



NEWS

FROM THE GRAND CONSEIL DU VIN DE BORDEAUX

- Mai 2009 -

Inauguration of two new Commanderies: Budapest in Hungary on 4th May 2009 and Salzburg in Austria on 8th May 2009

A large delegation of 23 people travelled to Hungary and Austria to inaugurate two new Commanderies.

It is thanks to the efforts of Dr Strunkmann Meister, Territorial Grand Maître of Europe, that these two new Commanderies have been established.

In the grounds of a French restaurant, “*Le Jardin de Paris*”, the new Maître of the Commanderie in Budapest, Mr George Kégl, held an excellently organised wine tasting to which numerous professionals were invited, including importers, restaurateurs and journalists. All wines of the various Bordeaux appellations were presented at this tasting.



Members of the Grand Conseil shared the role of serving wines from our terroirs to guests present at this tasting and distributing documentation provided by the different Wine Brotherhoods.

There seems to be a very keen interest for Bordeaux wines in this country where opportunities for them are developing.

In the evening of the same day, the Inauguration Chapter of the Commanderie de Bordeaux in Budapest was held. It was followed by a Gala Dinner where the guests of honour were His Excellency, Mr René Roudaut, French Ambassador in Hungary, and his wife. This reception took place at the Festetics Palace, a magnificent historical mansion, currently occupied by the University of Budapest.



The following day, the delegation was invited by members of the Budapest Commanderie for a visit of the Tokay region, in the Eastern part of Hungary. A trip to two wineries was organised: “Oremus” in Tolcsva and “Dodogo” in Tokay.

We finished our day at the home of Maître George Kégl, who welcomed us with his family. A buffet accompanied by various Hungarian wines was served.

Before leaving Budapest by train to travel to Vienna on the third day of our tour, the delegation went to the home of the French Ambassador, where His Excellency, Mr René Roudaut and his wife invited us to enjoy a delicious buffet lunch.

The trip continued on to Vienna, where members of the delegation had a day to visit this extremely charming historical city as they wished.

To limit costs, it was once again by train that we travelled from Vienna to Salzburg, where the new Maître, Mr Peter Benedict, welcomed us.

Peter Benedicts, a journalist, is well known to the Grand Conseil since he was one of the founding members of the Commanderie de Bordeaux in Munich in 1984.



Commandeurs in Salzburg

In his induction speech, the Grand Maître, Mr Michel-Pierre Massonie, expressed his Thoughts in the following way:

“The Grand Conseil in particular and Bordeaux wines in general are very fortunate that you have kindly accepted to become the Founding Maître of our new Commanderie de Bordeaux in Salzburg.

Indeed, not only do you know the Bordeaux winegrowing area perfectly well, for many years you have also tasted and given comments about all the wines produced here, from the most acclaimed to the most modest.

Your abilities, your meticulousness, as well as your tremendous amiability have made you a person much appreciated by professionals of our region, both winegrowers and wine merchants...

We know, my dear Peter, that thanks to your skill and perfect knowledge of the Bordeaux wine sector, you will have all they keys for successfully chairing and coordinating the new Commanderie we are inaugurating this evening in Salzburg. I am delighted in advance and I would already like to present you my thanks.”

The traditional Gala Dinner of excellent quality that closed this Chapter was served in a legendary location, the well known “Schloss Fuschl” Hotel, situated up in the mountains on the edge of a lake. In this magnificent setting, guests were all enchanted by the sunset that resembled a decor taken from an opera.



On the day that followed these unforgettable moments, members of the delegation took a plane from Munich and to Bordeaux, aware that they had made a useful contribution to the promotion of our fine wines in this part of the world.

* * * * *



THE GRAND CONSEIL DU VIN DE BORDEAUX

A VISIT TO THE TOKAJ WINE REGION (HUNGARY), 5TH MAY 2009

OREMUS

TOKAJ

In records dating back to the 16th century, the wine estate **Oremus** already bore this Latin name which inspires respect. During the 17th century, this estate was one of the prized possessions of the **Rakóczi** royal family. It rose to fame at the occasion of wine competitions organised during Hungary’s celebrations to mark the new millennium, at a time when the estate was owned by the princes.

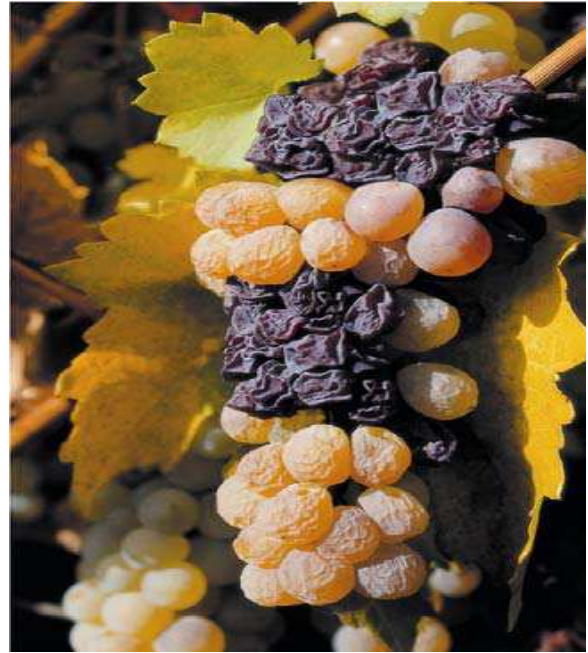
Windischgraetz and the **Dokus** family... Subsequently, during the difficult decades of nationalisation, ensued a long period of silence in the life of this property. Finally, in 1993, life was breathed back into the vineyard and cellar of Tokaj-Oremus.

The oenologist David Alvarez, owner of Vega Sicilia, assisted by a few Hungarian specialists, set himself, from the outset, the noble aim of perpetuating traditions, of reviving the vineyard and making the Oremus wine estate prosperous.

The four main grape varieties of the Tokay region (Furmint, Hárslevelű, small berry Muscat and Zéta) are grown at the estate, but experiments are also done using pre-phylloxera varieties.

Listed amongst the treasures of World Heritage, the cellars of Oremus are unique in the world and since 2002 receive protection given to these exceptional heritage sites.

In underground cellars, dug out by hand from volcanic tuff, the wines of Oremus are stored, in the same way since the 13th century. The various Tokay wines are matured for several years in oak barrels (136 to 220 litres), stored in different passages of the cellars which constitute a labyrinth measuring four kilometres in length.



In the new cellar in Tolcsva, traditional and modern methods are implemented to preserve the exceptional character of Oremus wines. The harvest is transported in the gentlest conditions, seeking the assistance of gravity as much as possible, through the various levels to finally reach the lowest part of the cellar, where, in oak barrels, the fermentation of musts begins.

In the Tokay wine region the beneficial effects of noble rot prevail

Harvests are always late; they begin in October when the sun has ripened the grapes to the point of giving them the sweetness of honey. It is at this precise moment that the mystical miracle occurs. Thanks to the simultaneous effects of light rain that falls just at the right time and early morning mists, *Botrytis Cinerea* appears; it is noble rot that takes hold of the grapes and covers them. Drying winds, sunshine and noble rot then come into play: the grapes wrinkle, shrivel and become "Aszú" berries. It is truly a process of alchemy and this phenomenon occurs in Nature's laboratory! The bio-chemical activity of *Botrytis* enriches the grape until it makes it an "Aszú" berry possessing a taste of honey.

TOKAJI ESZENCIA, OREMUS Nectar

Tokay Eszencia, also called Nectar, is the wine of the highest quality compared with all other Tokay wines. It is an extremely rare wine found nowhere else in the world. The botrytised grapes are picked one by one and harvested separately. These grapes are kept in small vats until the harvests are completed. During this period, the "Aszú" berries, by their own weight, cause a honey-flavoured nectar to form drop by drop: this is the ESZENCIA. It is the beverage sung about in the Hungarian national anthem.

Oremus Tokaji Aszú

"*Arum potabile*, or gold to drink." "Aszú" wines are like the crowning element of meals and solemn moments. To 136 litres of must (measured with the aid of a Gönc barrel), a certain quantity of "Aszú" berries is added; the unit of measurement is the "PUTTONYOS", the harvesting hod (it contains 25 kilos of "Aszú" berries): it is therefore possible to make "aszú"

wines with 3, 4, 5 or 6 hods. The “Aszú” berries rest for two or three days in the fermentation must and it is only afterwards that the golden-coloured “Aszú” must is pressed; it then continues to ferment for several months to eventually become wine. “Aszú” wines are matured in small Hungarian oak barrels. Each “Aszú” wine produced by Oremus possesses a world of complex flavours, perfect balance combining sweetness and vivacity. These wines provide an incomparable experience tasted as an aperitif without food accompaniment or simply savoured for pleasure amongst friends. In addition, Tokay “Aszú” wines are a perfect match with goat’s cheese, goose foie gras, fruit desserts and sweets.

The ideal temperature to serve Tokay “Aszú” wines is between 8 and 10°C.

Tokay wines have specific typical features which are different to the very special character of our fine Sauternes and Barsac wines, Loupiac and Sainte-Croix-du-Mont.

* * * * *

**Yves COPPENS, guest of honour
at the Open Days held in the Lalande de Pomerol Appellation
‘From the theory of Evolution*, to the vines of Lalande de Pomerol’**

In 1974, then aged 40, Yves Coppens made a joint-discovery which would, throughout the world, throw people’s knowledge into confusion and lead us, from that point onwards, to look upon our far-distant ancestors with curiosity and admiration, as well as a strange feeling that we all come from one and the same family ... or almost!

This discovery, made along with Maurice Taieb and Donald Johanson on November 24th 1974, is of course that of Lucy, in Ethiopia, to be more precise in Hadar, on the edge of the Awash Valley, in the Afar depression. What was unearthed was a 20-year-old *Australopithecus Afarensis*, who had undoubtedly died by drowning; a young woman or rather an almost complete fossil (52 bone fragments) dating back 3.2 million years.

At the time, news of this discovery was relayed around the world and 35 years later, even though other hominids found seem even older, only Lucy, thanks to the researchers finding 40% of her body, has given as much information about the Odyssey of our Species. The name she was given comes from the famous song by the Beatles, “*Lucy in the sky with diamonds*”, a tune the researchers then listened to over and over again on their tape recorder.

Yves Coppens therefore quite naturally became Lucy’s father, and it is undoubtedly (and without a poor play on words) that his genes predisposed him for this fate.

He has kindled a passionate interest for Prehistory since his childhood and began his career by digs carried out whilst he was still as middle school, in Brittany, since he comes from the town of Vannes.

Then, at the age of 22, he joined the CNRS (National Centre for Scientific Research) and studied the Tertiary and Quaternary eras. This emeritus researcher became involved in archaeological digs on the world’s five continents and specialised in paleoanthropology, or the scientific understanding of skeletons and hence the morphology of our very, very distant ancestors.

His discoveries go hand in hand with his excellent, awe-inspiring career: Master of Conferences at the Natural History Museum, Director and Professor of the Museum of Mankind, he entered the Collège de France where he became a lecturer, for a Chair of Paleoanthropology and Prehistory. More recently, the

French President entrusted him with a mission within the High Council of Research and Technology: *how to enlighten the nation about the main orientations to follow in terms of research policy.*

But a person can be one of the leading world specialists of Human Evolution and nonetheless a follower of Epicure.

"I love it when Lalande de Pomerol falls into a glass" he declared when he visited this appellation situated on the right bank of the Barbanne stream, and added "particularly when it is lively and vibrant."



Lunch at Château de Viaud-Lalande with Pr. Yves Coppens

Guest of honour at the recent open days held in the Lalande de Pomerol appellation, Yves Coppens was not only inducted into the Brotherhood of the Baillis de Pomerol at the occasion of a memorable Gala Dinner held at Château Haut Chaigneau, he was also able, at his leisure, to convey complex messages to a public of all ages who came to listen to him.

Specialist of our Origins, Yves Coppens is also a man of media and communication, a charmer, a bit of an actor, mischievous and quite simply amusing, very amusing, and what could be better than learning with delight.

Throughout this open-day weekend, his unaffected accounts about his life as a researcher were followed by some juicy anecdotes recounting encounters with celebrities and other crowned heads!

But Professor Coppens allowed himself some time to visit the winegrowing area and its estates, to discover the market in Libourne, shake some hands, a lot of hands, and always taste with conviction and pleasure the various vintages of Lalande de Pomerol.



During his time in this appellation, Yves Coppens proved that an excellent level of knowledge combines well with the art of living in the Bordeaux style, where the pleasure of the land is in harmony with the age-old skill possessed by winegrowers of this area named Lalande de Pomerol.

We hope he will return soon; this is clearly the message conveyed by inhabitants of this region!