

The amazing travels of Burgundy's cultivars

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Abstract

In the mind of wine buffs Viticultural Burgundy often comes down to two cultivars: Pinot Noir for red wine and chardonnay for white wine. However, it has not always been like that in the course of history. Now, ever since vines were cultivated, winegrowers as well as wine drinkers have always recognized that some cultivars are better than others but written documents revealed the names of hardly more than a dozen of them between 1000 and 1500 AD. In the 16th century, Rabelais and Olivier de Serres mentioned heretofore unknown varieties and in the 19th century, agronomists recorded 60 new varieties. In their wish to respect quality, the powers that be have always attempted to eliminate too productive cultivars. Thus, until the implementation of the Appellations d' Origine Contrôlée legislation in 1935, Burgundy was the stage of fierce clashes between "noble" and "vulgar" cultivars. Nevertheless, cultivars which were deemed undesirable in Burgundy found their "chosen country" in other regions to which they brought fame and fortune.

In the beginning, there was Pinot...

For most of the 20th century, wine historians and paleo-botanists as well as Russian botanists thought that the *Vinifera* species originated in Transcaucasia, between the Black sea and the Caspian Sea and that, afterwards, vines migrated West to Egypt, Greece, Rome, Gaul... Now, it appears that wine was made in France, even before the Greeks founded a colony there. Besides, several *Vinifera* species known in the Middle Ages, such as pinot noir did not correspond to the varieties cultivated in Southern Europe. Even more amazing: until the phylloxera crisis, *Vitis Vinifera* grew as a wild vine around the Mediterranean Sea, in Belgium, Luxembourg, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania. Raymond Bernard, who, for a long time, was at the head of ONIVINS in Dijon, speaks of the history of Pinot Noir in these words:

"it is not unthinkable that wild vines could have existed in the vast forests of Gaul long before the Greeks or Romans arrived and that local "Vitis Vinifera Silvestris" could have become "Vitis Vinifera Sativa" in situ with a bit of human intervention."

Be that as it may, retracing the history of vines appears to be a difficult task because the descriptions and drawings left by the agronomists and artists of old times lack precision. It has been established that vines thrived in Burgundy in the second century AD and the oldest description of what could be Pinot Noir is the Latin agronomist Columelle's in his book *De Rustica*, when he mentioned the three best cultivars of his time: *"the smallest and best of these three varieties is recognizable by its leaf which is much more round than those of the other two. It has advantages because it puts up with drought, easily withstands cold weather as long as it is not too humid. In some climates, it produces wine which ages well and it is the only one which, because of its fertility, highlights the poorest soils."*

Pinot, a noble cultivar

In the Middle Ages, Pinot Noir was known under the names of *Noirien* and *Morillon*. In his famous edict of 1395, Duke Philip the Bold banned the cultivation of Gamay and advocated that of Pinot but he had already used this term in 1375, so that geographer Roger Dion sees in Pinot a more accomplished version of Noirien obtained thanks to a selection: *"Couldn't Duke Philip the Bold, in the vineyards of the Côte d'Or whose quality he promoted with great attention, have been the instigator of the selection work whereby this upgraded form of grape with black berries was obtained? A form which, as early as 1375, he considered worthy of being to his credit. Couldn't he personally have contributed to the coining of this very name of Pinot, a term which had never been mentioned prior to 1375?"* Afterwards, according to Roger Dion, the word *Pinot*, which designated the best wine made in Burgundy, became the name of the cultivar. Indeed, this grape variety is indifferently mentioned under the denominations of *Noirien*, *Morillon*, *Auvernat*, *Franc Noirien*, *Plant à Bon Vin* (good wine variety), *Fine Cultivar*, *Noble Cultivar*, *Franc Bourguignon*, *Franc Pinot*... Today, the growers of Morey-Saint-Denis and those of Loir-et-Cher still call it *Morillon*.

The alliance between pinot and the Dukes' Burgundy which spread from the Alps to Flanders undoubtedly contributed to the fame of the Duchy. On account of its early maturity, it was sought after and planted so as to meet the needs of monastic communities and princes in the Middle Ages. Thus, it moved Northward, to Champagne, Westward, to the Loire Valley, Eastward, to Alsace and Germany, where it is known under the names of *Burgunder*, *Blauburgunder* and *Spätburgunder*, Southward, to Switzerland and Italy, where it is known under the name of *Pinot Nero*. However, the *Pineau* of the Loire Valley doesn't belong to the *Pinot* family because it is, in fact, *Chenin Blanc*. In this

respect, the spelling of the word *Pinot* was made official in the 19th century, so as to avoid a mix-up because local growers pronounced this word "pee-noh."

An aristocrat, a pauper and a large progeny

Major progress in the knowledge of cultivars has recently been achieved thanks to research carried out by INRA Montpellier researchers and by Carol Meredith, of the University of California, Davis on the DNA of vines. Thus, it has been established that Pinot Noir is one of the genetic parents of true Blue Burgundy cultivars such as chardonnay, Aligoté, Gamay, Melon, Auxerrois and 16 others. The other parent of this large progeny is Gouais, a white grape variety, which, in ancient times, was quite widespread in our province and which, supposedly had been introduced into France by the Huns in the 4th century A.D. In fact, it was known in some regions as *Heunisch Blanc*. As it was a productive cultivar giving poor quality wine, it was despised. As it was genetically very distant from Pinot Noir, the crossing between the two could only have beneficial effects. The many descendants of a noble cultivar and a vulgar one banished from Burgundy on account of its mediocrity shows that, in the Middle Ages, our vine growing ancestors searched out the varieties worth multiplying. Let's add that, to this day, no variety has been identified as one of the parents of Pinot Noir or Gouais, which would tend to prove that Pinot Noir had existed in a wild form for a long time.

Furthermore, the research carried out by INRA and Carol Meredith ties up with observations noted in vineyards, proving that Pinot Noir has a strong propensity towards spontaneous mutation in the vineyard. Pinot Beurot and Pinot Blanc are cultivated as cultivars different from Pinot Noir but when studying their DNA, it appears that it's impossible to distinguish them from Pinot Noir. These two cultivars prove to be spontaneous field mutations of the red grape variety. The English wine writer Clive Coates reports that, in 1936 Henri Gouges, a wine grower from Nuits Saint-Georges, had noticed that, in his vineyard of *Clos des Porrets*, white grapes grew on some of his old Pinot Noir vine stocks. He took cuttings of these white grape-producing vines and planted them in his nearby vineyard of *Les Perrières*. He started making White *Pinot Noir* which Clive Coates calls *Pinot-Gouges*.

It is not impossible that *Pinot Meunier*, which brings fruit character and suppleness to Champagne, also originated in Burgundy. According to Carol Meredith, it is the result of a mutation of Pinot Noir. However, as they thought this name somehow lacked class, the Germans renamed it *Schwarzriesling*, King Riesling undisputedly being a quality-bearing name in their eyes.

The peregrinations of Pinot Noir

In the course of history, Pinot Noir, "a reluctant traveler", in Jancis Robinson's words, has seen many countries. Champagne produces more pinot noir for its sparkling wines than Burgundy for its still wines. Thanks to its input of cookie aromas, it contributes to the complexity of Champagne wines. Pinot Noir is also cultivated in Alsace and in Sancerre. It is also present in the Jura, in Savoie, in Ménetou-Salon and in Saint-Pourçain where it is used in blends. It comes 4th in Germany, after the white cultivars Riesling, Müller-Thurgau and Sylvaner. In Switzerland, it grows in Valais and covers half the viticultural area of Neuchâtel where it gives *Oeil de Perdrix* (partridge's eye.) It has also been adopted by Italy in Upper Adige, Friuli and the Arno Valley, in Macedonia, Serbia, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Hungary. Nuits Saint-Georges wine merchant Charles Thomas set out to successfully plant pinot noir in Romania where he produces the appellation *Dealul Mare*.

In the 19th century, thanks to European immigrants, collectors and inquisitive viticulturists, it was transplanted to South Africa, North America, Chile, Australia and New Zealand. Today, North America

produces more Pinot Noir than Burgundy. In as early as the 17th century, attempts to establish French grape varieties were made in Virginia. Whether or not there was Pinot Noir doesn't matter because the experiment ended in failure. *Bis repetita!* At the end of the 18th century, president Jefferson lamented that he couldn't grow Pinot Noir on his estate of Monticello, in Virginia. Unknown by botanists, phylloxera wreaked havoc in the Eastern USA. Producers stuck to American species characterized by high yields and a very foxy taste.

In the wake of the 1848 gold rush, droves of immigrants converged to California. French and German viticulturists imported many European varieties in the 1850's. Historians haven't managed to determine whether the first person who introduced Pinot Noir was Pellier, a man who came from La Rochelle, colonel Agoston Haraszthy who brought back 158 cultivars from his trip to Europe or estate owner Charles Lefranc, the father-in-law of Paul Masson from Beaune.

When it started growing in California, Pinot Noir didn't make a strong impression and American consumers preferred to drink Zinfandel wine. In the 1880's, *Pinot of Pernand, "producing good aging, fine Burgundies"* and *Franc Pinot, "the famous wine of Clos-de-Vougeot"* obtained some success. Alas, California's vineyards were destroyed by phylloxera. After the first World War, they suffered from prohibition and the Great depression. The cultivation of Pinot Noir, which was somewhat neglected in the 1970's is currently enjoying a renaissance in California, especially in the cool and hazy climate of Carneros, in the Sonoma Valley. In 1965, after considering establishing a vineyard in California, David Lett, the scion of a Mormon family in Utah, preferred to grow Pinot Noir in the Willamette Valley in Oregon, 1200 kilometers north of San Francisco. He opportunely used the very detailed geological, hydrographic and climatic data put at his disposal after the building of a nuclear plant had been planned and abandoned. He has obtained remarkable results in a state whose physical conditions resemble those of Burgundy and which, every July, organizes the international Pinot Noir festival.

As for South Africans, they are proud of *Pinotage*, a crossing between Pinot Noir and Cinsault called *Hermitage* in South Africa.

However, according to Jancis Robinson, the transplantation of pinot noir is not altogether a great success: *"it must be noted that in California, as well as in the rest of the world, nobody has managed to compose a satisfactory variation on the theme of Burgundy Pinot Noir, not even a good pastiche."*

Beurot, the grey monks' Pinot

In the old days, Pinot-Beurot, with its irregular yields, accounted for 5 to 7% of the grape varieties planted in Burgundy. It notably grew in Clos de Vougeot and doctor Morelot regretted that it was not planted alone in our province, whereas it was in Aube (Champagne) and in Lorraine, near Verdun. The good doctor judged that the wine produced by this grape variety was *"scrumptious and not plentiful."* Sweeter than Pinot Noir, it increased the alcoholic content of the wine and brought subtlety to blends but at the end of the 19th century, its importance began to decline because the consumers' demand shifted to brightly colored and long aging wines.

Ampelographer Pierre Galet reports that it may have been taken from France by Emperor Charles IV to Cistercian monks who planted it on hills close to Lake Balaton. Thus, can we explain its Hungarian name of *Szükerbarat*, a word meaning grey monk. With this cultivar, the Cistercians made excellent wines. In the aftermath of victorious military campaigns against the Turks, general Lazarus von Schwendi, baron of Holandsberg, in Alsace brought back some cuttings to his estate of Kienzheim.

Henceforth, Pinot-Beurot was called *Tokay* and it thrived in Alsace. Let's hasten to add that the *Tokay d'Alsace* appellation is forbidden today and that the sole term of *Pinot Gris* is allowed. As for the genuine *Tokay* of Hungary, it is not made with Beurot but with *Furmint* and *Harslevelu*.

In 1711, an importer from Palatinate, Johann Seger Rüländ, discovered it, growing almost wild in an old Alsatian vineyard. Judging that the wine he made with it was excellent, he humbly renamed this cultivar *Rüländer*. Whereas this cultivar's fashion was waning in Burgundy and Champagne, German nurserymen developed a clone giving fairly high and regular yields.

Italy took an interest in Pinot Beurot. Transalpine growers planted it in the North-East of the country: in Friuli, Venezia, Giulia. Today, it has become very popular all over the peninsula under the name of *Pinot Grigio*. It is harvested early and it gives light, sometimes fizzy wines with discreet citrus aromas which strongly distinguish it from its Burgundian counterpart.

Known as Malvasia in the Loire Valley and in Switzerland, it is also cultivated in Luxembourg, Austria, Moravia and Slovenia. Hungarian wine growers make a sweet-flavored wine with this chameleon cultivar. In Romania, it is known under the name of Rüländer.

Beurot crossed the oceans and settled in South Africa, California, and more recently, New Zealand, where it has found enthusiastic advocates. As for the American producers of Oregon, they have obtained permission to mention on their labels the name *Pinot Grigio*, which they considered more commercial than that of *Pinot Gris*.

Thus in the minds of many wine amateurs, the Burgundian roots of pinot beurot are receding. This cultivar, which is part of Burgundy's heritage, is on its way out in its native soil because the Administration has forbidden growers to plant it whereas it's becoming increasingly popular in other countries. A few privileged wine buffs can still taste the nectar produced in very old vines which will have to be replaced by Chardonnay after they have been pulled out.

Enigmatic Pinot Blanc...

Pinot Blanc, the fruit of another mutation of Pinot Noir only existed by accident in Côte d'Or vineyards. However, according to Guicherd and Durand, *it was extensively cultivated* in the village of Chassagne-Montrachet at the end of the 19th century but it never was a prophet in its own land. On the other hand, Alsace offered a warm welcome to this enigmatic cultivar in the 16th century. Thanks to Mr Oberlin's selections, Burgundy's *Pinot Blanc* turned into *Pinot d'Alsace* or *Gros Pinot Blanc*, a more vigorous cultivar giving higher yields than in Burgundy but it lost in aromatic intensity what it gained in productivity. It was also "naturalized" Alsatian under the name of Klevner. As its quality was judged inferior to that of *pinot gris*, it was admitted into the AOC system as *Alsace Pinot Blanc* but not as a *Grand Cru* cultivar. In fact, it is mostly used in the making of *Crémant d'Alsace*. The growers of Palatinate and Baden also developed an interest in it. They called it *Weissburgunder*, but thinking that it was too aromatic, they preferred to grow *Pinot Gris*.

At the end of the 18th century, under the impulse of the House of Lorraine, Italian growers planted Pinot Blanc on the hills of Tuscany. One century ago, it was very fashionable in that region and often blended with Chardonnay. In fact, it was not until the implementation of the Italian Appellations d'Origine Contrôlée system in 1984 that a clear-cut distinction between Chardonnay and Pinot Blanc

was made. Today, this cultivar, which is not as sweet and doesn't age as well as Chardonnay is often used as base wine in the sparkling wines of Lombardia.

Pinot Blanc, the 4th most important cultivar in Austria, is often vinified as *Auslese* in the province of Styria. Slovenia, Serbia, the Czech Republic and Hungary have also adopted Pinot Blanc. In the New World, it has been introduced into Chile, where it is well-known, and in Australia. In the USA, it is used as base wine for California's sparkling wines.

Chardonnay sets out to conquer the world...

Chardonnay has been cultivated in Burgundy for a long time. The famous vineyards of the Chablis region, the Côte de Beaune (Puligny- and Chassagne-Montrachet, Meursault and Corton Charlemagne,) the Côte Chalonnaise (Rully, Montagny,) and the Mâconnais (Pouilly-Fuissé, Saint Véran) are planted with this cultivar. In the past, it was often mistaken for Pinot Blanc because of the similarity of their leaves and it was often called *Pinot Chardonnay*. It was not until the Conference held in Chalon-sur-Saône in 1896 that an official distinction between these two cultivars was made. Chardonnay starts its biological cycle a little later than Pinot Noir and may safely be harvested a week after its red counterpart. In its chosen terroirs of Burgundy, it gives wines characterized by extraordinary finesse and bouquet. Its yields are regular and generous. Furthermore, it ages well. In the words of the Australian producer-oenologist Brian Croser, it is "*the most indulgent of all grape varieties*" because it makes the best of very different climatic and soil conditions. Geologist Robert Lautel used to say: "*Pinot Noir is a serious, stay-at-home young man whereas Chardonnay is a loose girl who likes to romp about all over the world.*" However, if it has become very popular, it is not cultivated with an equal success in every country. In Chablis and in the Côte d'Or, it gives scrumptious wines which express their terroir with great intensity, but in other regions of the world, it sometimes merely produces a sweet-sour mix of alcohol and water...

It first settled in the North and then in the South of Jura. Transplanted from Burgundy to the Côte des Blancs in Champagne, in the 19th century, it is now very present in this region where it covers 31% of the vineyard area. It brings finesse, toasted aromas and subtle nuances of cream to Champagne blends.

In the 1980's, the Louis Latour company played a major part in the establishment of Chardonnay in Ardèche. The challenge it took up consisted in vinifying this cultivar in the Rhône Valley according to Burgundian methods. In Anjou, Chardonnay formed a happy alliance with Chenin Blanc by making the wines less aggressive than when they are made solely with Chenin Blanc. In Italy, it spread as far as Apulia but it mostly grows in Trentino, Venezia, Friuli, Giulia and Piemont. Central European countries: Slovenia, Romania and especially Bulgaria have also adopted it.

However, no country has been more hospitable to Chardonnay than the USA where this cultivar bearing an easily pronounceable name has almost become synonymous with white wine. The Chardonnay-oak barrel association has roused consumers' enthusiasm – and revived the French cooperage industry at the same time. Other states such as Oregon, Washington and New York produce Chardonnays which are more acidic than those of California.

In a desire to by-pass the administrative complexity imposed by their government, South African growers wanted to jump on the Chardonnay bandwagon by illegally importing cultivars from France in the 1970's. Unscrupulous nurserymen sold them Auxerrois, a white cultivar originally from Burgundy, but mostly planted in Alsace where it produces tart, alcoholic wines. In Australia, in the Yarra Valley, Chardonnay gives wines which are a little reminiscent of Burgundies. This cultivar has

almost conquered the world because it is to be found in Canada (Ontario,) New Zealand, Argentina and Chile.

Melon de Bourgogne has found its terroir...

According to ampelographer Pierre Galet, 7 hectares of vineyards in Burgundy are still planted with Melon, a grape variety which is used in the making of Mâcon Blanc and Crémant. Starved of affection in our province, it was called *Pourrisseux* ("which rots easily") in the Saône Valley. It characterized itself by its productivity and the steadiness of its harvests but it was notorious for its lean wines. It was cultivated all over the Duchy and it spread to the Comté of Burgundy to the great displeasure of Philip II of Spain who banned it in 1567. In spite of the ban, it went on being planted. In the beginning of the 18th century, in 1700 and 1731 the Parliaments of Burgundy and Franche Comté ordered its destruction. As they were quite attached to this fruitful cultivar, growers reacted by giving it the name of its competitor: *Chardonnay*. Thus, *Chardonnay*, re-named *Melon d'Arbois* was destroyed in its stead in Franche Comté.

In as early as the Middle Ages, Melon found its way to Anjou where it was cultivated under the names of *Petite Bourgogne*, *Petit Melon Musqué* and *Muscadet* while Chardonnay was designated under the denomination of *Grande Bourgogne*. François Mivadaine reports that under the rule of King Louis XIII, Burgundians, the forerunners of today's oenologist consultants, left their province to bring their lights to other wine-growing provinces of the kingdom. Thus, they settled in the Pays Nantais and planted some stocks of Melon. A few place names recall their arrival: *Bourguignon*, *Pressoir Bourguignon*, *Clos du Bourguignon*. A sharecropping contract, dated 1639, compels the tenant farmer to "*replant the land with a good variety from Burgundy and Pineau.*" As a matter of fact, the presence of Melon in the region of Nantes remained marginal until 1709, the year of *the formidable winter*, the coldest France had ever experienced, which destroyed practically all the vines of the country. The ocean even froze along the Atlantic coast!

To meet the enormous wine demand which ensued, the growers hastened to replant stocks. When it came to choosing cultivars, they realized that *Melon*, a more vigorous variety, had withstood the cold better than the other varieties. The vineyard of Nantes entered its modern age: *melon* put a spanner in the works for *Folle Blanche*, the traditional, local cultivar which, nevertheless kept its leading position in the area. After the phylloxera crisis, the progress of *melon*, at the expense of *Folle Blanche* continued. Today, this cultivar grows in 80% of the AOC area of Pays Nantais. The introduction of the "maturing on the lees" technique built for good the reputation of this pleasant, dry, low in acid wine which reveals floral and vegetal aromas and marvelously accompanies seafood. In the words of as competent a taster as Jacques Dupont: "*one can mistake a good Muscadet for a white Burgundy.*" What a striking revenge for a cultivar which was once banned from its native province! While it is still expanding in the Pays Nantais, it has also crossed the Atlantic and it is now cultivated in the Napa and Sonoma Valleys, in California. As for the University of Davis, it has called it *Pinot Blanc*.

Beaujolais, the land of refuge for "disloyal Gamay..."

Nobody will deny that Gamay originated in Burgundy. An outcast in its native land, this early maturing cultivar nevertheless spread all over France except in the South. One can easily understand that the plentiful yields it gave on fertile soils interested growers, especially in times when wine was drunk young and when consumers cared more for price than quality. The powers that be never failed to become alarmed and to attempt to clamp down on growers but the latter didn't care.

After the winter of 1709, it even replaced Pinot Noir in Ile de France. However, it found a land of refuge on the granitic soils of Beaujolais which allowed it to express itself better than on Burgundy's soils of clay and limestone. Its history is intimately linked to that province. Located outside Philip the Bold's jurisdiction, Beaujolais jealously kept this cultivar but its reputation was somewhat cut down because of the negative publicity. According to other sources, Gamay was introduced into Beaujolais in the 16th century. It took its importer's name: *Latran*. However, it was not until the opening of the Briare canal permitting the access of Beaujolais wines to Paris, in 1642, that viticulture developed in that region and that it became possible to sell wine to Parisians. Besides, the city of Lyon became the natural outlet of Beaujolais. In all "*bouchons*," the traditional restaurants of Lyon, 46 centiliter *pots* were served to accompany *mâchon*, the silk workers' snack.

In 1951, it became possible to sell *Primeur* wines as of mid-November, that's to say one month prior to all other wines. Re-named *Beaujolais nouveau*, *Beaujolais Primeur* became so successful that Touraine and Gaillac imitated it by launching *Gamay Primeur*. Furthermore, the *Coteaux du Vendômois*, *Côte Roannaise* and *Saint-Pourçain* are now producing good Gamay. And this cultivar is also used in the making of as diverse Rosé Wines as *Gris de Toul*, *Côte Roannaise* and the *Rosés de Loire*.

Gamay has been adopted by Switzerland. In Valais, it is blended with pinot, a blend reminiscent of Burgundy's *Passe-Tout-Grain*, to produce *Dôle*, a wine whose fashion seems to be on its way out. Italy's Val d'Aoste and Tuscany, Spain's Aragon, a few regions in Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania have also welcomed it. Let's also point out that California producers label as *Gamay-Beaujolais* wines which are, in fact, made with valdiguié and even Pinot Noir! What an unexpected recognition for Gamay on American terroir! For reasons of euphony, the name *Gamay-Beaujolais* appears to be more commercial to some consumers than *Pinot Noir*. However, the unfair use of such a denomination is due to end in 2009.

Aligoté: the poor relation is no longer ashamed

Growing in Burgundy for many centuries, very present in our terroirs until the triumphant march of Chardonnay and the implementation of the AOC system, Aligoté is a vigorous cultivar which was not called *three-grape variety* without a valid reason at a time when far more miserly noble varieties were *to be drunk in small tumblers*. For a long time, Aligoté suffered from its reputation of acid wine. Did novelist Henri Vincenot think of it when referring to *the Wine of Three?* (it took three persons to consume it: one who drank it and the other two who held the drinker on his chair because of its harshness.) In times when vines gave very generous yields, grapes didn't fully ripen, so that the acid Aligoté-sweet Cassis blend became popular under the name of *Kir**. But today's Aligotés are very different from yesteryear's...

Once planted with Aligoté and Gamay, the hill of Corton Charlemagne was replanted with Chardonnay after the phylloxera crisis. The same thing occurred in other places like Meursault, Puligny, Chassagne, Chablis... and the Aligoté production area kept diminishing in Burgundy. However, it is still present in the Hautes Côtes de Beaune and Nuits as well as in the Côte Chalonnaise. While it is used as base wine for Crémant de Bourgogne in Sacy (Yonne,) it won its spurs in Bouzeron rather belatedly. In fact, the wine of this terroir, which characterizes itself by its freshness and its vividness became the only white wine village appellation produced exclusively with Aligoté in 1998.

In France, it grows in a few scattered vineyards of Ain, Allier, Isère, Savoie but it settled in Eastern Europe: Moldavia, Ukraine, Georgia, where it is either drunk as table wine or used as base for sparkling wine. In Bulgaria and in Romania, the areas planted with Aligoté are far larger than those of Burgundy. The New World doesn't scorn this cultivar either because California and Canada have adopted it. In Chile, it is blended with Sémillon and Riesling.

Just as the French language no longer belongs to France only but gives quality literature and beautiful songs in Belgium, Québec, Lebanon, Haïti or Sénégal, Burgundy cultivars have known varying fortunes in the wine world. Like the French language, they have evolved, become emancipated, changed style and lived their lives on soils which are different from those of their native province. Today, Gamay, Melon and Aligoté are much better regarded in the world than they once were in Burgundy. Thanks to their transplantation in other soils and under other climates, some of our cultivars have experienced regeneration. They have thrived and Burgundians have almost forgotten their origin. But it would be ill-advised to let other local varieties such as pinot-Beurot or even César and Gouais vanish: we could be very glad to rediscover them some day.

Kir* a drink named after Cannon Kir, mayor of Dijon from 1945 to 1968, who systematically served it to his guests.

Appendixes

Productive Pinots.

In the course of the 19th century, some growers who were more interested in quantity than quality carried out pinot noir selections and sometimes left them their name.

Thus, in the Côte Chalonnaise, Estate-owner Giboulot created a variety which was then very fruitful because he produced 35 hectolitres per hectare. This grape variety was called *pinot Giboulot* or *Giboulot noir*.

The *Renevey* variety and the *Mathouillet* variety were fairly widespread fine pinots in the Côte d'Or but they were planted only in second rate soils.

Mr Pansiot, from Brochon selected a very fruitful variety: *pinot Pansiot*. Probably because he admired *the organizer of the French Revolution's victories*, Mr Loiseau, from Vignoles, presented *pinot Carnot* to Beaune's wine growers' Society in 1892 while Mr Liébault created *pinot Liébault* which is not coulure prone. As for *pinot de Pernand*, a vigorous, late variety, it bore the name of a village of the Côte de Beaune.

Etymology of a few cultivars

Aligoté: Scientists agree to recognize the Burgundian origin of this cultivar but its etymology remains mysterious.

Beurot: This word may come from *bure* (frieze,) the material the vine-growing monks' habit was made of. But Beaune's Historian Charles Bigarne gives another explanation: the term *bureau* designated the yellowish color characteristic of this cultivar.

César: This red cultivar is still a little cultivated in Irancy (Yonne.) It was supposedly introduced into Burgundy by Julius Cesar's legionaries, if not by Cesar himself.

Chardonnay: Indeed, there is a village named Chardonnay in Mâconnais. Did chardonnay thrive on soil propitious for thistles? (chardon means thistle.) However, the name *chardonnay* appeared recently in wine literature. In the 19th century, the word *chardenet* appeared in writings.

Gamay: A small village, not far from Puligny-Montrachet bears the name of Gamay. Could gamay have originated in that village? Nothing is less certain. This word was formerly spelt *gamet*. In Philip the Bold's famous ordinance banning its culture from the Duchy, this word is spelt *gaamez*.

Gouais: This word may come from the adjective *gou*, applied to mediocre vines. Thus gouais was considered a pauper in the wine family. Its etymology is the same as that of *gueux* (pauper.) This is why it has disappeared. Now, it only exists in ampelographers' collections.

Melon: this name was given to a cultivar whose leaf has a characteristic round shape, reminiscent of a melon.

Muscadet: This nickname was given to melon de Bourgogne in Western France because of the slightly muscat-flavored aroma of this cultivar.

Pinot: The shape and the piling up of grape berries on each other are reminiscent of pine cones.

Pinot Meunier: This cultivar got its name because its leaves seem to be covered with flour. (meunier means miller in French.)

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