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 Gunnels Wood Road, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG1 2BT
 

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 Member Services: 01438 741177
 

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## Wine Notes

These wine notes were created on 03-Apr-2020.

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### The Society's White Burgundy 2018

Our best-loved wine for many years, this Mâcon white continues to rise above the ebb and flow of fashion. Buyer Tim Sykes works with long-term supplier Jean-Marc Darbon to craft a blend that is of consistently good quality while respecting vintage differences. 2018 was a warm, ripe vintage, and the wine has lovely depth of flavour and roundness of texture with apple fruit and a fresh finish.

<b>Product Code</b>	BU72261	<b>Dominant Grape</b>	Chardonnay
<b>Product Type</b>	White Wine	<b>Drink Dates</b>	Drinking now
<b>Origin</b>	Burgundy	<b>Alcohol Level</b>	13.0%
<b>Style</b>	2 (of 9): Dry	<b>Closure type</b>	Screwcap
<b>Vintage</b>	2018 vintage	<b>Price £</b>	9.95 / 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.




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### The Society's Côtes-du-Rhône 2018

Ripe, full-bodied grenache-syrah blend from Vinsobres in the southern Rhône. Cool mountain breezes helped contain some of the ardour of the exceptional 2018 vintage, making this perennial favourite fresh as well as fruity.

<b>Product Code</b>	RH53931	<b>Dominant Grape</b>	Grenache Syrah
<b>Product Type</b>	Red Wine	<b>Drink Dates</b>	Now to 2022
<b>Origin</b>	Rhone	<b>Alcohol Level</b>	14.0%
<b>Style</b>	Full Bodied	<b>Closure type</b>	Screwcap
<b>Vintage</b>	2018 vintage	<b>Price £</b>	7.95 / 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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### Côtes-du-Rhône Rouge, Guigal 2016

This exudes class, richness and concentration of flavour in this outstanding vintage. Full-bodied, richly textured, ripe and long. The Guigal name is synonymous with Rhône excellence and while they remain best known for their prized single-vineyard estate wines, they also produce some excellent-value wines that show their class at a far friendlier price. The approach to quality is as unwavering in this outstanding Côtes-du-Rhône, which is by far Guigal's biggest-selling wine, as it is in their top wines.

<b>Product Code</b>	RH53581	<b>Dominant Grape</b>	Grenache Syrah
<b>Product Type</b>	Red Wine	<b>Drink Dates</b>	Now to 2024
<b>Origin</b>	Rhone	<b>Alcohol Level</b>	14.5%
<b>Style</b>	Full Bodied	<b>Closure type</b>	Cork, natural
<b>Vintage</b>	2016 vintage	<b>Price £</b>	10.95 / Bottle

**Producer : E. Guigal** - See next page.




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### Producer : E. Guigal

Guigal's is an extraordinary story of not-quite-rags to riches. Etienne Guigal joined Vidal-Fleury as a humble cellar hand in 1927 and rose to the position of cellar master. In 1946 he left Vidal-Fleury to start in business on his own account and this was quietly successful until his son Marcel joined in 1961. The company then quite simply took off in the most astonishing way. Just before Etienne died in 1988, Guigal bought Vidal-Fleury, thus completing the circle. More recent acquisitions have included Domaine de Vallouit which gave Guigal more land in Cote Rôtie and then Jean-Louis Grippat which suddenly made Guigal important owners in Hermitage as well. In 1995, Guigal bought the ramshackle Château d'Ampuis, just outside René Rostaing's front door and renovated it with no expense spared. The success of Guigal is founded on extremely hard work and immense skill in the cellar combined with flair and marketing genius. These days Marcel Guigal is often to be found in Paris on French *appellation contrôlée* business for the Ministry of Agriculture, in which he is deeply involved. Fortunately, his son Philippe is in every way as brilliant as his father .

At the heart of Guigal are the appellations of Côte-Rôtie and Condrieu where the company was at one time responsible for about a third of production. Indeed, Guigal resurrected both appellations, especially Condrieu which had almost disappeared. If the Guigal profile seems to be less important here nowadays, it is only because of the increase in the number of growers making and selling their own wine. Guigal also started the notion of single vineyard Côte-Rôtie bottling wine from his three iconic sites, La Landonne, La Mouline and La Turque under their own names. These are now among the most sought after wines in the world.

Guigal's genius in the cellar is in the *élevage* process, the way in which he raises the wines in barrel. Every vintage brings a new challenge to maintain the consistency of the Guigal style and this he does with a cleverly-managed combination of old and new oak. The reds are kept up to three years in barrel for good measure. What emerges is a richly textured style, underlying individual wines of true beauty.

Recent years have seen expansion and, as a result, a huge programme of investment in new cellars in Ampuis. Though best known for reds and Côte-Rôtie in particular, Guigal's most recent focus has been on white wines, particularly viognier, the great grape of Condrieu and as a major element in Guigal's very good white Côtes-du-Rhône.




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### Domaine Laborie, Pays d'Oc 2019

A longstanding favourite southern French red that has been a fixture in our range, and many members' wine racks, for years. The 2019 keeps the tradition alive in style, offering a floral scent, ripe brambly fruit and mouthwatering freshness. Deliciously dependable drinking.

We have been advised by our supplier in France that this wine will not now arrive in the UK as expected and that there may be a long delay. This has been caused by the shutdown of the bottling line in France due to impact of the coronavirus outbreak.

<b>Product Code</b>	FC38331	<b>Dominant Grape</b>	Carignan Grenache
<b>Product Type</b>	Red Wine	<b>Drink Dates</b>	Now to 2021
<b>Origin</b>	Languedoc and Roussillon	<b>Alcohol Level</b>	12.5%
<b>Style</b>	Medium Bodied	<b>Closure type</b>	Screwcap
<b>Vintage</b>	2019 vintage	<b>Price £</b>	6.50 / 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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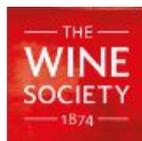
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### The Society's Rioja Crianza 2016

For the 2016 vintage we chose our Rioja from entirely tempranillo aged in American oak - the traditional way to make this famous Spanish style. We're thrilled with the result, which is alluringly soft, leathery and silky.

<b>Product Code</b>	SP15201	<b>Dominant Grape</b>	Tempranillo
<b>Product Type</b>	Red Wine	<b>Drink Dates</b>	Now to 2021
<b>Origin</b>	Rioja	<b>Alcohol Level</b>	14.0%
<b>Style</b>	Full Bodied	<b>Closure type</b>	Cork, diam
<b>Vintage</b>	2016 vintage	<b>Price £</b>	7.95 / 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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### Baccolo Appassimento Rosso Veneto 2017

If you like your reds medium-bodied but not short of richness and flavour, try this intriguing Veneto red, made with partially air-dried grapes. The blend is corvina, star of Valpolicella, with merlot. Lovely, digestible Italian red for a wine-based risotto and seafood, Rialto style.

<b>Product Code</b>	IT26291	<b>Dominant Grape</b>	Merlot
<b>Product Type</b>	Red Wine	<b>Drink Dates</b>	Drinking now
<b>Origin</b>	North-East, Trentino, Veneto	<b>Alcohol Level</b>	13.5%
<b>Style</b>	Medium Bodied	<b>Closure type</b>	Screwcap
<b>Vintage</b>	2017 vintage	<b>Price £</b>	6.95 / Bottle

#### Producer : 'Cielo e Terra' Gruppo Cantine Colli Bercici

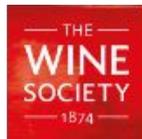
This family-run co-operative is based in the Colli Berici (Berici Hills), which are between Verona and Padua in the Veneto region of north-east Italy. It is owned by the Cielo family, and the name 'Cielo e Terra' is doubly clever: it translates literally to 'heaven and earth' and also reflects the family's close ties to the terroir of Veneto.

The estate was founded in 1908 by Giovanni Cielo. He began by planting vines around the family home, but the property grew and grew, and his sons and grandsons built their own winery and began buying grapes from other local growers to meet production demands. By the time it reached the current, fourth generation – Luca and Pierpaolo Cielo – in the early 21st century, the co-op was sourcing fruit from over 2,000 producers in the Colli Berici.

Considering that the Berici hills are a real suntrap, with a warm, Mediterranean climate, it isn't surprising to learn that vines have been grown here for hundreds of years. Co-op members own 4,000 hectares of vines here in total, from well-known favourites like chardonnay, sauvignon blanc, trebbiano, merlot and sangiovese to more local varieties like Manzoni bianco, tai rosso and raboso.

The company has three wineries spread across the southern towns of the hills. On arrival, grapes are sorted according to variety, area of origin and sugar levels. Winemaking involves cold fermentation and soft pressing, both of which help to retain the grapes' natural fragrance and complexity.

The co-op produces various ranges of wines – the one wine we buy, Baccolo, is from the estate's premium range, and is a blend of merlot and corvina. The grapes are partially dried to enhance flavour and part of the blend is aged in oak barriques.




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## Wine Notes

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### The Society's Sicilian Reserve Red 2015

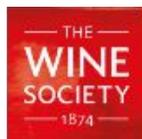
Smooth, generous and fragrant red from Sicily's nero d'Avola grape, one of the world's most naturally appealing varieties. It's no surprise that this has been extremely popular since we introduced it, because it hits the spot and is great value, offering plump cherry and blueberry fruit and sweet underlying oak.

<b>Product Code</b>	IT26661	<b>Dominant Grape</b>	Nero d'Avola
<b>Product Type</b>	Red Wine	<b>Drink Dates</b>	Now to 2022
<b>Origin</b>	South and Islands	<b>Alcohol Level</b>	13.5%
<b>Style</b>	Medium Bodied	<b>Closure type</b>	Cork, diam
<b>Vintage</b>	2015 vintage	<b>Price £</b>	8.50 / Bottle

#### Producer : Feudo Arancio

This substantial Sicilian estate is based on the windy south coast of Sicily. It has two large vineyard areas, covering almost 700 hectares in total, situated at Sambuca di Sicilia in the west and Ragusa in the east.

The grape varieties are each planted in separate blocks, and are used to produce a range of single-varietal wines in the state-of-the-art, temperature-controlled winery, although some of the wines are also bottled at the excellent Mezzacorona winery at the foot of the Italian Dolomites in north-east Italy.




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### Sabina Tempranillo, Navarra 2018

This consistently brilliant, charming Spanish red is one of our most popular wines. It has the lovely red fruit flavour that is typical of the tempranillo grape with much more body and richness than the modest price suggests.

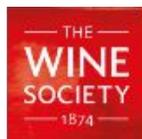
<b>Product Code</b>	SP14801	<b>Dominant Grape</b>	Tempranillo
<b>Product Type</b>	Red Wine	<b>Drink Dates</b>	Now to 2021
<b>Origin</b>	Navarra	<b>Alcohol Level</b>	14.0%
<b>Style</b>	Full Bodied	<b>Closure type</b>	Screwcap
<b>Vintage</b>	2018 vintage	<b>Price £</b>	5.95 / Bottle

#### Producer : Bodega Principe de Viana

Everything about Bodegas Príncipe de Viana is vast: owners of over 400 hectares of vines in Navarra, controlling a further 500 hectares, planted to Spanish grapes (graciano, garnacha and tempranillo) and international ones (cabernet, merlot and chardonnay). Príncipe de Viana also boast one of the region's most technically modern wineries, built in 2004, with a barrel room that contains more than 15,000 oak barrels. Despite this the winemaking approach is sensitive and modest, aiming always for clean, balanced flavours.

The scale of Príncipe de Viana's production brings an enormous economic advantage: by controlling everything from vineyard to bottling in combination with the high volumes produced means that the wines offer some of Spain's best value for money.

Sabina is a special label made by Príncipe de Viana for The Wine Society and is one of our top selling Spanish reds. The name Sabina is taken from the indigenous Spanish juniper tree grown locally in Navarra, where this wine comes from. This unoaked style of tempranillo (with a small amount of cabernet sauvignon to add structure) is made in a fruity and balanced style with lovely clean flavours. Perfect on its own at parties or enjoy with a plate of jamón.




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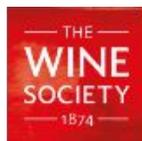
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### The Society's Southern Spanish Red, Jumilla 2018

A peppery, bold and full-bodied red from monastrell grapes grown in old vineyards in Jumilla, a small region inland from Alicante, benefitting from long hot summers.

<b>Product Code</b>	SP14821	<b>Dominant Grape</b>	Mourvedre
<b>Product Type</b>	Red Wine	<b>Drink Dates</b>	Now to 2021
<b>Origin</b>	Spain	<b>Alcohol Level</b>	14.0%
<b>Style</b>	Full Bodied	<b>Closure type</b>	Screwcap
<b>Vintage</b>	2018 vintage	<b>Price £</b>	5.95 / Bottle

**Producer : Bodegas Juan Gil** - See next page.




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## Wine Notes

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### **Producer : Bodegas Juan Gil**

Bodegas Juan Gil is a relatively young bodega, having only released its maiden vintage in 2003, but this family-owned winery has a passionate winemaking history dating back to 1916.

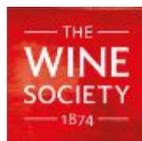
It began when Juan Gil Giménez, great-grandfather of the present generation, started getting involved in the world of wine, building a winery in the hilly Penarubia zone in the heart of Jumilla. His son, Juan Gil Guerrero, dedicated all his life to this world, but it was the third generation, Juan Gil González and his brother Paco, that really forged the winery's image of quality, efficiency, and reliability. It is after these men that the most emblematic trademark of this new period is called 'Juan Gil', and the current generation – Miguel Gil, the great grandson of the founder – is dedicated to continuing his ancestors' philosophy. Miguel has also been instrumental in the bodega's success in his own right, and was behind the development of the brand new winery which was opened in 2003.

Jumilla – and particularly the Penarubia zone – is most famous for its richly flavoured, concentrated monastrell. While known more widely as mourvèdre in France, the grape is in fact native to this region. Monastrell makes up the majority of Juan Gil's 100 hectares of vineyards, although they do also grow small amounts of other popular varieties like syrah. They also have access to fruit from around 700 hectares of local vines, which range in age from 30-50 years old.

Despite the proximity to the sea, the continental climate here produces scorching hot summers (there is sometimes a difference of 20 degrees between day and night temperatures) and very low rainfall. However, monastrell is able to resist drought remarkably well, and the predominantly limestone soils of Juan Gil's vineyards retain water, which also helps during the dry seasons. Poor-quality soils and strict viticultural practices produce low yields of high-quality grapes. The team at Juan Gil recognises that different plots of vines impart unique characteristics, so all plots are vinified separately and then skilfully blended to create distinctive and surprisingly complex wines.

When making The Society's Southern Spanish Red, a blend of monastrell with a little syrah, the syrah is hand-harvested in mid-September, whereas the monastrell is harvested in mid to late October. The winery is set right in the heart of the vineyards so the fruit does not have long to travel – this prevents temperature fluctuations and retains the grapes' natural aromas and freshness.

The processing capacity of the winery is an impressive three and a half million kilos, and the ageing cellar can hold 3,000 oak casks. All the buildings are air-conditioned, and the company has also invested in temperature-controlled vats and modern lab equipment, its aim being to balance their forefathers' traditions with the necessary technological advances to ensure the quality of their wines continues to flourish.



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**Producer : Bodegas Juan Gil - Continued.**

In addition to their projects in the Alicante region the Gil family also own other wineries and vineyards across Spain. An example is Cellers Can Blau based in El Molar in the DO of Monsant in Catalonia, established in 2003. Here 35 hectares of cariñena, syrah and grenache are planted for the company's small range of excellent red wines. The grenache is planted on soils of slate – known locally as llicorella, while the cariñena grows on clay soils and the syrah on limestone, and all average 40 years of age.




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### The Society's Beaujolais-Villages 2018

With intense and vibrant black-fruit perfume, this is a classic Beaujolais-Villages with good balance and a ripe yet fresh palate. Tim Sykes blends this every year at Les Vins Aujoux, home of The Society's White Burgundy. A delicious wine year after year that highlights Beaujolais' crunchy fruit-forward style.

<b>Product Code</b>	BJ7901	<b>Dominant Grape</b>	Gamay
<b>Product Type</b>	Red Wine	<b>Drink Dates</b>	Now to 2021
<b>Origin</b>	Beaujolais	<b>Alcohol Level</b>	13.0%
<b>Style</b>	Medium Bodied	<b>Closure type</b>	Screwcap
<b>Vintage</b>	2018 vintage	<b>Price £</b>	7.95 / 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.