

Access Revived



Members of ANIVIN DE FRANCE.
Front row, left to right: Nicolas Dufour, Grandissime; Olivier Negraz, Maison Tramier; and Marc Oliveira, Tri-Vin. Back row, left to right: Jacqueline Cole, Gabriel Meffre; Lionel de Ravel, Gabriel Meffre; Pierre Courdurie, Lionel Osmin & Cie; Victor Coulon, Lionel Osmin & Cie; Gregg Mutschler, Vintage Epicure for Val d'Orbieu; Jacquelyn Aurora, Sacha Lichine; Patrick Baugier, Metrowine Distribution for Domaines Auriol; Frédéric Pacaut, Badet Clement & Co; Hubert Surville, Barton & Guestier/Patriarche; Patrice Lancien, Groupe Taillan; Philippe Marion, Barton & Guestier France; and Valérie Pajotin, ANIVIN DE FRANCE.

VIN DE FRANCE SETS ITS SIGHTS ON A YOUNGER GENERATION OF AMERICAN CONSUMERS

by Emily Coleman / photos by Leigh Castelli

No, Malbec did not originate in Argentina, and Sauvignon Blanc's history does not begin in New Zealand. While these might seem like obvious facts to people well-versed in the world of wine, your average American consumer might only name California producers when asked about Cabs or Chardonnays. But France is no longer sitting back and letting other countries court the younger generations of wine drinkers. Watch out, New World—the Old World is taking its varietals back!

How do they plan to reclaim and conquer? The solution is simple: Vin de France wines. This designation—approved in the U.S. in October 2012—frees French producers from stringent AOC (Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée) and PGI requirements. Producers can now source the best grapes from anywhere within the country and label it as Vin de France, along with specifying the varietal and vintage on the front label. "We want to overcome the stigma that

French wines are too complicated to understand or too expensive, especially for Millennials,” divulges Valérie Pajot, Managing Director, ANIVIN DE FRANCE—the national wine trade organization that oversees Vin de France wines category.

A Sense of Place

Victor Coulon, U.S. Sales Manager for Lionel Osmin & Cie, expands, “The name itself—Vin de France—brings out a sense of place that consumers can easily understand, along with the improved packaging we can create.”

Vin de France hopes to synergize consumer preferences with its ability to display words like Muscat or Grenache on the label. Now, consumers know what they can generally expect when picking that bottle; a brand, a country and a variety simplify the buying process and enable the producer to create modern, minimalist label designs that will catch the attention of the younger consumer that they target.

Flexibility and Consistency

Most of the producers and members of ANIVIN DE FRANCE will agree that Vin de France acts as a great introduction to French wines with an exceptional and award-winning product at a great value. Jacqueline Cole, Export Sales Manager for Gabriel Meffre, explains, “Vin de France allows for amazing flexibility to play around, all while having the ability to stay consistent.” This advantage stems from avoiding bad vintages—producers can sidestep a region that did not yield quality grapes in one particular harvest and seek out other producers from another part of the country. Patrick Baugier, founder and Chairman of Metrowine Distribution recounts, “Sales were always up and down due to inconsistencies from year to year, but this category offers a huge opportunity to increase wines sales for France.” Reliability ensures a level playing field when competing against New World selections.

For other brands, the Vin de France category allows them access to a market that they couldn’t reach with their higher-priced offerings, which is the case for Maison Tramier, a family-owned wine merchant and grower located in Burgundy. Olivier Negraz, Export Director for Maison Tramier, notes, “Vin de France is a good way to complete our offerings and introduce the quality of French wines to new customers and new generations.” Or as Jacquelyn Aurora from Sacha Lichine put it: “The brands want to unlock the mystery of France.”

The companies reiterate the idea that these wines are a gateway to open American palates to French wines, and they take the right approach by tailoring their offerings to the taste preferences of the U.S., including Grandissime, a negociant that “listens to the customers first and make new profiles based on their feedback,” reveals Nicolas Dufour,

“The Vin de France category offers a huge opportunity to increase wines sales for France.”



Members of ANIVIN DE FRANCE attend ECRM’s Global Wine, Beer & Spirits EPPS in August to further educate retailers about their offerings.

American Sales Manager. Another company, Groupe Taillan, hadn’t focused on the U.S. in the past, although it has exported products here for about 20 years. Now they have created French Kiss, which Patrice Lancien, Sales Director USA, walks us through: “It is a brand for America, with an English name that is easier to remember and a clean label, but we still add touches that invoke notions of France.”

The flexibility to innovate—as well as to blend—according to changing tastes makes Vin de France an exciting new category for those participating in it. Although still quite young, the producers have discovered new freedom and play with indigenous grapes, developing blends like Muscat with Chardonnay. After sitting down with a number of the brands, it seems that these creations will only grow and become even more interesting in the future.

INTRO-VINOUS



“The name itself, Vin de France, brings out a sense of place that consumer can easily understand.”



The Marketing Plan

For any new category entering the marketplace, the fight for shelf space can be daunting, but since its U.S. launch in 2012, ANIVIN DE FRANCE has focused on meeting with on- and off-premise retailers—including a major presence at ECRM’s Global Wine, Beer & Spirits EPPS last month—to help with this task. Most important, they explain the ins-and-outs of Vin de France and familiarizing these “big players” to the overall DNA of the offerings and what they can expect. This phase of their marketing plan will continue until the end of 2014, when they switch their efforts to educating the consumer in key markets with on-site tastings in 2015.

Staying relevant in a constantly evolving marketplace and grabbing the attention of Millennials will definitely be an uphill battle, but Gregg Mutschler, Director of North American Accounts for Vintage Epicure for Val d’Orbieu, sums up the category’s hope best: “Vin de France gets people in, which will in turn encourage them to explore all of what the country has to offer.” It looks like Vin de France might just turn out to be the Old World’s much needed (but not so secret) weapon.

Want more info on any of the Vin de France wines?
See below for contact information for each brand.

1. ABBOTTS & DELAUNAY ALTO STRATUS BADET CLÉMENT & CO

Cellar Door Selections info@cellardoorselections.com

2. LA BELLE ANGELE BADET CLÉMENT & CO

Cellar Door Selections info@cellardoorselections.com

3. LA VILLETTE BADET CLÉMENT & CO

Cellar Door Selections info@cellardoorselections.com

4. BISTRO GIRLS NIGHT OUT

BARTON & GUESTIER PATRIARCHE USA Barton & Guestier
Patriarche USA cmoreau@sur-ent.com

5. PATRIARCHE BARTON & GUESTIER PATRIARCHE USA

Barton & Guestier Patriarche USA cmoreau@sur-ent.com

6. RED LACE BARTON & GUESTIER PATRIARCHE USA

Barton & Guestier Patriarche USA cmoreau@sur-ent.com

7. GRAND PLESSIS GRANDISSIME

Plume Ridge Christina@winemover.com

8. GRANDE RÉSERVE GRANDISSIME

Plume Ridge Christina@winemover.com

9. LE HAMEAU GRANDISSIME

Plume Ridge Christina@winemover.com

10. FRENCH KISS LA COMPAGNIE RHODANIENNE

L&L Imports keith@l-imports.com

The brands
want to
unlock the
mystery
of France.”



11. **JEAN BERTEAU** LA COMPAGNIE RHODANIENNE
L&L Imports keith@l-imports.com
12. **LE FAISAN** LA COMPAGNIE RHODANIENNE
L&L Imports keith@l-imports.com
13. **VOITURETTE** LA COMPAGNIE RHODANIENNE
L&L Imports keith@l-imports.com
14. **LE BISTRO MONTMIJA** LES DOMAINES AURIOL
Metrowine Distribution athevenet@metrowine.com
15. **LE CARLA** LES DOMAINES AURIOL
Metrowine Distribution athevenet@metrowine.com
16. **PAVILLON DE GAUJAC** LES DOMAINES AURIOL
Metrowine Distribution athevenet@metrowine.com
17. **J.P. CHENET RÉSERVE** LES GRANDS CHAIS DE FRANCE
Advantage International LPINTO@adv-inter.com
18. **KIWI CUVÉE** LES GRANDS CHAIS DE FRANCE
Advantage International LPINTO@adv-inter.com
19. **LES VIGNERONS** LES GRANDS CHAIS DE FRANCE
Advantage International LPINTO@adv-inter.com
20. **PETITES FOLIES** LES GRANDS CHAIS DE FRANCE
Advantage International LPINTO@adv-inter.com
21. **HEART OF DARKNESS** LIONEL OSMIN & CIE
H. Mercer Imports info@hmercerimports.com
22. **LA RÉSERVE** LIONEL OSMIN & CIE
H. Mercer Imports info@hmercerimports.com
23. **VILLA** LIONEL OSMIN & CIE
H. Mercer Imports info@hmercerimports.com
24. **LA CHASSE** MAISON GABRIEL MEFFRE
Vision Wine & Spirits lionel-deravel@meffre.com
25. **LE CIRQUE** MAISON GABRIEL MEFFRE
Plume Ridge christina@winemover.com
26. **LE PETIT PANIER** MAISON TRAMIER
Luxe Wines & Spirits B.Eden@LuxeWines-Spirits.com
27. **SACHA LICHINE** SACHA LICHINE SELECTION
Shaw-Ross International Importers PaulChevalier@shaw-ross.com
28. **BRISE DE FRANCE** VAL D'ORBIEU
Vintage Epicure gmutschler@vintageepicure.com
29. **LE VAL** VAL D'ORBIEU
Vintage Epicure gmutschler@vintageepicure.com
30. **PLAISIR DE FRANCE** VAL D'ORBIEU
Vintage Epicure gmutschler@vintageepicure.com
31. **SO PARISIAN** VAL D'ORBIEU
Vintage Epicure gmutschler@vintageepicure.com
32. **LES ALLIÉS** WINEFORCES
TRI-VIN IMPORTS, INC moliveira@tri-vin.com
33. **TUSSOCK JUMPER** WINEFORCES
TRI-VIN IMPORTS, INC moliveira@tri-vin.com ■■

For more information on Vin de France, visit www.vindefrancewines.com.