

THE WINE OF MARSEILLES

Marseilles, an exceptional wine growing region. The latter could sound somewhat of a southern-style exaggeration, if it weren't in fact grounded in an ancient economic reality: despite wine having been the region's key local produce for many years, it's difficult to imagine, when travelling through the city and surrounding region, that this was where the first wine in France was produced.

The finest amongst those offered by the Echevins and "the gentlemen of the Chamber of Commerce" to the grand personalities of the day, together with torches and preserves, were six to twelve bottles of cru, completed and even replaced by the wines of Cassis, Bordeaux and even Madère.

Marseilles was to remain the department's wine growing centre until 1830. However, in time, with urban development slowly nibbling its way into adjacent parcels, Marseilles went from wine production centre to commercial and industrial metropolis.

It seemed that a part of Marseilles agriculture was to disappear forever... until 1994, that is, when François Caillol planted but three hectares in Carpiagne, an event that would mark the rebirth of a wine bearing the stamp of the region.

With the recovery of these vines in 2005, the efforts of Jean-François Brando, already owner of Château de Fontcreuse in Cassis, to further improve the quality potential of the vineyard, bore their fruit: the production of the Syrah and Caladoc varieties, purposely maintained at low yields, was to benefit from contemporary oenological techniques. Future vintages would produce rare bottles, worthy of accompanying Provençal-style dishes delightfully updated by imaginative chefs.

A revival to which it is the historian's due to pay tribute and one that has allowed Marseilles to preserve intact a tradition dating back over 2600 years.

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