



The Grand Conseil Newsletter **May 2010**

The “foreigners” who contributed to establishing the renown of Bordeaux wine!

Part two of the article written by Mr Philippe Roudié, Emeritus Professor at the University of Bordeaux

THE CORRÉZIENS IN THE LIBOURNE....AND THE OTHERS!

“THE CORREZIENS”

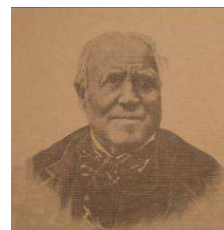
The end of the 19th century saw the arrival of a relatively huge wave of immigration in the Bordeaux winegrowing area. These newcomers were “foreigners” from within France who were in complete contrast to their predecessors and the Corrèziens are the most perfect example. It was in fact a migration of mountain dwellers who came from the central mountain range of France, the Massif Central. They sold goods from door to door in Northern France and in Belgium, disregarding major maritime trade. They were as discreet and efficient as the “Chartons” were inclined to like to think and show themselves to be grand and opulent.



Town of Meymac

Originally, it was a tradition of temporary emigration; for agricultural or craftwork purposes, people left the plateau of Millevaches, an area where it was extremely difficult to make a living. Many young people from Meymac, in particular, carried out their skills elsewhere.

For any new movement, there always has to be an emblematic pioneer. In this case it was J. Gaye Bordas, born in Davignac (in the Canton of Meymac); he was a travelling salesman in South-Western France. Noting that



the wine-producers of Davignac in the Médoc sold barrels of wine in Northern France, he set about doing the same, presenting their merchandise with great persuasion. He encouraged his family and friends

to do likewise. At the dawn of the last quarter of the 19th century, hundreds of Corrèziens from Meymac and its surrounding area were key intermediaries for Bordeaux wines being sold in Northern France and the wallonian area of Belgium, to the great displeasure of families in the Bordeaux region, who found it hard to tolerate this unexpected competition. Sometimes these Corrèziens used unscrupulous means to sell the wines and some even printed labels where one could read “*fine Bordeaux winesowner in Meymac, near Bordeaux*”; whereas in reality the two places were about 250 kilometres apart. The Girondins were disconcerted by this erroneous indication and won their court case against the Corrèziens.



Chateau Moines Larose in Meymac built by J.Gaye Bordas

But this legal action was not enough to curb the arrival of more migrants; it was quite the contrary in fact. The area from which newcomers departed expanded towards the south around Egletons, but mainly in the area surrounding Argentat in the valley of the Upper Dordogne, after 1900, whilst at the same time the very first pioneers began to invest in their native land, buying splendid mansions, with the money they had earned in the Bordeaux region.



Ets J.B. Audy on the Quai Souchet in Libourne

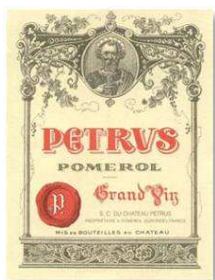
Given the success achieved, this movement intensified and whilst maintaining its traditional character (credit given orally, door to door sales, frequency of payment in cash....) it also moved with the times. Salesmen now travelled from one customer to the next in horse-drawn carriages, or even better used the railways, which arrived in Meymac as of 1880. Small banks also began to appear....they were run, naturally, by Corrèziens. The most impressive fact was that many Corrèziens definitively established themselves as wine merchants in Libourne, and mainly on the Priourat quays, which run alongside the right bank of the Dordogne River, a real wine district, upstream from the Napoleonic stone bridge, Libourne's copy of the Chartrons quarter in Bordeaux, but whose historic content was extremely different. These Corrèziens progressively invested, plot after plot, in vineyards. A small amount in the Médoc, but massively in the Libourne area, Saint-Emilion, Fronsac and Pomerol, especially in winegrowing areas which did not yet enjoy the renown of those of the Médoc or Graves, but whose success would gradually be ensured by their new owners. Amongst these investors were "*barricailleurs*"* who sold wines in small barrels, but also wholesalers such as Péresse, Audy, Gratadour, all working with Belgium and Northern France, such as Estrade, Ozoulias, Nony, Fournial and many others....

Above all, we will remember three dynasties: the Borie family, who settled in Bordeaux and own several properties in the Médoc; or the Janoueix family, now at its 4th generation in the Libourne area, which settled at Château Haut-Sarpe in 1930, became a wine merchant in 1932 and currently owns and runs fifteen wine estates.



Château Haut Sarpe

The most brilliant success has to be put down to the Moueix family. Born in the Corrèze region, Jean-Pierre Moueix set up his business in Libourne in 1937: it rapidly became a success and in 1956 purchased several highly-reputed estates in Saint-Emilion and Pomerol. But celebrity came with the definitive acquisition of the legendary wine estate Pétrus in 2001 by Jean-François Moueix. This wine trade firm is now extremely large and ensures the promotion and sale of the most acclaimed wines in the entire Bordeaux winegrowing region.



Mr Jean Pierre Moueix, Founder of the Ets J.P. Moueix in Libourne

Some other well-known Corrèziens include the industrialist Clément Fayat, one of the kings of the construction industry and civil engineering, who has invested in buying wine estates in the Libourne area. The story of the Delbos family, ancestor of the Bouteiller family, but from the Périgord region originally (from Domme to be precise), which settled in the Médoc, is of the same kind....

In total, according to the statistics, there are more than 100 wine estate owners of Corrèze origin in the Libourne area and the Médoc now based in the Gironde. Statistics also show that their production (almost entirely red wine) stood in 1978 at approximately 60 000 hectolitres: that is to say 1.5% of total wine production in the Bordeaux region, but representing a quarter of wines made in the Pomerol appellation, and a tenth of those in the Lalande-de-Pomerol, Fronsac and Saint-Emilion appellations. “*barricailleurs*”: the name for people who sold wines in barrels

“THE MONTAGNOLS”



Village of Bages

meudoc area, as of the beginning of the 19th century, from the Ariège region or the Spanish Aran Valley. Gradually this trend changed: many settled as permanent employees, then as small estate owners, even as managing agents or estate managers. Some succeeded magnificently, such as the Cazes family, which gave a Mayor to the town of Pauillac. His heir renovated the village of Bages, which is found alongside Château Lynch-Bages and all of this has now become an exemplary centre for wine tourism.

Not as well-known as the Corrèze “saga”, the migration of people from the Ariège region was largely very similar. At first it was a migration for temporary work, winter labour in the vineyards carried out by Pyreneans known as the “*Montagnols*”, who came to the



“THE PIEDS-NOIRS”



Château Carbonnieux

than 400 families invested in viticulture, the majority in average-sized estates where their hard work, sense of mutual aid, audacity and open-minded attitude to modernity often worked wonders, despite enormous difficulties. With just a few noteworthy exceptions (A. Perrin, Château Carbonnieux, the Tari family at Château Giscours in the Médoc or the Nairac family in Barsac, or even Philippe Raoux in Arsac, Médoc), it was not towards the most prestigious communal appellations that these new enterprising owners set their sights. They settled where the price of vineyards was still affordable, in the Côtes de Bordeaux or Bourg, on the border of the Haut-Médoc, in the periphery of Saint-Emilion, in the Côtes de Castillon or the Côtes de Francs and especially in the eastern part of the Entre-Deux-Mers and the area of Sainte-Foy La Grande. They contributed to making the population younger and took part in giving a new boost to the wine-producing economy, which had been severely hit by dreadful frosts in the winter of 1956 and the wave of rural exodus that ensued.

The decade from 1955 to 1965 saw the year when repatriates, known as “*pieds-noirs*”, arrived from North Africa, chiefly from Algeria, who literally revolutionized vine and fruit growing in the South of France. The Gironde department took advantage of these newcomers and welcomed hundreds of vine growers, mainly from the region of Oran, especially in 1962; they were assisted by being given special loans. The fact remains that no less



The Winery in Arsac

“FOREIGN INVESTORS”



Château Haut Brion

The end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century have not stopped the continuous creation the winegrowing world of the Gironde represents. Americans have made investments (at Château Haut-Brion, for example); the English continue to flock here (although they have at times

resold certain estates, such as Château Loudenne and Château Latour in the Médoc).

Belgians have invested far more than the Japanese, who are now actually only present in totality at Château Lagrange in Saint-Julien in the Médoc, which belongs to the Suntory group. However, Scandinavians, primarily the Danish, have arrived in the Bordeaux region, and now own and run three estates in the Entre-Deux-Mers area and Château Fombrauge in the Saint-Emilion appellation.



Château Haut Lagrange

The latest to arrive were the Chinese, who came in 2008. In the space of a few months, three estates were purchased: one in the area of Sainte-Foy La Grande, the second in Fronsac and the third in Puisseguin, Saint-Emilion (to be honest more Chinese-French, than completely Chinese!) At present there is no sign of the Russians; when will they come to the Bordeaux region?

The role of “foreigners” was significant in forming the class of Bordeaux and Libourne wine merchants, and for land and property investments too. The only sector of the wine industry which has escaped foreign influence is brokerage.

Foreigners’ inspiration for wine-producing techniques has also been quite considerable. As an example, the term “Dutch sulphur wick” was used for sulphuring in the past. But we cannot, however, overlook the role of the Girondins, those of pure Bordeaux stock, the most numerous, especially families of winegrowers, particularly since foreigners integrated in this region for many years rapidly became true Girondins!

Philippe Roudié



In Brief...

May

Annual Chapter of the Commanderie of Bontemps -Sainte-Croix du Mont

VINEXPO ASIA PACIFIC: Attend the opening evening!

The opening evening of VINEXPO ASIA PACIFIC on 24th May 2010 will, for the first time, be organised by the Saint-Emilion Jurade, in collaboration with the Commanderie de Bordeaux in Hong Kong. **You can take part in this event and invite your customers, as well as importers and journalists to the gala dinner reception** which will be held in the glamorous setting of the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Hong Kong. **Registrations must be made.** To request a reservation form, click on the active link below.



For any further information, please contact the Jurade's communication department:

Phone: 05 57 55 50 02 - astrid-deysine@vins-saint-emilion.com

Commanderie du Bontemps Médoc and Graves Sauternes et Barsac

Encouraged by the success of the event in previous years, **the Commanderie du Bontemps, Médoc & Graves, Sauternes & Barsac**, is organising, on Tuesday 25th May 2010 at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Hong Kong, its 3rd gala dinner reception as part of **Vinexpo Asia Pacific**. This major event, for which all available places have already been reserved, will bring together six hundred guests in the magnificent reception salon of this luxury hotel. Numerous well-known figures of the wine world from all corners of the world will attend this evening reception held in praise of wines from the left bank of the Gironde and the Garonne. This event will be chaired by Emmanuel Cruse, Grand Maître of the Commanderie du Médoc & Graves, Sauternes & Barsac, also a leading member of the Conseil Privé of the Grand Conseil du Vin de Bordeaux. Vincent Cheung, Territorial Grand Maître of Asia, representing the Grand Conseil du Vin de Bordeaux, will attend this prestigious evening reception too.

June

- **Wednesday 3rd June 2010**

General Meeting – Election of the New Maître -

- **Saturday 5th June 2010**

Fête de Printemps des Hospitaliers de Pomerol

- **Saturday 5th and 6th June 2010**

Weekend of the Grands Amateurs organised by the Union des Grands Crus

Contact: grands.amateurs@ugcb.net

- **Sunday 20th June 2010**

Fete of the Jurade Saint-Emilion

- **Friday 25th June 2010**

Fete de la Fleur of the Commanderie of the Bontemps Medoc and Graves-Sauternes and Barsac on the Quinconces esplanade

Contact: commanderiedubontemps@orange.fr – Phone. 05 56 30 38 38

September

- **Sunday 4th September 2010**

Connetablie of Guyenne en Entre-Deux Mers Annual Chapter at Château de Rauzan.

- **Sunday 12th September 2010**

Ban des Vendanges des Compagnons du Bordeaux at Château Arras in Saint Gervais

