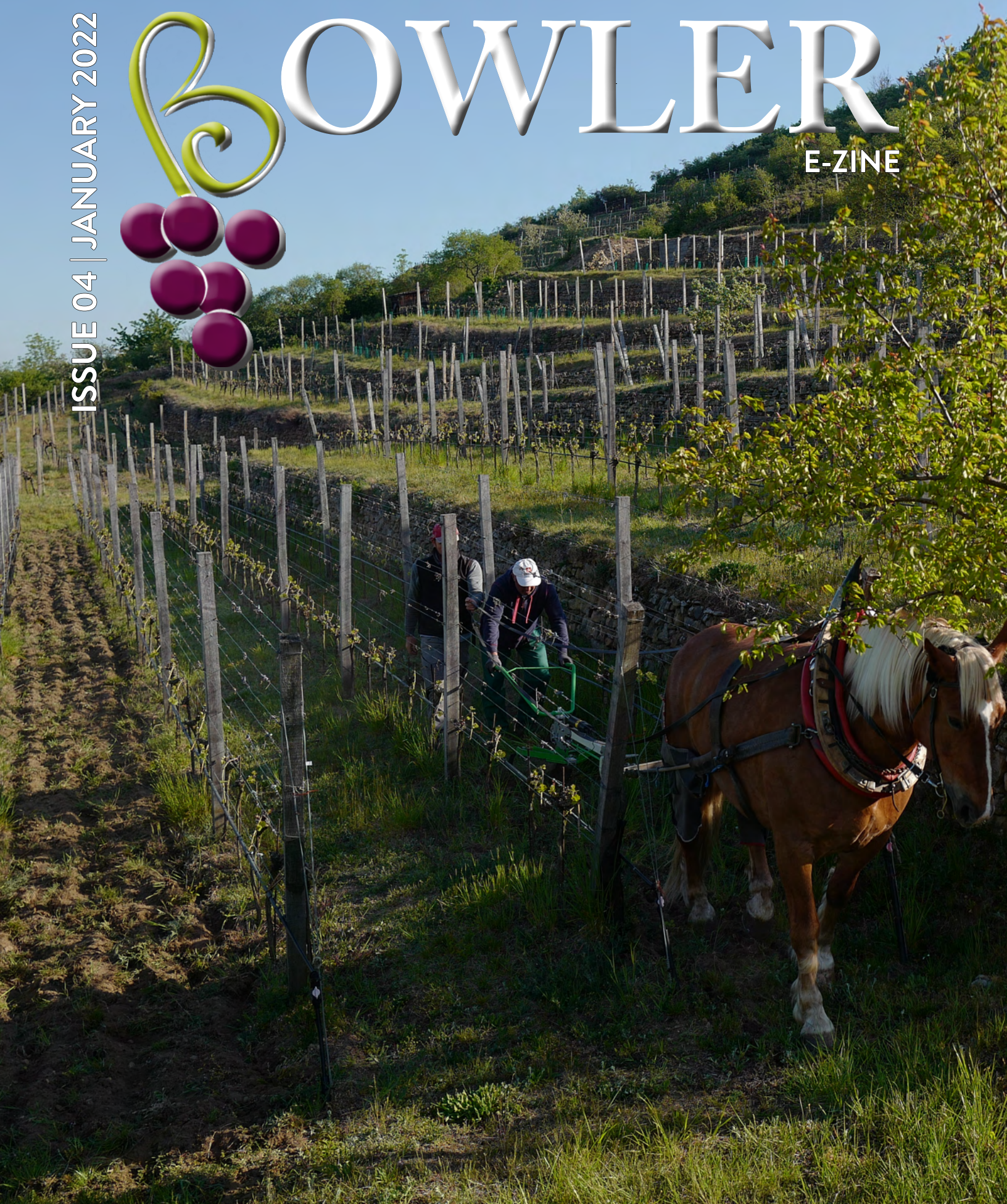


ISSUE 04 | JANUARY 2022



BOWLER

E-ZINE





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WELCOME

The long outdoor tables were set, the lights were glowing, the music was playing and the champagne was flowing. It was a perfect fall night at Simi Winery, the crown jewel in Constellation Brands \$44 billion wine portfolio. Tickets to the event, billed as a “Harvest Celebration”, were \$145 each—roughly the amount of money a grape harvester at Simi makes for bringing in one ton of grapes. But the perfect night was about to be spoiled by hundreds of farmworkers who showed up uninvited with drums, picketing and chanting—demanding changes at the vineyard. The protest was organized by North Bay Jobs with Justice, a farmworker advocacy group after the owners of Simi failed to respond to repeated attempts by farmworkers to sit down with them and 30 other wineries to discuss working conditions and protocols during these seasonal fires. And what are the demands?

--Disaster insurance to cover lost wages when working conditions are too dangerous

--Hazard pay when wineries are granted waivers to allow workers to work in evacuation zones

--Community safety observers to enforce these rules and to distribute these regulations in indigenous languages

--Clean water and clean, functional bathrooms when fires are burning

The issue of fair labor practices at wineries has begun to attract attention in places that it never seemed to before, including the natural wine crowd—a crowd that prides itself on principled farming. The issue’s sudden visibility among the natural wine crowd was a result of an affair two years ago involving a well-known natural winemaker whose reputation was tainted after her father’s arrest for exploitative and illegal labor practices on his farm. That this particular winemaker was not directly implicated was not enough for their American importer who dropped the winery and wrote a long missive about the need to recognize fair labor as part of his “mission” and responsibility as an importer. The implication, which was readily picked up by those in the movement, was if we truly care about our vineyards, our health and the future of the planet, it is hypocritical

to ignore the human side of wine and give a pass to exploitative and unfair labor practices in the wineries the importers represent.

In Europe, Europol, the EU's enforcement division, has begun to crack down on many of these illegal practices which include not only poor wages and horrendous living conditions but also human trafficking-- run by criminal organizations preying on vulnerable populations of seasonal labor across Europe arresting winegrowers, service providers and their intermediaries.

In the United States, the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA) created in 1962 by labor activists Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta worked for decades to gain rights for seasonal farm workers in California. A precursor to the United Farm Workers union (UFW), the NFWA advocated for workers particularly in California's largest and most lucrative agricultural industry: grape growing. After years of boycotts and community organization, the NFWA secured the California Agricultural Labor Relations Act (ALRA), which guaranteed the rights of farm workers to organize and collectively bargain.

California is the only state that extends these types of protections to agricultural workers. All other states require union approval by employers. However, even with these protections the situation for workers is not great—especially during the difficult fires of the last few years.

In Oregon, Willamette Valley Vineyards, one of the largest wineries in the state, citing inflation and their own internal values, will begin paying overtime to its farmworkers in January. Their plan mimics a bill the Washington Legislature passed earlier this year which calls for overtime starting at 55 hours a week in 2022, 48 hours a week in 2023 and the standard 40 hours a week in 2024.

The announcement comes as PCUN, Oregon's farmworker union, plans to re-introduce a farmworker overtime bill in the 2022 legislative session, and as a group of farmworkers brings a lawsuit claiming the state is illegally excluding them from overtime pay.

And closer to home, on September 27 last year, farmworkers at Pindar Vineyards on Long Island had their right to organize certified by the New York State Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) giving the workers the right to collectively

bargain. They are the first agricultural workers to form a labor union in New York State.

And finally there are organizations being created to certify businesses, including wineries, who adhere to fair labor, economic and environmental practices. One of those is B-Lab, a global non-profit started in 2006 which offers a “B-Corp Certification” to businesses who adhere to fair labor and economic practices as outlined in their certification process. More info here:

<https://www.bcorporation.net/en-us/certification>

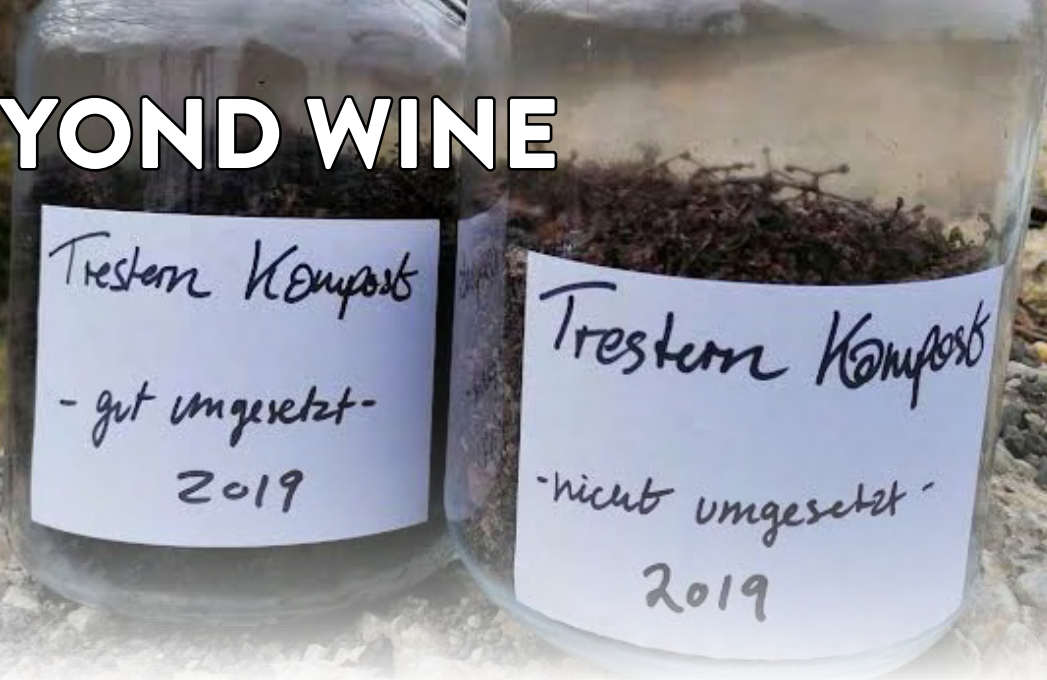
To date more than 2,700 businesses, including 25 wineries, have signed up for B-Lab certification. For those of us in the industry who care about these issues, it’s a beginning. Let’s hope it doesn’t end here. Let’s hope it continues to attract the attention not only of business but consumers as well, the real “agents of change”.

- David and Gab Bowler





BEYOND WINE



Compost Cookery

with Foradori, Hoch, Bucklin, and Podere Giardino

by Matthew Christoff Westchester Sales Representative

Do you know how many leaves fall from a 200-year-old shagbark hickory tree? It's nuts... and leaves, actually—lots of them. More out of sheer necessity than any actual interest, I spent years observing the process of composting firsthand following autumn's dumping of detritus on my property. Each November's massive pile of mulched leaves, grass clippings, and kitchen scraps would miraculously shrink into a manageable pile of black humus by the following May, ready to be added to the new season's plantings.

Annually, I would marvel at the process, speed, and transformation of humus production, without really understanding what was happening. So, in May of 2020, I contacted Bowler resident farmer, New Jersey Sales Representative John Kafarski (check out @prettybird-farm, it's legit), to pick his brain on composting. John responded, "Sir Albert Howard wrote a book titled *An Agricultural Testament* (1940). It is an old work, but the gold standard regarding composting. Read it with coffee... it is amazing work, but dense and can take years to absorb." So, I read it—with lots of coffee. The "testament" explores the development of Howard's organic "Indore Method" in India and it is, indeed, an amazing work.

Just recently, equipped with a little bit of experience and even less knowledge, I contacted some of the most thoughtful growers and winemakers from the Bowler portfolio for some insider perspective on the role of compost in vineyards. I was curious to find out just how important this whole composting bit really is to those individuals. Their responses are wonderful.

Winery: Foradori¹

Winemaker: Emilio Zierock (with siblings Theo and Myrtha Zierock, and mother Elisabetta Foradori)

Place: Dolomites (Trentino-Alto Adige, Italy)

Total hectares: 54ha

Hectares planted to vine: 30ha

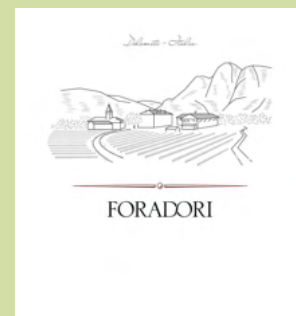
Hectares for other cultivations: 0.5ha vegetables, 5ha grassland

Hectares left uncultivated: 18.5ha

First vintage: 1939



Courtesy of respekt BIODY.



Winery: Christoph Hoch

Winemaker: Christoph Hoch

Place: Hollenburg (Kremstal, Austria)

Total hectares: 10.5ha

Hectares planted to vine: 8.5ha

Hectares for other cultivations: 2ha hedges between vines and herbs for farming

Hectares left uncultivated: 0ha

First vintage: 2013 (biodynamic farming), 1640 (family owned)



¹Imported by Louis/Dressner Selections

Winery: Bucklin²

Winemaker: Will Bucklin

Place: Sonoma Valley (California, United States)

Hectares planted to vine: 10ha

Hectares for other cultivations: 0ha

Hectares left uncultivated: 4ha

First vintage: 2000



Winery: Podere Giardino

Winemaker: Marco Crotti (with siblings Paolo and Federica)

Place: Reggiano (Emilia-Romagna, Italy)

Hectares planted to vine: 5ha

Hectares for other cultivations: 45ha

Hectares left uncultivated: 2ha

First vintage: 2001



Courtesy of podere-giardino.it



Matthew J. Christoff: How do you define your overall farming practices?

Emilio Zierock: Biodynamic, certified Demeter and ICEA.

Christoph Hoch: Biodynamic, certified Demeter.

Will Bucklin: Promiscuous, wildlife-friendly, biological and ecological dry-farming, forever protected by the Sonoma Land Trust.

Marco Crotti: Organic, certified ICEA³. Since the birth of Podere Giardino (2001), Federica, Paolo, and I decided to embrace organic agriculture, as our way of feeling connected to nature, so entering an organic certification system was a very natural step.



Christoph Hoch

MJC: Does your composting system require the use of outside amendments or are you capable of utilizing raw materials produced entirely by your estate to create your compost?

EZ: Our compost is composed of cow manure from our cows; vine-wood, skins, seeds and stamps of grapes. Sometimes we have to buy additional cow manure.

CH: While converting to biodynamics, it was important for us to bring “enough” compost (so a lot) to our vineyards. We wanted to do the conversion as best as possible and we had not brought in compost before, so the amount was important to us. That’s the reason why we had something like a 1/3 concept = 1/3 compost from ourselves + 1/3 organic compost bought + 1/3 cow compost bought. Ten years later, the amount is less important to us than the quality, so now it is more about the living/resident microorganisms in the compost and less about N, P, Bor and Co... and that’s the reason that NOW the compost is our own.

WB: We use compost generated from the bay area green waste stream, among others.

MC: We produce compost using manure and (sometimes) grass clippings and dry leaves coming exclusively from our farm; all these materials are mixed and accumulate in the field and are left to mature. The maturation process (1) halts the activation of the seeds of weeds that have passed through the

³ICEA is the acronym for Ambiental and Ethical Certification Institute, which underlines and emphasizes the correlation between ethics and sustainable practices. The result is no use of chemical products, herbicides, pesticides, on the plants, and no use of antibiotics for animal care.

digestive system of livestock; (2) eliminates the presence of fungal diseases that can cause problems for the plants; (3) enriches complex organic substances by the microbial and fungal flora present. It's a slow transformation of the organic compounds and at the end we have a completely different material, with no smell, and an all new consistency and characteristics.



Christoph Hoch

MJC: Do you have any recommendations for books, lectures, or resources that you find to be exceedingly relevant or useful? What aspects of these resources are most important to you?

EZ: We use Pierre Masson and Adriano Zago's advice for our compost cycle. Trial and error are the greatest advisors.

CH: We are inspired by "Dr. Gernot Graefe & Maria Felsenreich"—specifically, composting for grapes. Right now, we are trying with beer leftovers, but do not have the results yet. In small batches we also try to make other special composts like only from nettles and

so on.

WB: I tend to follow what is called the Albrecht Method of soil fertility. Although that has morphed into sort of a compost and carbon sequestration⁴ focus.

MC: Our management of the raw materials used to produce compost to fertilize fields, crops, and vines follow the same concept as the Indore Method: build a long and narrow pile (not too high) of materials that mature in some months. Some years ago, I took a biodynamic course focused on the experience of Alex Podolinsky. That course opened my eyes and gave me more awareness and inspiration. Podolinsky considered, as Steiner described in his conferences and lessons, a farm as a living body that finds all the resources it needs within itself. Although we're not certified biodynamic, we use the biodynamic preparations 500 and 501 on the fields and vines.

MJC: For the non-farmer looking to understand composting or utilize the practice at home, what would you say is the most important thing to know?

EZ: You need a basic understanding of the compost system (balance of fungi and bacteria). It is not about throwing organic waste together; it is more complex. Basically, you have to take care in the layering system and the different timing of decomposition. Onions

⁴Carbon sequestration is the process of capturing, securing and storing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. The idea is to stabilize carbon in solid and dissolved forms so that it doesn't cause the atmosphere to warm. The process shows tremendous promise for reducing the human 'carbon footprint.'—"What is Carbon Sequestration and How Does it Work?" 20 Sept 2019, CLEAR Center, UC Davis

and orange peels have different decomposition times than lettuce, for example.

CH: To me the most important thing to learn at the beginning was to understand and accept that composting is really complex and not easy, so do not underestimate it! That does not mean that it is not doable to do it at home, but you have to ask yourself the following things: Which material do I want or have for composting? | Which location do I have? (inside or outside) | How long should the composting take? | How much time am I willing to invest in the composting process? | Can I influence the humidity/temperature? | Can I turn the compost? If you can answer these questions, you will find a way to compost!

WB: That you do not know, and the journey is the point. Also, keep the rats out! Compost is CO2 sequestration.

MC: In the cycle of matter, everything is transformed. The materials we see as waste are so important! We can give back to the soil that gives to us!



Christoph Hoch

MJC: How important is composting to you and your farming?

EZ: The compost is the stomach of our farm. It is the digestion and creation of new life. It is the place where we create fertility.

CH: Pretty important, because we think it is related to the future of plant protection as well! To make a great compost—breed those bacteria and use them for spraying/irrigation. Everything made at the winery, without buying things from outside—totally in the idea of holistic thinking! We have been working on this since 2019 and, year-by-year, we collect more knowledge!

WB: Compost more than composting, we apply between three to five tons per year per acre.

MJC: What does it mean to be a net-zero winery?

EZ: To be able to create fertility from your own resources without inputs from outside. Be like a forest.

MJC: Is there anything you would like people to know about composting?

EZ: Just try it. Composting means to create new life. It is a fascinating process.

CH: To know that good composting is, at a minimum, as complex as “making” good wine – you should know that you want to know everything about it!

MC: If you use compost, you give to the soil vital substances that increase vitality. Healthy soil produces healthy fruits. That’s all!



Christoph Hoch



Matthew Christoff



SPIRITS EXPLORATION

The Tradition of Jean Cavé Armagnac

by Rick Long *Spirits Portfolio Manager*

Happy New Year!

I would like to introduce you to an amazing Armagnac house: *Jean Cavé*. But before we get there, I thought it best to give a short explanation of Brandy from Cognac and Armagnac.

Cognac is to the north of Bordeaux and Armagnac is to the south. Although they share proximity, their style, history, grapes, soil, production methods, and aging are very different.



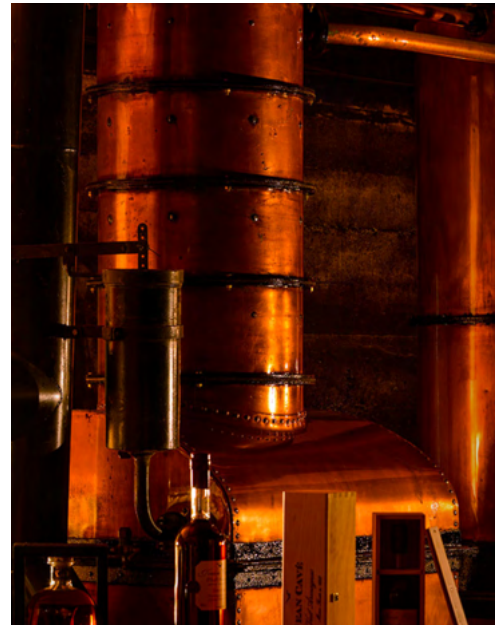
Since Cognac borders ocean ports, brandies from Cognac have always been more popular and more widely available. To this day, close to 98% of all Cognac made is exported. Cognac has to be made from wine from the Cognac region and it must be double distilled on alembic pot stills. The dominant grape used is Ugni Blanc (97%) but small amounts of Folle Blanche and Colombard may also be used. Cognac is divided

into six crus: Grand Champagne, Petite Champagne, Borderies, Fin Bois, Bon Bois, and Bois Ordinaires. Each impart a different depth and flavor profile for blending by the cellar master.

The eaux-de-vie is then aged in French oak, although there has been some experimentation in recent years including finishing in used bourbon barrels.

Armagnac, on the other hand, is made in the Gascony region. Armagnac predates Cognac by one hundred and fifty years, beginning as early as the fifteenth century. While both brandies are made from white wine grapes, there are ten different grape varieties authorized by Appellation decree in Armagnac. The four main varieties are used in the production of Armagnac are Ugni Blanc (55%), Baco Blanc (35%), Colombard (5%), and Folle Blanche (5%); though, other authorized (but rarely used) grape varieties include le Plant de Graise, la Clairette de Gascogne, le Jurançon blanc, le Meslier Saint François, le Mauzac blanc and rosé. Armagnac vines grow in quartz sands, continental and riverbed sediments, and clay. The region is divided into three crus: Bas-Armagnac (clay), Haut-Armagnac (limestone), and Tenaeze (clay and limestone).

One of the biggest differences between Cognac and Armagnac comes from the distillation process. While Cognac goes through double distillation in copper pot stills, Armagnac only goes through one distillation on a column still. By using this process, Armagnacs are known for their enhanced aromatics and richer depth of flavor and complexity because not all congeners are stripped away. After distillation, Armagnac is then blended for depth and aged in French oak. Almost 65% of all Armagnac produced is consumed in France. Many Armagnac houses keep the best barrels from specific vintages and offer a wide range of special vintage bottlings.



Both Armagnac and Cognac use the same labeling for their blends and follow the same aging guidelines.

- **V.S. (Very Special):** the youngest brandy in the blend is aged at least two years
- **V.S.O.P. (Very Superior Old Pale):** aged at least four years
- **Napoleon:** Aged at least six years
- **X.O. (Extra old):** aged a minimum of ten years

Jean Cavé is a small family producer from Lannepax, a small village of five hundred inhabitants in the Bas-Armagnac region. Jean Cavé opened its doors in 1883 and the current team is guided by Henri Cavé, the fourth generation of the family. With Henri at the helm, the distillery benefits from generations of knowledge, as well as a shared sense of tradition and purpose.

Jean Cavé is part of “Le Club des Marques” group; the leading producer and exporter of Armagnac worldwide. Le Club des Marques owns more than three hundred hectares of vineyards in the region. Ugni Blanc and Baco account for 90% of the total vineyards. The rest is dedicated to Colombard and Folle Blanche. The Colombard and Folle Blanche work best for younger Armagnacs while Ugni Blanc and Baco are used for medium and long aging. 70% of the vineyards are in the Bas region while 30% are in the Tenareze area.

Within the Le Club des Marques group, vineyards, work, wine production, and distillation are consolidated. However, each individual member has their own cellar, employs their own cellar master, and controls their own barrels and aging regimen. They have complete control over the kind of cellar practices they choose; new or used oak, the way they use those barrels, and the way they blend.

At Jean Cavé, the grapes are pressed mechanically before being put into tank and cooled down to complete fermentation, then racked to clarify the musts. Absolutely nothing may be added to the musts/wine during fermentation. The distillation process takes place on four large alembic Armagnacais stills from Geimdor. These all-copper stills were built in 1973 and 1974. The distillation usually lasts for 60 days. Annually, Jean Cavé produces about 25% of the 20,000 hectoliters produced in the whole Armagnac area.

Le Club des Marques is the only producer in the Armagnac appellation to have an integrated waste treatment system. The wine residues coming from the distillation process are decanted then dried. It is then crushed into powder and spread throughout the vineyard as fertilizer. They have also lowered fuel consumption by 30%. Because of Jean Cavé’s vision and commitment to older, vintage Armagnac, the eaux-de-vie comes off the still at 65%—much higher than the usual 55%. This high degree of alcohol allows their eaux-de-vie to attack and aggress the wood of their barrels, ensuring an elevated level of tannin in their final Armagnac.

Cavé employs new oak barrels for the very first years of aging. After 18 months (and with the reserves wines up to 36 months), the Armagnac will absorb a high content of tannins. It develops a nice amber color and absorbs the woody, vanillin flavors needed for long aging, before

being transferred to older barrels, which then foster a slow evolution of aromas and flavors. Every year, Jean Cavé invests in almost two hundred new oak barrels just for this purpose. They work exclusively with French oak, sourced mainly from the Southwest of France. For those who love detail, the coopers they source from are Bartholomo and Tonnellerie de l'Adour.



The Jean Cavé cellar in Lannepax is constructed on two levels. The ground level is a beaten earth/dirt floor, with a high level of humidity and this is where they age the youngest Armagnac. The beaten earth allows this part of the cellar to keep enough humidity to limit the evaporation process. Because of its dry atmospheric conditions, the upper level is dedicated to the older vintages (the oldest are kept in glass jars). Over the years they have acquired one of the most spectacular collections of vintage Armagnacs, going all the way back to 1888.

For the first time since 2019, Bowler plans on offering a few of these vintages in the Spring of 2022 (along with their “regular” bottlings).

Here's the range:

TROIS ÉTOILES



Color: Amber

Nose: Fresh and pleasant with floral scents and dry fruits

Mouth: Subtle, elegant, aromatic, expressing a beautiful freshness

Finish: Spicy and elegant

Grapes: Ugni-Blanc (75%), Colombard (25%)

Aging: 18 months in new oak barrels medium toasted and then up to two more years in second use barrels

VSOP

Color: Mahogany with copper reflects

Nose: Fresh fruits, crystallized citrus fruit, sweet spices, and vanilla

Mouth: Supple and greedy attack with fresh fruits, vanilla, honey, prunes, plums, pear, and orange peel

Finish: Long and spicy

Grapes: Ugni Blanc (75%), Colombard (25%)

Agings: 18 months in new oak barrels medium toasted and then 36 months to 84 months in second use oak barrels medium toasted

HORS D'AGE

Color: Nice and limpid amber color with orange sparks

Nose: Dominant of orange peel, oaky vanilla, and smoky scents

Mouth: A complex and frank attack with sweet spices melted with licorice

Finish: Grilled notes, licorice and prunes. A long lasting with a dominant of oak and cooked prunes

Grapes: Ugni-Blanc (80%), Baco (20%)

Agings: 18 months in new new barrels medium toasted and then 108 months to 228 months in second use oak barrels medium toasted

I hope you enjoyed learning just a little bit more about Jean Cavé and Armagnac. I would like to thank Jerome Lassus, Global Ambassador and Sales Manager for Jean Cavé, for helping me, as well as my editors, who make this E-Zine possible.

Cheers!

Rick Long



PAST. PRESENT. FUTURE.



COZs

a Partnership of Two Brilliant Portuguese Winemakers

by *Vinicius Rodrigues Iberian and South America Portfolio Manager*

COZs is a partnership between two of the most brilliant winemakers from Portugal: Tiago Teles (Gilda, RAIZ) and Antonio Marques-da Cruz (Quinta da Serradinha).

The idea of working together started in 2015 when they approached the family of the late Jose Mendonça about working their vineyard in Figueira da Foz, a village north of Lisbon. This place was the main source of the grapes of Quinta dos Cozinheiros (from which they took their name COZ), a winery that became a reference point for the new generation of winemakers in Portugal, and which unfortunately came to an end with the tragic and untimely death of Mendonça. The vineyard,



located just five miles from the Atlantic, proved ideal for the wines of Teles and Marques-da-Cruz. Its 50-year-old vines of Baga and slightly younger vines of Maria Gomes and Arinto are co-planted on clay-limestone soils and farmed organically. The proximity to the coast keeps the heat at bay and the grapes find great balance between ripeness and minerality.

Spurred by the success of their first wine, in 2017 they acquired the Vinha da Pena, in Serra de Montejunto, a limestone formation from the Jurassic period, located 15 km from the Atlantic Ocean, in the northeast part of the Lisbon wine region. Here COZs flourished.

The Montejunto mountain range is a Protected Natural Reserve with scattered vineyards on its

slopes and there, Tiago and Antonio found the perfect place to implement their viticultural ideals and work the land. This work is based on the rejuvenation of ancient vines and preservation of the endangered genetic heritage of Portuguese grape varieties like Vital, Arinto, Jampal, and Castelão.



Agriculture in the Serra de Montejunto has always been conventional, and Tiago and Antonio introduced organic farming techniques, as well as natural green fertilizers. They don't till the soils and Tiago calls their pruning methods "rejuvenation pruning," working as closely as possible to the roots, and avoiding unnecessary cuttings and pruning.



Vital is the main indigenous grape, which they work with and have planted in six historical vineyards: Vinha da Pena, Vinha do Outeiro, Vinha da Barra, Vinha da Serra, Vinha do Anfiteatro, and Vinha do Nuno. Plantings are done via a multitude of clones (more than 70) and massale selection as a way of preserving the identity of the varieties. This work is in sharp contrast to the current trend witnessed in Portugal, of creating monoclonal, single variety vineyards. This approach is creating a genetic uniformity, which is exactly what the winemakers at COZs are against.

The median age of the vines is between 35 and 50 years-old. The Jurassic soils here are rich in clay-limestone, and the climate is decidedly influenced by the Atlantic, with northeast winds coming from the ocean keeping the air moist enough to maintain cooler temperatures.



The wines are made at Quinta do Olival da Murta, a winery located at the foot of the mountain. Here, around the winery, they also have vines of Castelão and Arinto. Tiago sums up their work as follows:

“Starting from the acceptance of nature, the goal of COZs is to make geographical wines that express their origin and age with dignity. We don't want to make French, or Italian wines (however if pressed we'd say our wines are more of an Italian nature...), nor are we interested in making wines which are en vogue in other parts. That is why we don't do carbonic wines, for instance. Portugal is a beautiful country but it is not perfect. I think that showing who we are is a nice way of doing things.”



A CLOSER LOOK

HVE – Qu’est-ce que c’est?

by Michele Peters *French and Austrian Portfolio Manager*

There is a new acronym popping up increasingly often on wine labels, in importer’s descriptions, and in the press: HVE, which stands for Haute Valeur Environnementale. A quick, but incomplete translation is that it is a new sustainable certification, but that does not tell you the whole story.

According to the National Association for the Development of the Certification of HVE, a part of the French Ministry of Agriculture and Food, there are four main tenets:

1. Encourage biodiversity - taking into consideration flowers, insects, trees, and grass.
2. Preserve the life of the soil.
3. Develop positive synergies with the natural environment.
4. Prioritize the development of useful fauna, especially pollinators.



This certification is not only for wine, but applies to all French agricultural products. It’s a French certification and not a part of a broader European Union program. The HVE certification was launched in 2011, but the first time I heard about it from a winemaker was in 2018 at Château Haut-Dambert in the Entre-Deux-Mers region in Bordeaux. Jean-Luc Buffeteau, the third generation to run his thirty hectare domaine, explained to us that HVE does not only take into consideration the vineyards, but also the winery, and everything

surrounding the vineyards, including the air! In 2015 Buffeteau built a new sustainable winery that put HVE principles into practice: all water is recycled to clean the equipment, all waste is recycled as well, and to keep the air clean, fires are not permitted (for example, burning vine cuttings). While HVE does not exclude all chemical use entirely, Buffeteau shared that 70% of his treatments are organic products. And, after becoming certified by HVE, he reduced his treatments by 40% in three years, which impacts not only the vines themselves, but also the energy used by the tractors, the soil compaction, and emissions.



Jean-Luc Buffeteau of Haut-Dambert

There are three levels of HVE certification which allows growers to gradually transition to HVE 3 (the highest level). The process takes a minimum of two years.

Level 1: Respect the essential tenets of the environmental rules.

Level 2: Adopt techniques with little to no environmental impact.

Level 3: Measure the environmental standards in terms of biodiversity and limited number of outside applications.

Over the last few years, I've heard more and more wineries talking about HVE and in 2021, I began to see the emblem on wine labels in the US market. Only after completing the third level are you allowed to use the logo on your label. At the third level, checks and tests are made to uphold the standards of the certification.



Domaine la Monardière in Vacqueyras

Since the certification covers aspects other than how the grapes are grown and does allow some chemical usage, I was wondering how organic growers felt about the HVE certification. Damien Vache at Domaine la Monardière in Vacqueyras is certified organic and also certified HVE3. Monardière has been working organically since 2000 and became certified in 2010, so adding the HVE certification in

2017 did not require any changes in their viticultural work. He points out that the certification applies to the company and not a specific product, like the organic certification. He describes HVE as having two main principles, in his words:



Domaine la Monardière

Technical aspect: Use of chemicals, fertilizers, and water. The rules are not very restrictive, using less than the area average.

Global aspect: Biodiversity (for me the most important in the HVE certification, you do not have this aspect in the organic certification for example): measure all you do for biodiversity: different varieties, trees, hedges... you must have a minimum of points, of course it can be subjective but at minimum it is interesting to do the inventory, and see where you can progress.

Even if one considers the HVE certification light or less strict than organic, Vache really appreciates its goal for considering the whole impact of the winery. He said, “It imposes



Domaine la Monardière

that you do a complete inventory about what you do. After, each grower will do what he wants with the results, but mainly they will try to improve their results, and think about the impact of each action on the environment.” Vache also shared that HVE was perhaps designed for big companies, to certify big agricultural areas. Because you are still allowed to use chemicals, it’s not a huge economic risk for a big company to go for the

HVE certification. Critics of the system charge that the positive impact to the environment is low and does not go far enough, but Vache pointed out that, “[if you] multiply by several growers and big surface areas, the impact on the environment can be important, compared to a ‘perfect’ agriculture on less land.”

Nicolas Benivay at Domaine Pélaquié in the Tavel area of the Southern Rhone echoed Vache in saying that the most intriguing aspect of HVE3 is the global impact on the environment in every decision they make. Pélaquié became certified HVE3 in 2017 and they also did not need to make any changes to their farming to get the certification, but it does formally

recognize their work in the vineyards and winery. It takes into consideration the woods that surround the vineyards, which is good for biodiversity, including pollinators like bees. They don't use any copper, which is permitted in organic farming, but is very bad for the life of the soil. In the winery, they use a Helioseec system that works with evaporation to recycle all of the water, so there is no run-off into the ground.



Domaine Pélaquié



As Vache points out, HVE may be a step in the right direction—especially for a larger company who would never consider organic farming. And for some wineries who start with HVE, organic farming might be a logical, and now easier, next step. I agree with Damien Vache: let's widen the circle of those who make a positive impact on the environment, instead of finding reasons to keep them out.



BEHIND THE SCENES



The Two-Ton Onion

by Kevin Russell *Italian Portfolio Manager*

You will find Adriano Zago behind the scenes at some of Italy's (but not just Italy!) most dynamic wineries (but not just wineries!). Adriano, originally from the Veneto, is a trained agronomist and enologist. His company, Mastrilli Consulting, boasts over eighty clients around the world, different in size and scope, but linked by a desire to improve and grow through biodynamics. Adriano is also an active speaker and educator. I sat down with him in the Zoomisphere to learn more.

Kevin Russell: Ciao, Adriano. Thanks for taking the time to chat with me. So, how did you form your company and what does Mastrilli mean?

Adriano Zago: Ha. Mastrilli is a nickname my grandfather, who I grew up with, gave to me. It was a kind of fantasy name, which I forgot. It doesn't mean anything in Italian or dialect. But when it came time for me to start my business, I remembered it and said 'why not?' It was a second life for this little nickname. It was a chance to realize my inner child.

Going back twenty years, my first experience

with biodynamics was in New Zealand. Rippon, Felton Road, Milton—I visited all those pioneers. Then at the Basil Biodynamic Academy in Mysore, India. But my main master was in France, Pierre Masson. I even translated his books into Italian and worked with his son, Vincent.

Then I was lucky to meet Castello dei Rampolla. I became the technical director of the vineyards. There I really touched with my hands the real biodynamics and all the inspirations coming from it.

People kept asking me to help them understand biodynamics in the vineyards. I kept

saying, ‘why not?’ The pleasure is shared experience—technical, human, vision. After many years, this is still the most interesting part, the sharing.

Avignonesi called me to manage their conversion, fifteen years ago. They were my second client as Mastrilli. It was the first Italian, maybe first European, estate with more than 100 hectares to convert everything to biodynamics. We did that over 10 years’ time and it was really, really challenging. After that experience it was easier for me to work with big wineries, like Col D’Orcia. Now I’m managing a spin-off of Planeta in the South. Even Borgoluce in Conegliano, which is a 1000-hectare farm. 300 hectares of vines, cows, water buffaloes...so many, many problems! It’s amazing—they’ve owned this farm for more than 1000 years. There are three restaurants on the farm and everything, everything, you eat is from the farm, with long menus.

And then many iconic wineries, Elisabetta, Ampeleia, Emidio Pepe, Arianna...and that for me is the other challenge: maintaining high-quality fine wine while introducing all the concepts around biodynamics. I’ve been saying that biodynamics is kind of a mindset, because when we work with the vitality of the soil, respecting the plants, we’re so used to finding their most intensely alive parts. We can move this into human resources, general organization, even when we make a rebranding strategy.

KR: How do you choose to work with a client? Your list is vast. I’d imagine you have to say no a lot.

AZ: *Dal naso*, (“by nose”), as we say in Italian. I try to see if the intentions are really tough.

Sometimes people want to maintain biodynamics in a place where it would be really over-romantic. I’m not interested in that. If you really want to do something, if you’re intellectually honest, then I am interested, if I have time.

I can really work if I can get energy back. People expect me to give them something—energy, knowledge, motivation. But I can only do that if I have a source from the other side, a real exchange.

I just came from a long Friday at Foradori, where we’ve been working in many different



directions in the last ten years. We really worked hard but at the end of the day I wasn't tired, because it's a circle, a circuit.

I'm more and more interested in transforming viticulturists into actual farmers, in many directions—animals, trees, multifunctional farming, increasing biodiversity, increasing enjoyment. If you have space, try to grow some wheat, some old varieties, try to find a good miller, and try your hand at bread-making. If you're able to get your wine to be unique in the world, it's really easy to get your bread unique, too. You have your own vegetables, your own wine, your own bread. And the wine gets so powerful. All the team can even eat, not just drink, so less probability of getting drunk!

KR: I like this—the Human Resources side of Biodynamics!

AZ: Yeah! You can even develop your knowledge of your terroir through food. I've really experienced this in the last five years. In many cases, you can increase the wine's communication.

A type of tomato, a piece of cheese, bread... whatever the ingredients of the farm are producing, or in alliance with neighboring farms. It's a positive contamination, without losing sight of fine wine. I'm still a winemaker, still spending 50% of my time tasting wine. We're still worried about Brett, we're still worried about extractions, we're still worried about pH. We're not so hippie, saying “who cares

about pH?” No, I still care about pH. But the social impact of wine and farming is more powerful than the pH. And that is one of the meta-focuses of the last few years.

KR: Do you work with any clients who are not winegrowers, no grapevines, maybe just purely a farm?

AZ: Yep, in Verona I work with a group of vegetable farmers. We started working with them about 10 years ago, a serious big organic, and now biodynamic, farmer. They've really helped me a lot. I studied agronomy and winemaking, but I started working in wine from the beginning. And day by day, I lost the authenticity of being a farmer. The wine world is a special bubble. When I realized that one pallet of better, biodynamic salad, sold in the Netherlands—so high-quality stuff—has the same price as a bottle of Sassicaia, I said, “fuck!” That was a big lesson of humility. This has two days of shelf life. You have two days, and minute after minute the value decreases. The other probably thirty long years in which the value just increases. And the market knows both of these realities. I said “much respect to these people,” so I really wanted to work with them. We developed biodynamics. They're kind of a big estate, like 10 hectares of greenhouses, which is really a lot. Not the small, romantic vegetable grower, but the professional vegetable grower.

KR: I'm sure you've had surprises in both directions, places where your work exceeded

your expectations, where you did more than you thought or quicker? Are there certain terroirs where you've been more successful or less, and why?

AZ: Oh, wow. Well, for me it's tough to link the success to one territory. It's more dependent on the human factor, meaning farm organization, scale, all these kinds of things. Biodynamics are all around the world. I was really surprised when I worked in India, because biodynamics was amazing. They are still confident with animals—cows, shit, everything we really love and need. In Australia, it's so dry and you say "it's impossible," but you see the effect that biodynamic preparations have and it's incredible.

Especially in vines we confuse disease pressure and biodynamics. We say, "no, in the North, there is so much disease, you have to spray a lot."

I always ask, "what's the country where biodynamics is most popular?" It's Germany. I can say that there is not a lot of sun in Germany, sorry to our friends there.

Where the climate is not so dry, biodynamics can help the evolution of the soil even quicker than in the South. When I'm in Sicily, where everything is dry, it takes a little more time. The diseases are a little easier to control, but we're not there for that. That's only one piece of the puzzle. It's not everything.

KR: You feel that, over years, implementing

biodynamics, when everything gets a little more connected, you're having truly less problems with disease?

AZ: Sure, but we can't achieve that with ideals. We can achieve that with many different choices on many different levels. I'm really surprised when people say biodynamic farming is super confusing and disorganized, something romantic. From my point of view, it's high-precision agriculture.

We need to know everything. When you have less instruments to solve the problem, you have to go into the problem. What is this disease? Why did it happen? Let's wait. Ok, for the moment you can spray. But in the five minutes you wait before spraying, you may learn something else for the next time—when you trust your grapes, when your team has energy.

Sometimes you have to be quicker than anyone else to spray, because the reason to



say “now” is that you’re conscious that you can’t use any product tomorrow. You have to have a really tough team. That’s another misconception about biodynamic farms, that everyone is really slow. Maybe we can be more “fla fla fla” than other growers, but on many other days we have to be quicker.

KR: Are there parts of ‘classical’ biodynamics that you feel don’t work and you tend not to use, from the original Steiner teachings, from calendars, preparations? In your experience are some things superfluous?

AZ: Not really. The things that we really understood from Steiner are really working: preparations, the agricultural organism/multifunctional farm, the importance of the social vision of the farming, the quality of the food to develop mental processes. All these kinds of connections that we’ve been making for the last 100 years are working, and fucking working, because we can really touch, really see, really perceive, really drink.

I don’t want to say there are things from Steiner that don’t work, but there are still things we don’t understand. This guy has so many layers, like a huge onion, like a two-ton onion. My impression is that we’re just eating the first centimeter of this huge onion.

He gave us many directions of knowledge, not just agriculture. Agriculture was the last one. It was just eight small conferences in 1924, as if to say ‘I can just give you the first ideas. Please go further.’

A SHORT LIST OF SOME OF MASTRILLI’S CLIENTS...

Emidio Pepe
Podere Le Boncie
Ceretto

Montinore Estate
(Oregon)

Corsorzio Korè
Pomegranate growers in Sicily

Forno Brisa
A sourdough bakery mini-chain in
Bologna, growing their own wheat in
Abruzzo

Biodynamie Services
Selling biodynamic preparations, tools,
and education (France)

IMPORTED BY BOWLER

Ampeleia
Stefano Amerighi
Salicutti *Coming soon!*

IMPORTED BY LOUIS/DRESSNER

Arianna Occhipinti*
Foradori*
Fonterenza*
Montesecondo*
Monte dall’Ora*

IMPORTED BY EUROPEAN CELLARS

Gramona*
Terroir al Limit*

*Distributed by Bowler in NY, NJ, and PA

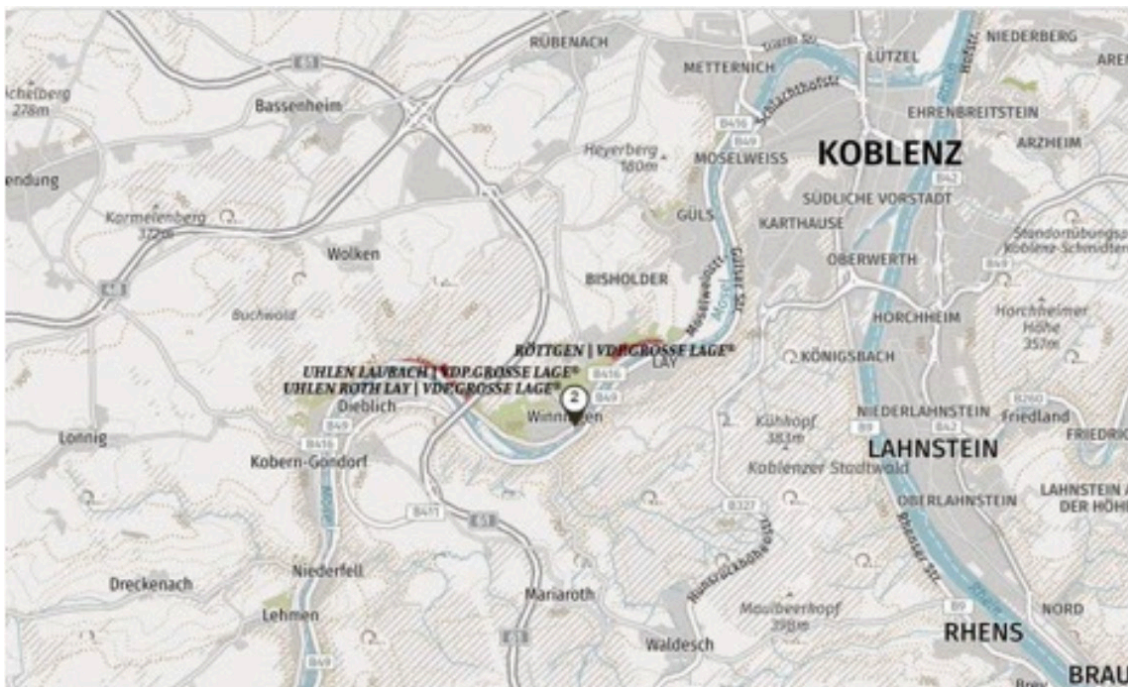


DEEP DIVE

A Community in the Terrassenmosel

by Evan P. Spingarn *German and Special European Selections Portfolio Manager*

Most wine lovers locate the epicenter of great Riesling in Germany's Middle Mosel, home to renowned estates with ancient names like Haag, Prum, Haart, Loosen, etc. The village of Winningen, located at 50° 19' N, 7° 31' E, is a full hour-and-a-half north of there by car, with strangely little of interest in between. It's a long drive along a quiet part of the river, through forbiddingly steep hillsides and mostly anonymous place names. Winningen is where the wineries start looking familiar again. Commercially and viticulturally, it is the last stop on the Mosel.



Map of Terrassenmosel from Lehmen to Koblenz with Winningen and associated vineyards at center

Winningen serves as the commercial hub and heart of the wine region called the *Terrassenmosel*, named for its dramatically terraced vineyards that are among the steepest in the world. A ludicrously picturesque town of half-timbered houses perched on narrow cobblestone streets, it is home to about thirty wine growers, half of whom can be classified as commercial wineries. Heymann-Lowenstein is the “big dog” there, a powerful VDP estate established in 1980 by the iconoclast Reinhardt Löwenstein. Another star is Matthias Knebel who makes top wines from the same vineyards as Löwenstein’s.

These names are well established, but there is a coterie of winemakers in town who are on the rise, learning from their predecessors in the area, while practicing their own methods and crafting wildly different kinds of wines. Their efforts are heroic, given the challenges of working the steepest slopes in the world by hand with little money, press, or recognition. Their work might, in fact, be impossible if they were alone. But what is remarkable in Winningen, is that no one is alone. Every winemaker there is part of the local community, and that community is historic and strong.

Rebecca Materne and Janina Schmitt came to the area in 2012. They graduated together from Geisenheim, Germany’s prestigious wine school in 2008. After making wine separately in various places inside and outside of Germany, they decided to collaborate on their own project. Winningen beckoned because they wanted to work with Riesling on steep slopes, and land there could be bought for relatively cheap. People are abandoning vineyards



Rebecca Materne and Janina Schmitt in 2021

in the *Terrassenmosel*, not acquiring them. The work is hard, dangerous, and expensive. Undeterred, they started hatching plans. When Reinhardt Löwenstein offered them a shared position as cellar masters at his estate, it made their start in the Mosel possible.

“We came to the Mosel, to Winningen, to start our own winery,” says Janina, “and then we got this great option from Heymann-Löwenstein, so that we got a quite good start here. We had a job we could do, but we could also work on our own project.” In 2014 Löwenstein’s former cellar master returned to the estate, freeing Rebecca and Janina to leave and start Weingut Materne & Schmitt. The idea of competition or conflict with their former employer seems never to have arisen.

This cooperative attitude lies at the heart of Winningen’s success as a wine community. Its origins can be traced at least as far back as the 1950s with the founding of the local winemaker’s club, known as *Jungwinzer und Schröter*. Remarkably, every single winemaker in town is a member. They meet each month to taste and discuss each other’s wines and to address issues facing the community. As far as Rebecca and Janina are aware, it is the only club of its type where ALL wine growing members of the town are included.



The passage of time has made its name unintentionally ironic. A *jungwinzer* means a “young winemaker,” which may once have accurately described its founding members; but those men are in their eighties now, so the age range of the current organization varies widely. A *schröter* is an archaic name for a job that no longer exists. When Riesling was sold by the barrel to merchants who bottled it for export, the *schröters* were the workmen who rolled the barrels out of the wineries and transported them down the river. Pumps and hoses made that job obsolete many years ago. Old traditions die hard, however, and the name has stuck with the organization as a fond gesture toward its past. Other traditions have not weathered as well and in some instances have deservedly been changed. Rebecca and Janina are the first women members in the history of the *Jungwinzer und Schröter*.

Friendships happen on the Mosel as a matter of course, not just in Winningen but everywhere along the river. Like-minded growers meet and share ideas, sometimes to great benefit. Janina and Rebecca work in a particularly “natural” style, although they decline to identify with that word which has become fraught and unpredictably connotative. They prefer to describe their wines as “unmanipulated,” and “true to their terroir.” Expressing the inherent qualities of Riesling grown on steep slopes in the Mosel is their most vital concern, and they see that as best accomplished by vinifying dry with ambient yeasts, long maturations, and zero additions or subtractions. Many fantastic wine growers share this philosophy, and so they have befriended them: Clemens Busch (the patron saint of biodynamics with whom Rebecca did an early internship), Gernot Kollmann at Immich-Batterieberg (tireless networker and friend to many winemakers in Germany), Jan Matthias Klein at Staffelter-Hof (whose 1,200-year-old cellar in Kröv serves as a haven for small, experimental winemakers), and others. Over

dinners, tastings, and (most recently) Zoom calls, important working relationships have evolved among these growers. In this sense, the women belong to two communities, the one they share with their neighbors in Winningen and the wider one they share with the vanguard of natural-leaning winemakers on the Mosel.

Perhaps inevitably, a third community has taken shape since Rebecca and Janina arrived in Winningen: the “original community” known as family.

Rebecca’s husband, winemaker Tobias Feiden, another protégé of Clemens Busch, has garnered serious attention in recent years for his Spätburgunders (Pinot Noirs). That success can be traced to 2014 when he started working with fruit that Materne & Schmitt took under lease in nearby Lehmen. The next year he purchased his own Pinot vines in the Winningen Domgarten, and under his winery’s name Marbleous he has continued to produce immaculate wines with an almost cult status in Germany.

The family grew again when Robert Kane arrived. An American-born aspiring winemaker, Robert was working in Barossa with his friend Derek Paul-Labelle from Canada when he decided to leave and try his hand at working the dizzying cliffs of the *Terrassenmosel*. He interned at Materne & Schmitt in 2017 and “did very well,” as Rebecca puts it slyly. In other words, he landed in a romantic relationship with Janina and married her.



Derek Paul-Labelle and Robert Kane

Within a short time of joining their team, Robert reconnected with Derek and together they started a new project, which they called Madame Flöck Wines. This is an overtly natural wine-making venture based in Winningen with a more extreme organic agenda. “Sustainability” is the keyword they use, but that is far more work-intensive than it sounds. They have acquired a small amount of acreage themselves (1.7 hectares to date), and leased vineyards nearby with grapes planted other than Riesling, such as Kerner, Müller-Thurgau, and Spätburgunder. These are not new plantings, some of them reach back 60 years; but what they are doing with them is radical by Mosel Valley standards. They are working the vineyards themselves by hand, rehabilitating and restoring old plantings, and converting them to organic viticulture. It is crazy work on the precipitous terraces where no tractor or horse can go, requiring far more manpower hours than normal. Experiments in the cellar with long aging, skin contact, and extremely low usage of sulfur is resulting in wines decidedly different from the typical

Mosel taste profile. Theirs is a long-term project, just at its start, and seemingly a harbinger of more radical winemaking in the Mosel valley—especially in Winningen.

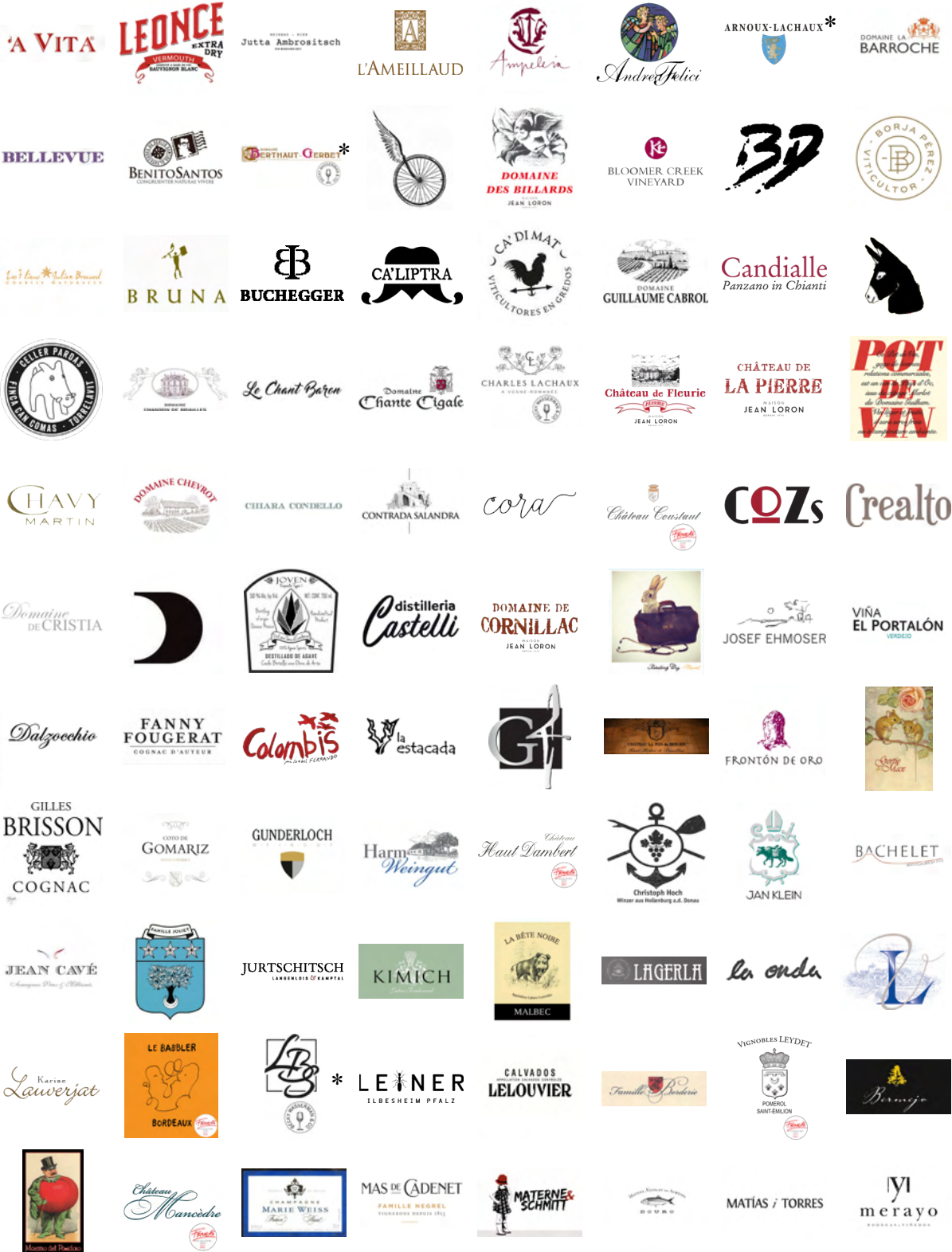
The work at Marbleous and Madame Flöck dovetails with what Janina and Rebecca are doing in their sites. All of them help each other with the tasks of vineyard maintenance, restoration, and harvest. The wines are all made at the Materne & Schmitt cellar. Safe to say, it is unlikely that Madame Flöck would exist without Materne & Schmitt, and Rebecca and Janina would not have launched so successfully without the helping hands and cooperative spirit of Reinhardt Löwenstein and the tight knit wine growers of Winningen. Thus, a community has developed here with three deeply interconnected parts: family, town and region. All participate in the continuous exchange of ideas and help with the intensive work required to glean naturally grown, hand-crafted wines from this extreme terroir. Hopefully, this new kind of community with roots in the past serves as a model for things to come on the Mosel and in emergent wine regions across the globe.



The families of Madame Flöck and Materne & Schmitt



WINERY PARTNERS



*NY, NJ and PA only

BOWLER WINERY PARTNERS



MICHELINI MUFATO

DOMAINE LA MŌNARDIÈRE

MONGARDA
VALDOBBIADENE D'ADIGE



DOMAINE LA MONTAGNETTE



ONCIA IRVANA



DOMAINE PÉLAQUIÉ



Patrick Piuze
Chablis - France



*



WEINGUT STEFAN MULLER

STEFANO AMERIGHI



Val de Mer



VILLA CALICANTUS



VIÑÁTIGO VORSPANNHOF MAYR



Jules MARTIN, Vigneron

ZORZAL
VINEYARDS & WINERY

*NY, NJ and PA only