



The Grand Conseil Newsletter

August/September 2009

“A SPORTING VENUE FOR THE MÉDOC HARVEST FESTIVAL 2009”

The Médoc Harvest Festival will be held this year on Sunday 20th September in a location dear to the heart's of all sports enthusiasts of the Bordeaux region, as well as to those from the Médoc area, because the venue is Château Bel Air, headquarters of Bordeaux's well-loved football team, the *Girondins de Bordeaux*.



A dynamic football team, Bordeaux became Champion of France 2009 after a memorably tough season against Marseille and reigning champion Lyon, teams which had to admit defeat faced with the *Girondins'* grit, endurance and technical skill.

Photo D. LE LANN / FCGB

The manager of Bordeaux's football club is a renowned man of Médoc origin, an estate owner and producer of great growth wines: Jean-Louis Triaud. He is in fact the son-in-law of the Founding President of the Grand Conseil and the Commanderie du Bontemps de Médoc, de Graves, de Sauternes et de Barsac, Henri Martin, who, in the past, was also Manager of this team of champions for many years.



Photo D. LE LANN / FCGB

2009's Médoc Harvest Festival offers us the occasion to give you a more detailed presentation of the well-known Commanderie du Bontemps de Médoc, de Graves, de Sauternes & de Barsac, even though many of you are honorary members or already familiar with this extremely active wine brotherhood.



Commanderie du Bontemps Médoc & Graves-Sauternes & Barsac.....

The Commanderie is now heir traditions that date back several hundred years. Here are some details about its history... During the Middle-Ages, a religious order founded a church in Benon, near Saint-Laurent Médoc and later a second monastery in Arcins. Vine growing, as well as maturing and selling wines soon became the main resources of these soldiers and farmers. But they did not content themselves with solely carrying out their own activities; they also assisted and protected vine growers in the neighbouring villages of Margaux, Soussans, Avensan, Moulis... They therefore held a position of great importance in the affairs of this region.



The current organisation of the Commanderie dates back to the period just after the Second World War, but it has preserved the convictions of its origins.

In 1959, Graves wine producers decided to join those of the Médoc and formed one single wine brotherhood. In the same year, the Commanderie du Bontemps de Sauternes & de Barsac was established with our patronage.

24th June 2000 is the date of the merger between the Commanderie du Bontemps de Médoc & de Graves and the Commanderie du Bontemps de Sauternes & de Barsac, which now form a united entity on the left bank of the Garonne and the Gironde.

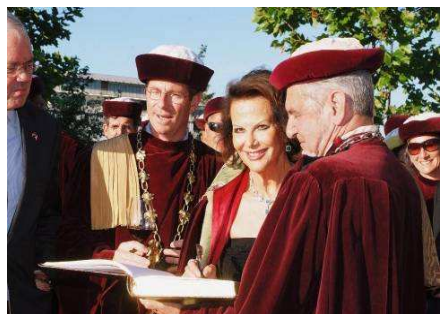
We cautiously mention the eminent ancestor of this Commanderie, Jean-Odule Paulin d'Esquet, because the only information we possess about him has been passed on by word of mouth over the centuries. It is claimed that during the 9th century he invented the small wooden dish named in Gascon a "*desquet*"; naturally it takes its name from the inventor and in French is called a "*bontemps*". It is a recipient in which a cellar master beats egg whites to be used for fining and clarifying wines.



"*Bontemps*"!! One word, not two of course... an essential piece of equipment for a wine-maker, unassuming in shape, easy to use, it is now the emblem of the Commanderie. It serves as a model for our headdress, a Bordeaux-coloured velvet toque for Médoc & Graves, golden-yellow for Sauternes and Barsac, and white organdie evoking wood tinged by new wine and the snowy whiteness of beaten albumen.

Our robe is a simplified version of the historical ceremonial garment worn by members of religious orders in the distant past. Ample folds of Bordeaux-coloured velvet are set off by a band of velvet worn over the shoulder, green in colour for Médoc Commandeurs, golden and green for Graves. The fibula, which holds it in position on the shoulder, is made in the image of the *Bontemps* and bears the initials of the Commanderie around its edge.

The Commanderie is a group, an association bringing together the main professions involved in wine-production: winegrowers, wine brokers and wine merchants. Winegrowers contribute their presence, skill, land and infrastructures; brokers bring their knowledge about wine and those who produce them; wine merchants provide their network of contacts, their understanding of various markets for wine sales and their open-minded outlook on the world as a whole.



The Commanderie's character is also based upon its members' determination to be, in all circumstances, men and women of Quality.

Commandeurs devote their efforts to ensuring the renown of all Médoc & Graves, Sauternes & Barsac wines, as well as the wide range of Bordeaux wines. Carrying out their joint activities, they form a united group of friends dedicated to working for the general good of all wine professionals.

Their activities include traditional annual events: the Saint-Vincent celebration held in the month of January, a festival for winegrowers, and cellar and vat house staff; the Vintage Proclamation held in March, for wine merchants and their foreign customers; the Fête de la Fleur in June, which brings us together at the period of the year when the vine flowers; the Harvest Proclamation, held in September, which marks the start of each new harvest. The Commanderie also organises numerous meetings, receptions, induction ceremonies and Exceptional Chapters, held in our winegrowing region and elsewhere in France.

Activities of the Commanderie du Bontemps de Médoc & de Graves – de Sauternes & de Barsac are also held abroad. Via the “Grand Conseil de Bordeaux”, established at its initiative to federate all the region's wine brotherhoods, it is in contact with the “Commanderies de Bordeaux” throughout the world. These now exist in many countries such as the United States of America, Canada, Japan, Senegal, Great Britain, Belgium, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, Spain, Denmark, Sweden and Norway, where they bring together many leading personalities united by their love and interest for our wines.



As the induction ritual says: “*In every place and in presence of whosoever*”, the Commanderie represents, celebrates and upholds not only wine, but all the values which, in our region, are closely linked to it: friendship, good cheer and loyalty to our land.



Dates to remember

♦ **13/09/2009 –**

Ban des Vendanges de la Jurade de Saint-Emilion
See the schedule on the website of Saint-Emilion
www.vins-saint-emilion.com

♦ **13/09/2009 –**

Ban des Vendanges des Compagnons du Bordeaux
Cité Médiévale de Saint-Macaire

♦ **19/09/2009 –**

Fête des Vendanges de la Commanderie du Bontemps Médoc & Graves –Sauternes & Barsac at Château Bel Air – « Girondins de Bordeaux » Head Office at Haillan