



Gunnels Wood Road, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG1 2BT

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Wine Notes

These wine notes were created on 18-Apr-2021.

The Society's Portuguese Red, Península de Setúbal 2019

A new baby from Portugal and the sandy coastal region of Setúbal south east of Lisbon. Local castelão, which is all juicy red fruits, is complemented by 10% alicante bouschet which brings darker notes of black fruit and smokiness.

Product Code	PW8101	Dominant Grape	-
Product Type	Red Wine	Drink Dates	Now to 2022
Origin	Portugal	Alcohol Level	13.5%
Style	Medium Bodied	Closure type	Cork, agglomerate
Vintage	2019 vintage	Price £	6.50 / Bottle

Producer : Casa Ermelinda Freitas

The warmth of the Portuguese sun is tempered at Casa Ermelinda thanks to the breezes blowing in from the Atlantic that lies close by. Located at Palmela on the peninsula of Setubal, close to the Sado estuary south of Lisbon, there are currently 440 hectares of many different kinds of vines across the domain, with grapes supplied locally from a further 500ha or so. Head of the company Leonor Freitas has worked tirelessly to make many improvements out in the vineyards and in the winery where modern equipment goes hand in hand with traditional values under the skilled guidance of winemaker Jaime Quendera. Casa Ermelinda Freitas has been run by a long line of dynamic women, celebrating its 100 year anniversary in 2020.



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The Society's Côtes-du-Rhône 2019

Ripe, fruity grenache-syrah blend from this outstanding producer in Vinsobres in the southern Rhône. The colour has depth and the nose is beautifully marked by raspberry and redcurrant fruit. There is nothing heavy here, just loads of vibrant fruit.

Product Code	RH56981	Dominant Grape	Grenache Syrah
Product Type	Red Wine	Drink Dates	Now to 2022
Origin	Rhone	Alcohol Level	14.0%
Style	Full Bodied	Closure type	Screwcap
Vintage	2019 vintage	Price £	8.50 / Bottle

Producer : Domaine Jaume

Domaine Jaume, which celebrated its centenary in 2005, has been supplying The Wine Society with Côtes-du-Rhône since 1981. The wines are among the best-selling red Rhônes on our list. The domaine is based in Vinsobres, a beautiful hillside village in the southern part of the Valley, blessed with extremely well-exposed vineyard sites. The Jaumes worked hard to get cru status for Vinsobres and in the end won the argument based on their Cuvée Référence. Though geographically close to villages like Cairanne or Rasteau, the climate here is quite different with particularly interesting potential for the syrah grape. The Jaumes also own plots of vines high above village at an altitude of some 420 meters which inspired the name for another of their cuvées – Vinsobres Altitude 420.

Brothers Pascal and Richard Jaume are highly committed vigneron and strongly believe that wine should be highly enjoyable and approachable so the style they look for is smooth, round and satisfying. Pascal is often found in the vineyard and his wife Isabelle does much of the pruning. Richard divides his time between the cellar and the office. A warm welcome awaits visitors here, especially Wine Society members, with Richard's wife Laurence on hand to meet and greet with genuine pleasure.



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The Society's White Burgundy 2019

Ripe and round yet with a broad, appley palate and fresh finish. For good reason this white Burgundy is consistently our bestselling wine. Its ongoing quality reflects the deep involvement in its selection by successive buyers and the skill of our 'man on the ground', Jean-Marc Darbon, who excels in sourcing the right blending options for us.

Product Code	BU75801	Dominant Grape	Chardonnay
Product Type	White Wine	Drink Dates	Drinking now
Origin	Burgundy	Alcohol Level	13.0%
Style	2 (of 9): Dry	Closure type	Screwcap
Vintage	2019 vintage	Price £	10.95 / Bottle

Producer : Les Vins Aujoux

This is the source of the bulk of our Beaujolais for the last 50 years, and many members will also have tried the fruits of The Society's work with this excellent Beaujolais-based négoce in the form of our bestselling white wine, The Society's White Burgundy, sourced from the Mâcon.

Dealing with a négociant allows The Wine Society to pick and choose, often blending together from different estates in order to end up with a wine that is better than any of its parts.

Négoces have had a huge part to play in the recent history of Beaujolais, some of it not so good but some of it very positive. For all its apparent simplicity, Beaujolais is a complicated region that is often the victim of its own capricious climate with late frosts and violent hailstorms a common recurrence.

The one name that stands out for us is Dépagneux: Jean Dépagneux was the last of this illustrious merchant family who, with his partners, bought up a list of ailing names such as Aujoux, which had made its name selling Beaujolais to the once profitable Swiss market. Jean retired about a dozen years ago and his place was taken by a young and talented oenologist from Viré called Jean-Marc Darbon. One consequence of the change has been the meteoric rise in the quality of The Society's White Burgundy.

Since 2002 Les Vins Aujoux have operated an office in the Languedoc-Roussillon in the deep south of France, sourcing a range of wines.



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Corbieres Rouge Dom du Trillol 2016

Product Code	FC39001	Dominant Grape	Grenache Syrah
Product Type	Red Wine	Drink Dates	2017 to 2023
Origin	Languedoc - Roussillon	Alcohol Level	13.5%
Style	Medium-bodied	Closure type	Cork, natural
Vintage	2016	Price £	No longer for sale

The Society's Rioja Crianza 2017

Product Code	SP16181	Dominant Grape	Tempranillo
Product Type	Red Wine	Drink Dates	Now to 2022
Origin	Rioja	Alcohol Level	14.0%
Style	Full Bodied	Closure type	Cork, diam
Vintage	2017 vintage	Price £	8.95 / Bottle

Producer : Bodegas Palacio - See next page.



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Producer : Bodegas Palacio

Bodegas Palacio is located in the heart of the Rioja Alavesa, at the bottom of the road leading up to Laguardia, a spectacular fortified hilltop village set against the backdrop of the Sierra Cantabria. The original stone-built bodega, now a small hotel, was first superseded by a rather four-square winery, but was replaced with a new, modern winery in 2014.

Palacio was founded in 1894 by Don Cosme de Palacio, an entrepreneur from Bilbao, one of the pioneers of winemaking in the region who made many positive changes, including the introduction of ageing in oak barrels. After a period under French ownership in the 1980s, during which Bordeaux guru Michel Rolland consulted here, Palacio was acquired in the 1990s by Hijos de Antonio Barcelo, one of Spain's largest winemaking conglomerates, itself part of the giant Acciona group. Thanks to a high level of investment, Palacio has been able to expand, modernise and thrive.

This is an unusual enterprise in many respects. It buys in most of its fruit from a long-established network of contract growers, effectively controlling 255ha of vineyards, all in the Alavesa. It concentrates almost exclusively on tempranillo and viura, though in the new *alta expresión* white, Cosme 1894, there is a touch of malvasia. The winery has a 13,000 barrel capacity and exports a third of its production. A number of distinctly different bottlings reflect the bodega's historical French bias, from the almost *bordelais* El Portico (named after the ornately carved door of the church of San Bartolome in Logroño), to the high-definition prestige *cuvée*, Cosme de Palacio developed by Rolland.. More true to regional style is Glorioso, though its maturation – six months each in French and American oak – is hardly typical. This is an outfit which does its own thing, to be sure, and does it well, if the medal tally from international fairs and shows is anything to go by.

Bearing little resemblance to any of these in style – Glorioso is perhaps the closest – is The Society's Rioja, which is also made here., The head of winemaking, forty-something Roberto Rodriguez [Martinez] has worked here since the tender age of 18: his deep understanding both of his craft and of the plots at the bodega's disposal enable him to preselect, in anticipation of the buyer's final blend, a range of appropriate component wines that he knows will both appeal to members and maintain the consistency and quality of this best-seller.

A last word about Cosme Palacio 1894, Palacio's newest prestige project, named in honour of Palacio's founder and year of establishment, and developed with input from consultant winemaker Sam Harrop MW. The white is a remarkable viura-based blend, with a little malvasia and garnacha blanca, from very old, low-yielding vines grown at up to 800m, The red is 90% tempranillo with 10% graciano. The inaugural 2007 vintage was released in 2010 and has already won critical acclaim.



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The Society's Montepulciano d'Abruzzo 2019

This much loved montepulciano's ripe cherry and strawberry perfume leaps out of the glass, while the palate has generosity and freshness. A great modern version of a traditional southern Italian red that's food-friendly and very tasty.

Product Code	IT30241	Dominant Grape	Montepulciano
Product Type	Red Wine	Drink Dates	Now to 2022
Origin	Central - Tuscany, Umbria	Alcohol Level	13.5%
Style	Medium Bodied	Closure type	Cork, plastic
Vintage	2019 vintage	Price £	7.95 / Bottle

Producer : Casa Vinicola Roxan

Montepulciano d'Abruzzo is the seldom overpriced but frequently variable wine made from the eponymous red grape variety on Italy's Adriatic coast. At its best it is flavoursome, deeply coloured and delightfully fruity. Most of the wine here is produced at winemaking co-operatives.

The Society's version is made by the Roxan co-operative, known for their special relationships with 700 individual growers who, unusually in a co-operative set-up, are given a significant amount of input into the final wines. While up to 1,000 hectares of land is farmed, less than 10% of the grape yield in each vintage is actually bottled by the co-operative which keeps quality control reassuringly strict. These are smooth, stylish wines at the price. The winery itself is located in the town of Rosciano, near Pescara, and each bottling tends to be drawn from vineyard-specific sites.

Buyer Sebastian Payne MW recalls that The Society first looked to buy wines from the Roxan co-operative after Edoardo Valentini, the brilliant but eccentric local winemaker and one of the most influential figures of his generation, sold his surplus grapes to it. Valentini was fiercely secretive, shunning wine critics and the wine establishment in general, yet this particular co-operative was the only one he trusted to turn his grapes into good wine. He died in 2012, but his son continues his estate, and upholds his father's trust in the Roxan co-operative.



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Duo du Midi, Pays d'Oc 2019

A delightfully fruity blend of cabernet franc and malbec from the Languedoc in the sunny south of France. Ripe and full flavoured, very round and delicious with grilled lamb chops.

Product Code	FC38721	Dominant Grape	Malbec/Cabernet Franc
Product Type	Red Wine	Drink Dates	Now to 2022
Origin	Languedoc and Roussillon	Alcohol Level	13.0%
Style	Medium Bodied	Closure type	Screwcap
Vintage	2019 vintage	Price £	6.95 / Bottle

Producer : LGI

LGI was the brainchild of Alain Grignon, formerly of the Foncalieu co-operative group, who had the vision of making inexpensive wines designed specifically for the export market. In this he was helped at the beginning by English merchant, and ex- Waitrose buyer, Mark Lynton.

Most of the wines are sourced from a number of cooperatives, mostly along an axe between Carcassonne and Béziers with some fruit also coming from Limoux and from further away in Gascony. The winemaking and bottling is supervised by Xavier Roger, a Sancerrois and recently promoted to chief executive.

The core business remains at entry-level prices, which, for The Society, means delicious wines like Domaine Laborie, Domaine Raynier and the marsanne-viognier blend, Pierre Borde, but LGI is also able to act as broker for several top estates. For The Society, this includes Domaine Barroubio in Saint-Jean de Minervois and Christophe Barbier in La Clape.



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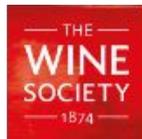
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Ventoux Les Traverses, Paul Jaboulet Aîné 2019

The 2019 vintage of this delicious Rhône red is as full-bodied as its predecessor of 2018, lusciously fruity and ripe. What makes the difference is the feeling of fresh fruit on the palate, in part thanks to cool breezes coming off of the iconic Mont Ventoux.

Product Code	RH56921	Dominant Grape	Grenache/Garnacha
Product Type	Red Wine	Drink Dates	Now to 2023
Origin	Rhone	Alcohol Level	14.5%
Style	Full Bodied	Closure type	Cork, natural
Vintage	2019 vintage	Price £	8.95 / Bottle

Producer : Paul Jaboulet Aîné - See next page.



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Producer : Paul Jaboulet Aîné

The man credited with starting the family firm was Antoine Jaboulet in the early nineteenth century. Antoine had twin sons, Henri and Paul. Both expanded the business but it was the elder (*aîné*) brother who had the business named after him giving the full title of the firm: Paul Jaboulet Aîné. The generations passed until Louis and his brother Jean arrived on the scene. Louis was the brains and marketing genius and it was he who, by some accident, made the very first contact with The Society some 40 years ago. Among the first wines ever bought would have been La Chapelle 1961, probably one of the greatest wines ever made.

Louis Jaboulet remained in charge for some time until his son Gérard was rightly put in charge. Gérard, brilliant and outgoing like his father, was a worthy successor and became the driving force behind the firm. Sadly, a succession of calamities in the 1990's were about to endanger the firm's survival. In the early 1990s Gérard's equally talented brother Jacques, who had overseen winemaking, was involved in a scuba-diving accident which left him in a coma for months and from then on unable to recover his influence. Then, tragically in 1997, Gérard died suddenly, aged just 55. Gérard was not just the driving force of Jaboulet; he also had the authority that held the family together. Following his passing, the next generation, young and inexperienced, struggled to cope. The baton was passed between several members of the family, who never quite managed to restore the harmony and success of old in the wines as much as in family relations.

In 2005 news came that the entire family business had been sold to Franco-Swiss financier, Jean-Jacques Frey, who also owns Château La Lagune in Bordeaux as well as having a large holding in Champagne house Billecart-Salmon. His daughter, Caroline Frey, is in charge of winemaking. Much has changed, with Frey's considerable wealth allowing Jaboulet to invest heavily in new cellars as well as more vineyards in Côte-Rôtie and Châteauneuf-du-Pape, for example. The wines themselves are certainly more convincing than those made during the tumultuous period following Gérard's death, but it is still early days for the new regime.

At the heart of the estate is Hermitage where Jaboulet own 22 hectares, a little less than Chapoutier. The vineyards, in descending order of size, are Méal, Maisons Blanches, Bessards, Diognieres, La Croix and Rocoules. It is the blend of syrah grapes from these vineyards that make La Chapelle, which is a brand name and not a vineyard. Indeed, though the chapel itself, from where the wine takes its name is owned by Jaboulet, the vines around belong mostly to Chapoutier and Chave.

As impactful as La Chapelle, and certainly more affordable, is Crozes-Hermitage from the Thalabert vineyard, an original Jaboulet planting. Another important area for Jaboulet is Cornas, where they make some of the appellation's best wines, from fruit grown on their own estate at Saint Pierre, and from grapes purchased from other growers.



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The Society's Chenin Blanc, Stellenbosch 2020

Made for us by the Grier family at Villiera Estate from their own sustainably farmed old bush vines - some over 30 years old - which bring greater depth and texture to the bright stone-fruit flavour of this South African chenin.

Product Code	SA16061	Dominant Grape	Chenin Blanc
Product Type	White Wine	Drink Dates	Now to 2022
Origin	South Africa	Alcohol Level	13.5%
Style	2 (of 9): Dry	Closure type	Screwcap
Vintage	2020 vintage	Price £	7.95 / Bottle

Producer : Villiera Wines - See next page.



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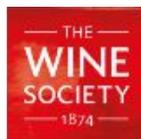
Producer : Villiera Wines

Villiera is a large, family-owned estate on the borders of the Paarl and Stellenbosch wine regions in South Africa. The estate takes its name from the Villiers family who were former property owners. Since 1983, Villiera has been run by the Grier family; cousins Simon and Jeff Grier are in charge of viticulture and winemaking respectively and have steadily raised the quality of the wines. Cathy Grier Brewer, Jeff's sister, is in charge of sales and marketing and is a regular visitor to Society tastings.

The 180 hectares of vineyards are split into roughly 40% red and 60% white grapes, with different varieties being planted as consumer tastes change. There are trials for the conversion to organic viticulture as well as plans to improve the drip irrigation system, but the farm has already been insecticide free since the early 2000s, and uses a flock of Peking duck as natural pest control. The cellars and winery were first built in the 1940s but they have expanded dramatically since the Griers took over in the 1980s.

The family quietly gives a large percentage of its land over to conservation as part of the Biodiversity and Wine Initiative as well as planting thousands of indigenous trees and maintaining a wildlife sanctuary on site. In partnership with The Pebbles Project – a charity which helps children with special needs, which has had a base on the farm for some years – Villiera also launched its own crèche in 2013.

Overall the Grier family's approach is one of understatement as exemplified by their Down to Earth house wines which are accessible blends of ripe fruit with distinct varietal character. The mantra here is 'turn the ordinary into an occasion' which the Griers certainly manage to deliver through extraordinary wines at unremarkable prices. They make a wide range of wines across a broad price spectrum, including some of the Cape's most popular bubbly.



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Duo Des Mers Sauvignon-Viognier, Vin de France 2020

Fragrant, fruity, dry and refreshing southern French white made with sauvignon from Gascony and viognier from the Languedoc.

Product Code	FC39861	Dominant Grape	Sauvignon Blanc
Product Type	White Wine	Drink Dates	Now to 2022
Origin	Languedoc and Roussillon	Alcohol Level	12.0%
Style	2 (of 9): Dry	Closure type	Screwcap
Vintage	2020 vintage	Price £	6.75 / Bottle

Producer : LGI

LGI was the brainchild of Alain Grignon, formerly of the Foncalieu co-operative group, who had the vision of making inexpensive wines designed specifically for the export market. In this he was helped at the beginning by English merchant, and ex- Waitrose buyer, Mark Lynton.

Most of the wines are sourced from a number of cooperatives, mostly along an axe between Carcassonne and Béziers with some fruit also coming from Limoux and from further away in Gascony. The winemaking and bottling is supervised by Xavier Roger, a Sancerrois and recently promoted to chief executive.

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