du-Pape
84370 BEDARRIDES - FRANCE
Tél. 90 33 00 31 - Fax. 90 33 18 47

EDITORS :
Maguy et Daniel Brunier
Alain Narjoux

ARTWORK:
Terre Neuve

PRINTED BY:
Imprimerie Laurent