

A UNIQUE MEAL TO PROMOTE THE BRAND NEW FRENCH WINE APPELLATION SYSTEM. THE FOURTH LUNCH HOSTED BY «LA REVUE DU VIN DE FRANCE» (OCTOBER 22, 1930)

Una cena unica per promuovere il nuovissimo sistema di denominazione dei vini francesi. Il quarto pranzo organizzato da «La Revue du vin de France» (22 ottobre 1930)

Olivier Jacquet

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Abstract

On October 22, 1930, the fourth lunch of the «Revue du vin de France» was held at the restaurant “Le Calvados” in the Halles de la Villette in Paris. On that day, the magazine invited many of the leading figures in the world of wine, gastronomy, and the French and international press to enjoy eight courses, 19 appellations wines, and 5 eaux-de-vie. While the dishes served partly reflected the rise of regional gastronomy, the wine list and guest list were even more indicative of the new context in which this meal was held. We show how, in the early 1930s, the wine industry attempted to promote a new type of wine: appellation wines. Through effective and complementary networks bringing together producers, sommeliers, gourmets, wine organizations, public authorities, the media, and cultural circles, and with the help of pioneering propaganda campaigns, a new discourse was developed that emphasized origin and terroir.

Il 22 ottobre 1930, presso il ristorante “Le Calvados”, nelle Halles de la Villette a Parigi, si tiene il quarto pranzo della «Revue du vin de France». Quel giorno, la rivista invita a gustare 8 portate, 19 vini di denominazione e 5 acquaviti molti dei principali attori del mondo vitivinicolo, della gastronomia e della stampa francese e internazionale. Se i piatti proposti riflettono in parte il boom della gastronomia regionale, la carta dei vini e la lista degli invitati evocano ancora di più il nuovo contesto in cui si svolge questo pranzo. Partendo da questo presupposto, mostriamo come, all'inizio degli anni 1930, il mondo vitivinicolo cercasse di promuovere vini di nuova concezione: i vini a denominazione di origine. Attraverso reti efficaci e complementari che riuniscono produttori, sommelier, gastronomi, organizzazioni viticole, autorità pubbliche, media, mondi culturali e con l'aiuto di azioni propagandistiche pionieristiche, un nuovo discorso valorizza l'origine e il terroir.

Keywords: appellation of origin, folklore, gastronomy, propaganda.

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Olivier Jacquet, doctor-HDR research engineer in contemporary history, he is a member of the UMR CNRS-uB LIR3S and project manager of the UNESCO Chair «Cultures et Traditions Vitivinicoles» at the Université Bourgogne Europe. His work focuses on wine-producing societies and the professional, scientific and political construction of wine produc-

tion and norms in France in the 19th and 20th centuries. He also studies the phenomena of prescriptions and descriptions of wines over the course of the long 20th century, with a particular interest in the question of changes in drinkers' tastes. He has recently published a book entitled *Le goût des vins d'origine : Genèse, construction et triomphe des AOC au XX^e siècle*.

Olivier Jacquet, dottore HDR in storia contemporanea, è membro dell'UMR CNRS-uB LIR3S e responsabile del progetto della cattedra UNESCO «Cultures et Traditions Vitivinicoles» presso l'Université Bourgogne Europe. Il suo lavoro si concentra sulle società viticole e sulla costruzione professionale, scientifica e politica della produzione e delle norme enologiche in Francia nel XIX e XX secolo. Studia inoltre il fenomeno delle prescrizioni e delle descrizioni dei vini nel corso del lungo XX secolo, con un interesse particolare per la questione dell'evoluzione dei gusti dei consumatori. Ha recentemente pubblicato un libro intitolato Le goût des vins d'origine : Genèse, construction et triomphe des AOC au XX^e siècle (Il gusto dei vini d'origine: genesi, costruzione e trionfo delle AOC nel XX secolo).

Introduction

October 22, 1930, *Halles de la Villette*, Paris. The restaurant *Le Calvados* hosted the fourth lunch of the «Revue du vin de France» (RVF). The magazine, founded three years earlier, invited some of the leading figures in the world of wine, gastronomy, and the French and international press to enjoy 8 courses, 19 wines of appellation of origin, and 5 *eaux-de-vie*.

Although this was only the fourth lunch organized by the magazine since its founding in 1927, a look at back issues shows that this meal was a real turning point. The first two lunches were of much less interest and remain insignificant. The first is not even mentioned in the monthly magazine. The second was the subject of a short article of a few lines and brought together the magazine's team around a menu consisting of six very classic dishes, with three of the wines served mentioned in the margin: a Monthelie, a Bordeaux *château* and a Piper-Heidsieck Champagne. The third edition of the «RVF» dinner, held on May 24, 1930, at the Viel restaurant in *La Madeleine*, is of some historical interest. Three pages are devoted to it. The meal brought together 8 guests from outside the magazine, mainly from the wine trade union, the restaurant industry and, to a lesser extent, the press. The menu consisted of nine courses, accompanied by 7 fine wines from several French regions, including 4 wines that had recently been awarded appellation d'origine status. At the end of the lunch, however, the editor of the «Revue du vin de France» proposed the idea of a larger banquet that would bring together more people from the wine industry, the press, and all areas of the wine world. This meal took place in October and was a defining moment.

This lunch was not just a gathering of gourmets, of which there had been many since the 1920s with the development of gastronomic clubs and regional gastronomy (Csergo 1996; 2007; 2008; Pitte 2019). The fourth lunch of the «Revue du vin de France» took place at a time when new standards for wine production and marketing were being defined in France: the first appellations. Desired by many winegrowers, their implementation was complicated and caused numerous conflicts within the profession. How did the «Revue du vin de France» contribute to supporting and even promoting this new system among its readers and beyond? How could the meal explored in this article have become a key moment in a burgeoning wine propaganda movement (Laferté 2006) for appellation wines? How does it illustrate, at a time when an unprecedented crisis of over-production is beginning, the difficult process of promoting wines of appellation of origin against the branded wines or ordinary wines that dominate the markets?

To decipher the many historical messages conveyed by this lunch in 1930, we will first rely on a careful and exhaustive reading of all issues of the «Revue du vin de France» published from 1927 to the late 1930s. However, this study also draws on the corpus produced by all the stakeholders who attended these banquets. This includes the Parisian sommeliers' publication, the bi-monthly «Le Sommelier», as well as the numerous archives of wine organizations such as professional unions, the International Organization of Vine and Wine (OIV), and the *Institut National des Appellations d'Origine* (INAO), all of which deal with appellation wines or propaganda.

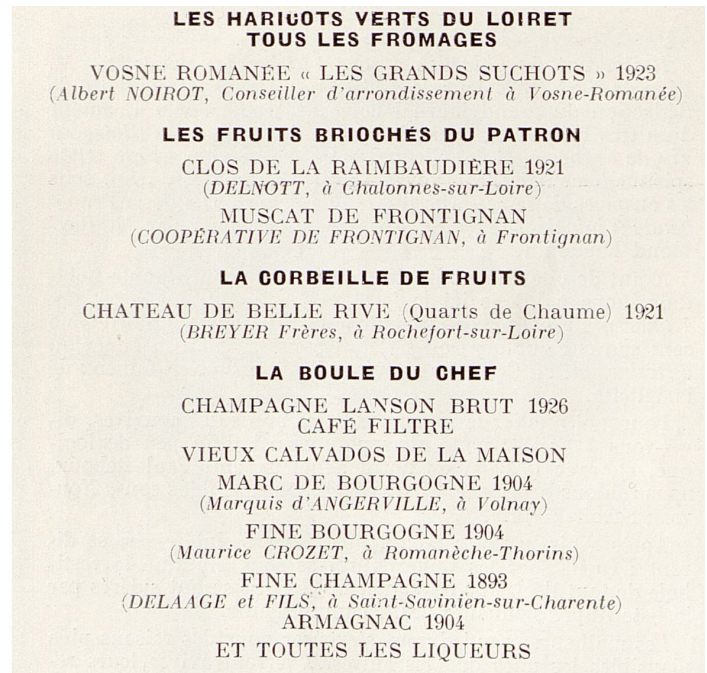
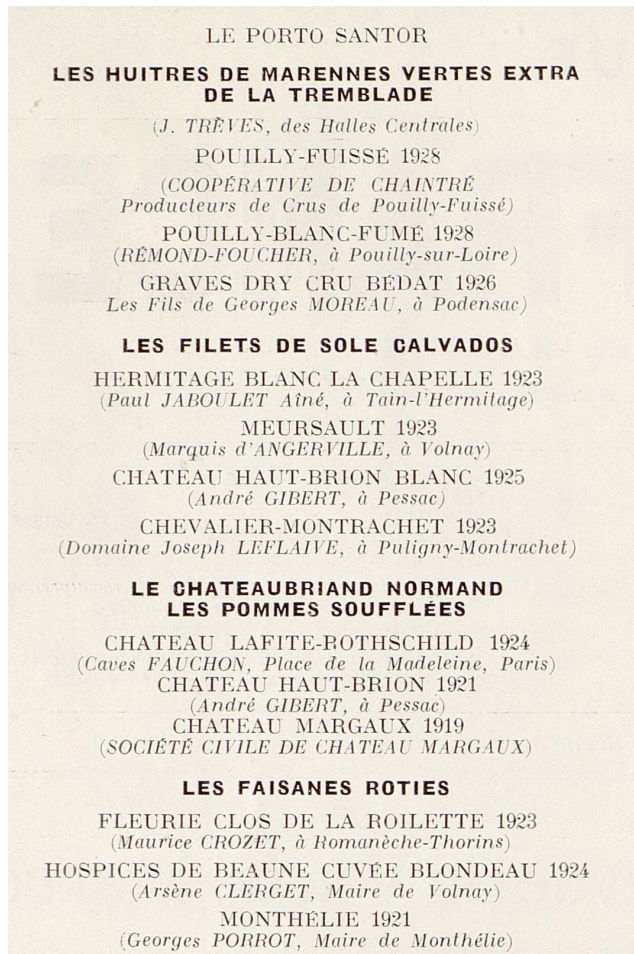


Figure 1. Menu for the fourth lunch of the «Revue du vin de France», «Aux Ecoutes», October 24, 1930.

1. «RVF» in the early 1930s, a gourmet magazine

Like wildfire, following some indiscretion, the Parisian gourmet and gastronomic club scene learned that the fourth lunch of the *Revue du vin de France* would take place at the restaurant *Le Calvados* at the *Marché de la Villette* (Chevrier 1930).

In fact, at the end of October 1930, this Parisian restaurant hosted a lunch which, as indicated in these introductory remarks by Félix Chevrier, a journalist for the «Revue du vin de France», attracted the cream of French gastronomes.

Although its name does not indicate it, the content of its pages shows that the magazine takes a keen interest in gastronomy. In a way, the «Revue du vin de France» continues the movement to promote regional gastronomy that began at the end of the 19th century and continued throughout the first third of the 20th century. Politically driven by a Third Republic that sought to highlight the nation's regional specificities (Thiesse 1991; Citron 1987; Kessler 2018), the process benefited from numerous initiatives in both the provinces and Paris. Following the development of regional folklore (Young 2007; Laferté 2006) and the rise of culinary literature increasingly inclined to establish the canons of regional gastronomy¹, an entire bourgeois elite, mainly from the capital and motorized, took pride in this new “tradition” of localized dishes. The venture was understood as an *ex nihilo* invention of a regional cuisine made from local products but arranged according to bourgeois, urban standards of hygiene and taste, adapted to the sociology of the motorized tourist of the time (Jacquet Laferté 2013). Gathered in prestigious clubs such as the *Club des Cent* (Pitte 2019), promoted by new guides, led by «Michelin» (Csergo 2011; Harp 2002), spread by the regional mix of soldiers during the First World War and finally established along provincial roads by the emergence of dedicated restaurants, this new gastronomy gradually became emblematic of certain regions.

Such is the case in Burgundy, where, in the wake of the economic regionalism of the interwar period (Veitl 1992) and eager to promote local food and wine production, Gaston Gérard, then Deputy Mayor of Dijon, gave it a place in the spotlight by founding the Dijon Gastronomic Fair in 1921 (Laferté 2006). At the same time, this heritage status for regional cuisine was in line with the main concerns of the new breed of tourists keen on local gastronomy, in an endeavor that was as much cultural as it was economic. With it came a proliferation of culinary guides and a whole body of literature highlighting the dishes and gastronomic locations of the regions: the «Michelin» guide, already mentioned, but also the collection *La France gastronomique, guide des merveilles culinaires et des bonnes auberges françaises* (Gastronomic France, guide to culinary wonders and good French inns), published from 1921 to 1928 by Curnonsky and Marcel Rouff (Curnonsky 1921-1928). It is in this context, where wine is understood as an integral part of gastronomy, that the «RVF» builds a large part of its editorial line.

The cover page of the first issue in 1927 announces: the aim is, of course, to work «for the defense and promotion of French wines», but what stands out at first glance are the three inserts «Good Roads, Good Tables, Good Lodgings» replaced in August 1928 by «Good Restaurants», «Good Hotels» and «Healthy Criticism» the latter explicitly giving way to «Tourism» in December 1928. As a result, many pages are devoted to *chefs*, restaurant owners or, as illustrated by the exhaustive list published in August 1930, members of circles such as the *Académie des Gastronomes*. Readers were encouraged to visit a number of restaurants, while «others were disparaged after a visit from the RVF team» (Levêque 2021, 46). Recipes regularly appeared in the pages of the magazine, accompanied by advice on pairing them with wines (Levêque 2021, 46). Adèle Lévecque, in her excellent research on the magazine, notes the presence of a recipe in one-third of the issues from January 1930 to May 1939 (Levêque 2021, 46). Finally, the monthly magazine periodically reports on gourmet meals held in bourgeois circles keen on this new regional culinary art, with menus provided. The Bressan lunch held at the *Café Neuf* in Lyon on October 15, 1933, fully illustrates this trend toward the territorialization of dishes. The guests enjoyed «Saucisson (sausage) de Lyon», «Grenouille (frogs) des Etangs de Bresse», «Poularde (fattened chicken) de Louhans», «Vrai gratin bressan», «Grives (trushes) de Villars», «écrevisses (crayfish) de l'Ain» and cheeses «de la région» while the *soufflé* was «fait maison (homemade)» (Baudoin 1933, 10). In the absence of any wine production worthy of the name in region of Bresse, the wines accompanying the meal came from the nearest vineyards: Bugey country for the 1928 Montagnieu (a sparkling wine) that opened the meal, Beaujolais for the 1926 Moulin-à-Vent that accompanied the dry sausage, and Burgundy for the 1929 Batard-Montrachet that was enjoyed with the crayfish. So, even though this time several French regions are in the spotlight and some dishes are less precisely localized, the October 1930 «RVF» lunch is in the same vein. The oysters are «de la Tremblade» the sole fillet is «Calvados», the Chateaubriand is «Normand», the green beans are «du Loiret» and even, the brioche fruit is «du patron (from the boss)» (Chevrier 1930, 8)!

Given this partly gastronomic editorial line and, as mentioned in Félix Chevrier's comments quoted at the beginning of this paper, the fourth lunch of the «Revue du vin de France» promised to be an important event², but no more than a classic gastronomic gathering attracting the «Tout-Paris des gourmets» and gastronomic clubs. It was much more than that, and it is undeniable that gourmets were very much in the minority. Among the latter were Dr. Robine (honorary president of the *Club des Cent*) and Curnonsky, president of the *Académie des Gastronomes*. The founding president of the *Club des Cent* was excused. To these gourmets, and to complete the list, we can add Eugène Rousseau, president of the Syndicat National des Marchands de Volaille (National Union of Poultry Merchants). That makes four people out of the 40 present and the 10 excused, in reality mainly from the press and the world of wine, which was totally committed to the new system of appellations of origin.

2. Designations of origin and their defense

The «Revue du vin de France» is therefore far from being solely focused on gastronomy. As its name suggests, it is also dedicated to wine itself. As we pointed out when we quoted the subtitle of the «RVF» in the 1930s, the magazine aims to be a monthly publication «defending and illustrating the wines of France» and is undoubt-

**100 délimitations loi 1919 en France
dont 28 en Bourgogne
et 38 en Bordelais**

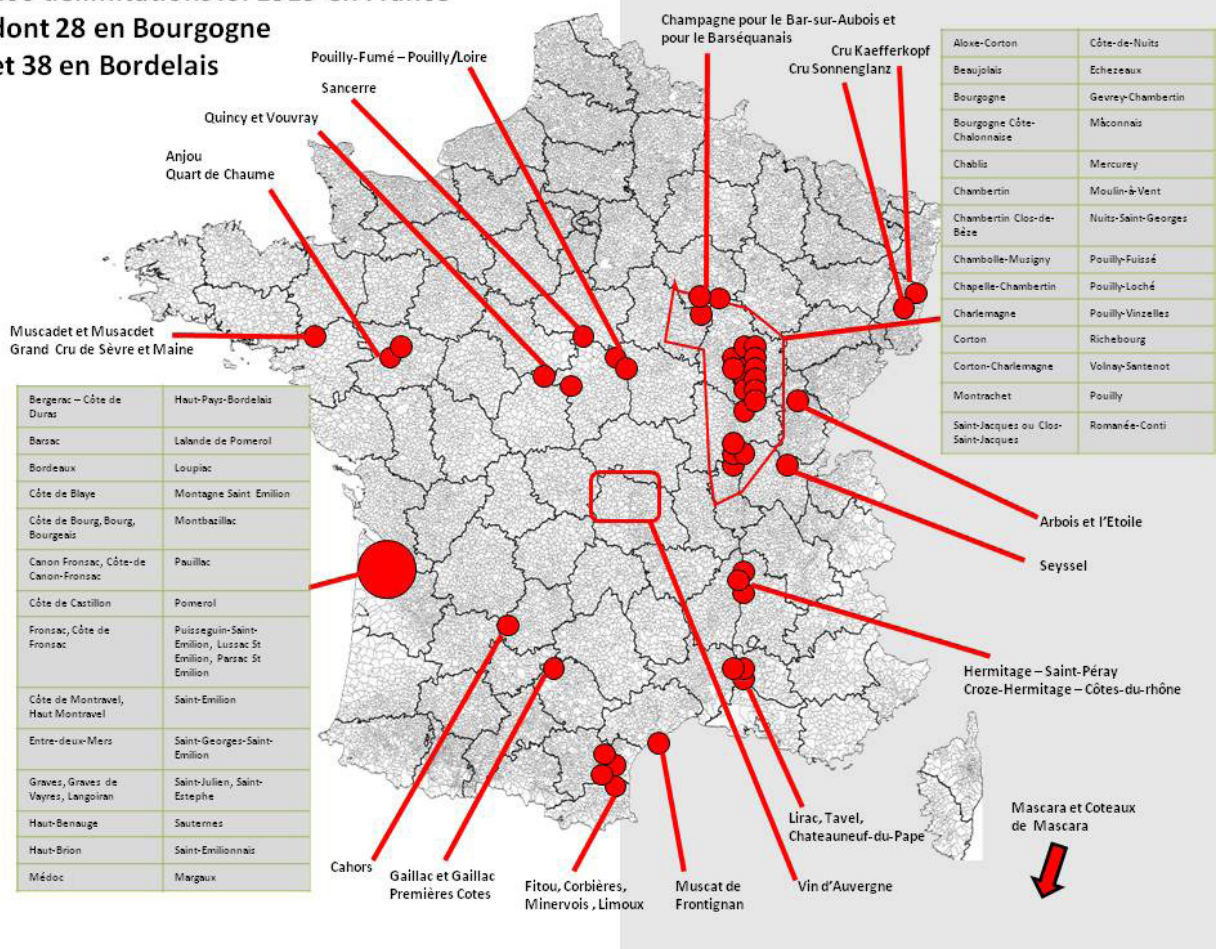


Figure 2. Olivier Jacquet, List of 100 appellations of origin recognized in France between 1919 and 1937.

edly also published for producers³. But even more than the «wines of France» it was primarily the first wines of appellations of origin that the monthly magazine sought to «défendre (defend)» and «illustrer (Illustrated)»

Very clearly, Raymond Baudoin, the editor-in-chief, positioned himself as an advocate for appellation wines that had emerged a few years before the birth of his magazine, since the law of May 6, 1919, which authorizes them (Jacquet 2024). The journalist positions himself in favor of the jewels of national production, now highlighted by the specific place they come from, in total harmony with the regional dishes praised by the gastronomes of the period. Beyond that, however, it was a question of giving a voice to those who supported this new system, mainly winegrowers, sometimes merchants, all of whom were owners and, at that time, fighting to ensure that their products could compete with the branded and blended wines of a significant part of the French wine trade (Lucand 2011; Le Bras 2019). The wines offered on the October 1930 lunch menu and the guest list clearly demonstrate the links between the «RVF» and this pro-appellation section of the wine industry.

Firstly, it is clear that although the menu gives pride of place to the food, its exceptional character is due to the wine list. 24 wines and spirits are served throughout the meal. Of these, 12 wines, listed in the order in which they appear on the table, have had their appellation d'origine recognized by the courts since 1921: a Pouilly-Fuissé (appellation in 1922), a Pouilly-Fumé (appellation in 1923), a Graves (appellation in 1924), a white Haut-Brion (delimitation in 1927), a Chevalier-Montrachet (delimitation in 1921), a Château Lafite-Rothschild (Pauillac appellation in 1926), another Haut-Brion but red, a Château Margaux (Margaux appellation in 1923), a Quart de Chaume (a sweet white wine of Loire, delimited in 1930), a Champagne (delimited in 1908 then 1927) and an Armagnac (delimited in 1908)⁴. It should also be noted that 4 Burgundian wines from Côte-d'Or, a Monthélie, a Meursault, a Vosne-Romanée and a Volnay have also benefited from the broader Bourgogne

appellation (for the Côte-d'Or) since 1925. Finally, Muscat de Frontignan and Hermitage were able to display their own appellations a few years later in 1935 and 1936, respectively. When the system of Controlled Appellations of Origin (AOC in French) was introduced, this time recognized by the *Institut National des Appellations d'Origine* (INAO), the vast majority of wines on the menu were recognized as such even before World War II.

The menu, in a truly pioneering move, also provides detailed information about the bottles on offer, specifying each vintage and its owner. This presentation of wines follows the recommendations of professional appellation associations, which continue to advocate for restaurant menus to display all this information. In fact, many of the producers on the list are also fervent supporters of pro-appellation organizations, which are often behind the rulings that have made it possible to define their wines. Such is the case with Sem d'Angerville, supplier of Meursault and *Marc de Bourgogne*, but also the all-powerful president of the *Syndicat de Défense de la Viticulture Bourgogne* (Burgundy Wine Defense Union) and a prominent member of the *Grand Cru* Section of the *Fédération des Associations Viticoles de France* (Federation of Wine Associations of France and Algeria – FAVF). Albert Noirot, producer of Vosne-Romanée «Les Grands Suchots» has a similar profile and chairs the *Syndicat général de défense des viticulteurs de la Côte-d'Or* (Syndicat for the Defense of Côte-d'Or Winegrowers). He was behind the highly controversial ruling that led to the recognition of the Bourgogne appellation for Côte-d'Or wines in 1925. We should also mention the negociant Breyer, one of the three producers behind the *Quart de Chaume* delimitation in 1930. Finally, the cooperative world, a newcomer to the wine industry, made its presence felt with Pouilly-Fuissé from the Chaintre Cooperative and Muscat from the Frontignan Cooperative. All these winegrowers and cooperatives, strengthened by the economic protection against counterfeiting and fraud provided by the appellation wines they produced, were then able to start bottling their own wines, which until then had been the preserve of the wine merchants. A new world of wine is emerging, as clearly shown by the October 1930 menu.

Furthermore, many of the guests belong to these same circles. Almost all of them are either prominent trade unionists, appellation producers (often winegrowers), or members of organizations that support these new regulations. Thus, we find ourselves sitting at the table that day with Dr. Ozanon, President of the *Confédération des Associations Viticoles de la Bourgogne* (Confederation of Burgundy Wine Associations), Charles Perraton, President of the *Fédération régionale des grands crus de Bourgogne* (Regional Federation of Burgundy *Grands Crus*) and the Chaintre Cooperative, but also Mayor of Chaintre and, indeed, producer of Pouilly-Fuissé. Burgundy was well represented, as evidenced by the presence of Henri Gouges, winemaker in Nuits-Saint-Georges, Vice President of the *Union des producteurs de Grands Cru de Côte-Or* (Union of Grand Cru Producers of the Côte d'Or), and Secretary General of the *Consrtrium des producteurs de Grand Crus de Bourgogne* (Consortium of Burgundy Grand Cru Producers). The influential Baron Pierre Le Roy de Boiseaumarié is also among the guests. A producer in Châteauneuf-du-Pape, he rules with an iron fist over the Côtes-du-Rhône Wine Syndicate and the *Grand Cru* Section of the *Fédération des Associations Viticoles de France et d'Algérie* (FAVF). Alongside a few others, including Sem d'Angerville (invited but excused that day), he was behind the decree-law of July 30, 1935, on AOC, becoming president of the INAO in 1947 and of the International Organization of Vine and Wine (OIV) in 1949.

To these illustrious guests, we can add the equally illustrious Mr. Guillon, Inspector General of Agriculture, who represents the State, and above all, Léon Douarce, Director General of the OIV, an international organization whose presence added an extra dimension to this meal, which we will discuss later.

The 1930 lunch, as much for the wines on the menu as for the personalities from the wine world in attendance, clearly illustrates the shift that was taking place in terms of French wine production and marketing standards. Contrary to the practices of wine merchants at the end of the 19th century, this system, designed to prevent fraud in wine appellations, promoted origin rather than blending, place rather than brand, and collective terroir rather than a name associated with technical expertise (Jacquet 2024). The lunch was at the heart of this paradigm shift, which was now propelling new players into the industry, both winegrowers and cooperatives. It finally marked the magazine's commitment to this emerging world, which it believed would be the salvation of French wine production, which was in great difficulty during the 1920s and 1930s. And its editorial line became increasingly committed to this cause from 1930 onwards. More and more decrees, laws and ministerial circulars, sometimes accompanied by commentary, appeared in the pages of the monthly magazine. Above all, legal reports on appel-

lation boundaries in the courts became commonplace in the magazine. The RVF's commitment was such that it was even summoned to appear before the Beaune Criminal Court on July 26, 1933. The proceedings were brought at the request of Charles Giraud, a winegrower and mayor of village of Meursault, whose trial for selling wines under false appellations had been published in the magazine a year earlier. The trial was transcribed in broad terms over six pages in the October 1933 issue, confirming the strong link between the «RVF» and the defenders of appellation wines, as the witnesses called to defend the magazine included the leading union figures invited to the October 1930 lunch, Sem d'Angerville and Pierre Le Roy at the forefront. The report will even give rise to a magnificent series of caricatures of the protagonists present in the courtroom (H-P Gassier 1933. 9-15).

Notwithstanding this exclusivity, «RVF» also sought, in part, to reach a wider and emerging population of wine lovers, who could, in fact, be partly confused with *gastromomes*. Revised and corrected wine lists, monographs on vineyards, and articles on certain French wine regions fill the issues published between the two world wars and bear witness to this objective. It is necessary to participate in the effort to popularize the new appellation of origin system, which, all things considered, is revolutionizing the practices of wine drinkers. What should we think of these new producers who were competing with merchants renowned for their expertise? Should we trust the quality of wines from specific appellations when, previously, merchants could guarantee the taste of a product by blending wines from different locations, even if it meant giving it the name of a specific place? Isn't the taste of terroir considered by the majority of tasters at this point to be earthy, rustic, a flaw in the wine? Finally, how can consumers be convinced of the value of appellation wines, some of which they don't even know the names of?

This is why the presence of Emile Carme, president of the *Union des Sommeliers de Paris* (Union of Paris Sommeliers), at the 1930 dinner was entirely justified.

The Union was formed in 1907. Due to their influence over French and foreign customers in the capital's restaurants, sommeliers were very quickly sought after by producers of all kinds who wanted to promote their wines (Fedoul 2024). However, after the war, appellation wine owners were lining up. As clearly shown in the magazine they published, «Le Sommelier», these food service professionals received courses on the geography and characteristics of appellation wines, and discovery trips to vineyards were organized with appellation defense unions. As a key witness to these new synergies, in April 1924 the Union organized what can be considered the first blind tasting competitions. Only wines with an appellation (and there were still very few in 1924!) were presented, covered with a blindfold, and had to be recognized by the competitors (Le Sommelier 1924).

All these new stakeholders in the wine industry – sommeliers, winemakers, and cooperative members – are working together to promote a product that is still relatively unknown and, above all, poorly understood by the majority of wine drinkers. The lunch hosted by the «Revue du vin de France» magazine is a striking example of



Figure 3. Agence Rol, 3rd Wine Tasting Competition of the Union des Sommeliers de Paris, April 28, 1926, Gallica – BNF.

this. By bringing together all the forces involved in defending and promoting appellation wines, it has become one of the key moments in the launch of an intense propaganda campaign for these new products.

3. A pioneering and growing interest in wine promotion

3.1. Export difficulties and the case of Belgium

In the 1920s and especially the 1930s, the wine industry was marked by significant overproduction, compounded by the closure of certain markets, a resurgence of anti-alcohol health movements (Nourrisson 2013; 2021) and competition from other beverages (spirits, cocktails, mineral waters) (Le Bras 2022a; 2022b; 2024). However, for the years 1928-1929, on the eve of the «RVF» dinner, France had to sell around 70 million hectoliters of wine, a volume that it was unable to absorb entirely on the domestic market. The major problem facing the entire industry in the interwar period was how to sell an excessively abundant production on markets that had become increasingly wary of products devalued by fraud.

The problem of exporting French wines was very real at that time. The American market closed in 1920 due to the introduction of Prohibition (Martin 2003), the Russian market was no longer a factor since the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, Germany was struggling to regain a stable currency, and the Scandinavian countries, despite having many wine lovers, imposed “hygienic” import taxes of nearly 90%. Even European countries that traditionally loved French wines saw their purchases decline considerably. Great Britain, for example, imported only 131,000 hl in 1930, compared to almost 165,000 in 1913 and even 136,000 in 1929 (Bulletin International du Vin –1930, 4; 1932, 5). Belgium, a pillar of French exports, imported only 192,000 hl in 1930, compared to 223,000 the previous year and 285,000 on the eve of the World War I (Bulletin International du Vin –1930, 4; 1932, 5). Apart from the French colonies, the Belgian market was nevertheless the most important for the French wine industry and, as a neighboring country, it was logically a prime target for producers and also for the «Revue du vin de France».

In July 1928, an article by André Fage, a journalist for la «Revue de la France», entitled *La mévente des vins français en Belgique* (The Slump in French Wine Sales in Belgium), already explained the reasons for this steady decline: devaluation of the Belgian Franc, rising wine prices, excessive customs duties, competition from wine-based drinks, exotic fruit wines, artificial sparkling wines and Belgian raisin wines (Fage 1928, 1). He considered that customs duties had recently caused a 75% drop in Champagne imports! The magazine's focus on Belgium can be seen in the number of articles devoted to the issue between 1928 and 1930. These include, for example, *La concurrence contre les vins français en Belgique* (Competition against French wines in Belgium) (Fage 1928b, 7-8), *La fraude contre les vins français en Belgique* (Fraud against French wines in Belgium) (Fage 1928c, 6-7), *Une campagne en Belgique en faveur des vins de France* (A campaign in Belgium in favor of French wines) (Fage 1929, 11-14) and *La protection des appellations d'origine en Belgique* (The protection of appellations of origin in Belgium) (RVF 1929a), a total of 10 articles were dedicated to this neighboring country in the monthly magazine. In addition, the magazine showed real proselytism towards Belgian importers when it contributed to sending a delegation of French journalists to Brussels and reported on a conference given by Raymond Baudoin in the same city in 1929 (Baudoin 1929, 12-13).

The aim was clearly to promote French wine to Belgian opinion leaders in the first instance. However, considering that advertising French wines in Belgian periodicals would be too expensive, the editor-in-chief of the «RVF» (Baudoin 1930) based his promotional approach on the same advertising model used by the first wine folklore events such as the *Paulée de Meursault* (Laferté 2003). Initiated in Burgundy in a pioneering manner by local producers⁵, its success was based on the use of editorial advertising, freshly imported from the United States (Chessel 1998). As a result, thanks to his contacts with a number of producers, Baudoin invited several Belgian journalists to take part in a *Tour de France Viticole* (Wine tour of France) (RVF 1929b). Bringing together 15 journalists, the aim of the «Tour de France des journalistes belges» (Tour of France by Belgian journalist) was to win the favor of journalists in order to obtain favorable coverage of the wine industry in the press.

A year later, the fourth «RVF» lunch was explicitly organized in honor of Léon de Nave, the Belgian direc-

tor of «L'Echo d'Anvers», who had recently published the book *A la gloire du vin de France* (In Praise of French Wine). Among the guests was Willems de Leria, a journalist for the newspaper «Le Neptune d'Anvers» and an eminent gastronome, as he was also secretary general of the *Club des Gourmets de l'Écu* in Paris.

In a way, the lunch in October 1930 was an opportunity to further strengthen these Franco-Belgian ties. But above all, it supported a much larger initiative aimed at boosting international propaganda for French wine, which was still in its infancy.

3.2. The development of international propaganda

«Wine would be one of the most splendid sources of revenue for France's budget if our country wanted to and knew how to take advantage of it. It is the second most important [...] It could become the first if we agreed to create a National Propaganda Office» (Baudoin 1930, 9). These were the words spoken by Raymond Baudoin in his opening speech at the fourth lunch organized by his magazine.

Baudoin's idea was not original in itself. As early as 1922, Champagne merchants and winegrowers joined forces to launch their *Comité de propagande des vins de Champagne* (Champagne wine propaganda committee) (Wolikow 2012). In 1931, this association became the *Commission pour la promotion et la défense des vins de Champagne* (Commission for the Promotion and Defense of Champagne Wine). However, despite this pioneering project, the editor-in-chief of the «RVF» noted a clear lack of initiative in promoting French wines, particularly those from appellations of origin.

This skepticism is illustrated by the criticisms he made in 1931 to the newly created *Comité National de Propagande des vins de France* (National Committee for the Promotion of French Wines) (*Journal Officiel de la République Française* 1931, 12613-12615). There were no publicists in the organization, and Baudoin also lamented the absence of owners and the «preferential treatment given to the wine trade». He warned «our friends in viticulture and the wine trade» that they would have to «open their eyes if they did not want this propaganda committee to turn into a 'watering hole', at the expense of viticulture» (Baudoin 1931, 19). Indeed, mainly inspired by the wine unions of the South of France, the advertising campaigns of the Comité aimed primarily at reviving the consumption of ordinary and table wines, neglecting fine and luxury wines and their owners. The



Figure 4. Advertisement for Spido oils as part of French wine propaganda, «*Revue du vin de France*» May 1930. This advertisement highlights the link between wine propaganda and the development of the automobile.

composition of the Committee was also very broad, with representatives of all the sometimes highly contradictory interests of the national industry (Journal Officiel de la République Française 1931, 12613-12615).

Consequently, in July 1929, Baudoin announced the creation of a new private press organization: *La propagande vinicole française* (French wine propaganda) (Baudoin 1929, 1-2). The agency's objectives were to promote wine in France and abroad through conferences, films, the creation of a press and documentation office, study trips, leaflets, publications, the establishment of a network of correspondents in France and abroad, and the founding of a general advertising office. At the same time, Baudoin called on the ministry of Agriculture to set up a propaganda budget by levying a tax on traffic rights. The presence of the Inspector General of Agriculture, Mr. Guillon, at the 1930 lunch was far from coincidental.

More than just another gourmet meal or a gathering of leading winegrowers celebrating appellation wines, the lunch organized on October 22, 1930, was a moment that cemented the propaganda campaign launched by the «RVF». The press was remarkably well represented by 15 journalists, almost a one-third of the total number of staff. In addition to the two Belgians mentioned above, there were Paul Sencier from «Paris-Soir», René Brunswick from «L'Excelsior», Charensol from «Les Nouvelles Littéraires», Dumont from «Rire Fantasio», André le Bret from «Miroir du Monde», Levesque from «Le Monde Illustré», Mairesse from «Paris-Midi», Edouard Sattler from «L'Intransigeant», and Gaston Derys (Paul Reboux) from «Minerva». But, as international propaganda demands, we also have two Anglo-Saxon journalists, founders of «The Boulevardier», an American magazine in Paris: Erskine Gwynn and Arthur Moss. Finally, we should note the presence of Acremant, editor of «L'Atlantique», the daily newspaper distributed on the ships of the *Compagnie Générale Maritime*, which carried a wealthy clientele seeking distinction.

And the approach bore fruit. The invited press immediately echoed this memorable day. The lunch and its festivities were described with great enthusiasm on October 25, 1930, in the «Journal du Loiret» (Grancher

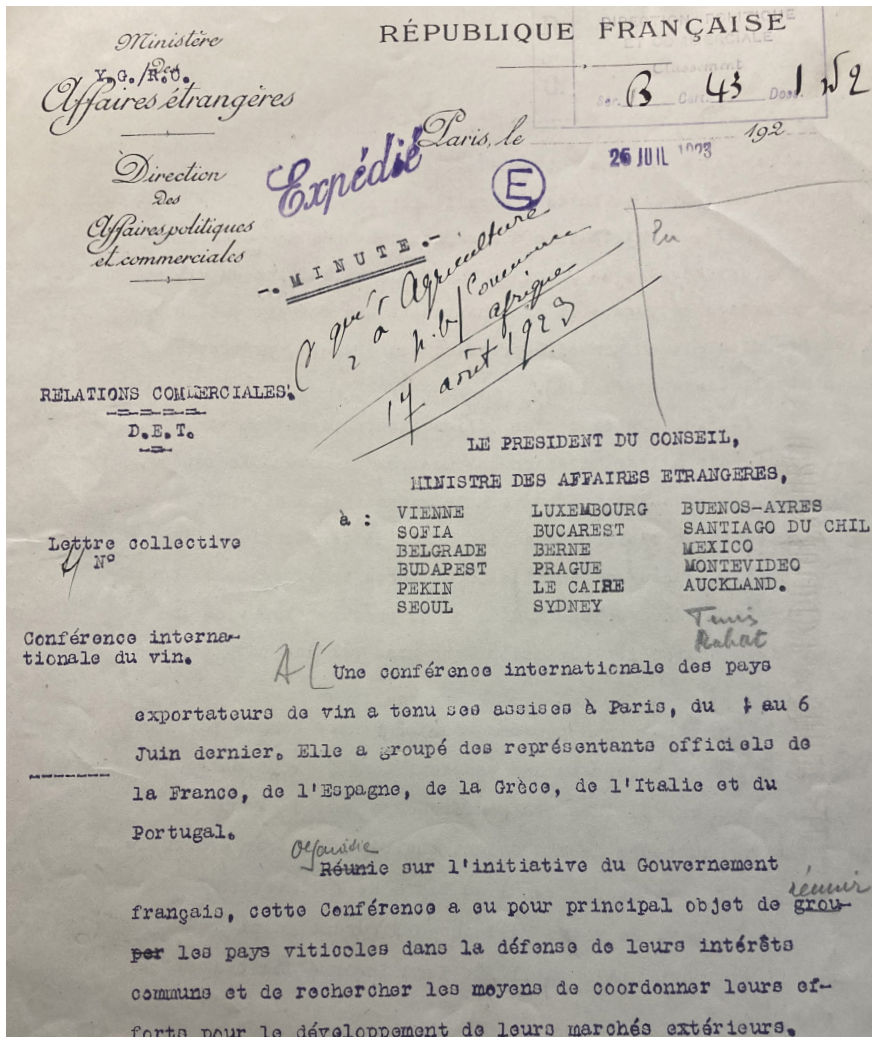


Figure 5. Letter from Raymond Poincaré, President of the Council, to several foreign ministers of third countries to set the objectives of a future international organization on wine, July 26, 1929, Diplomatic Archives, La Courneuve.

1930, 31) and the newspaper «Aux Ecoutes» (Grancher 1930, 21) by the colorful Marcel Grancher. There was similar positive feedback on January 2, 1931, in «Paris-Midi», and on December 23, 1930, in «L'Atlantique» under the title *Les bons vins français* (Good French wines), alongside an article entitled *France's Wines* written by Raymond Baudoin. The event was also mentioned in the columns of «Paris Soir» (Curnonsky 1930, 4), «Le Monde illustré», «L'Intransigeant» (October 21, 1930, p. 6), «D'Artagnan», «Le Neptune d'Anvers», «Le Petit Courrier d'Angers», «L'Ouest», le «Nord Industriel», and «Minerva». All paid tribute to the menu, the wines, and the guests at the fourth «RVF» lunch («RVF» 1930, 12-14). Editorial advertising was in full swing.

Finally, to support his initiative, Baudoin could count on the presence of a key ally who was also among the guests: Léon Douarche, Director General of the International Organization of Vine and Wine (OIV). The OIV, created by the French on November 24, 1924, and bringing together Italy, Spain, Greece, Hungary, Luxembourg, Portugal, and Tunisia, was established precisely to organize, standardize, and promote global wine production, including French production, given its undeniable global importance at the time. As early as 1923, in a letter dated of July 26 addressed to 19 foreign ministers from third countries, président of the Council (French Prime Minister) Raymond Poincaré recalled the objectives set by the *Conférence internationale des pays exportateurs de vin* (International Conference of Wine Exporting Countries^o (Paris, June 4-6, 1923), a prelude to the founding of the OIV. The aim was to «bring together wine-producing countries to defend their common interests and seek ways of coordinating their efforts to develop their foreign markets»⁶. In short, the project consisted of promoting wine in every way possible (economic information, standardization, combating fraud, conferences, tastings, propaganda, museums, etc.). The program proposed by Raymond Baudoin was fully in line with this objective, and the journalist naturally hoped to be able to count on the Director's unwavering support to carry out his project.

Conclusions

Beyond its exceptional nature, both in terms of the succession of dishes and, above all, the impressive list of wines on offer, the fourth lunch hosted by the «Revue du vin de France» marked the desire to create effective networks bringing together stakeholders in the wine industry and journalists to promote the latest appellation of origin productions. It was also a concrete step towards launching the private propaganda organization founded the previous year by Raymond Baudoin, *La propagande vinicole française* (French Wine Propaganda).

This first action by the propaganda agency would not be the last. In 1933, Félix Chevrier looked back on two rather fruitful years of activity. In his review, the journalist recalled that thanks to the support of the ministry of Agriculture and the major French railway networks, as well as the financial backing of the wine unions of Mâcon, Côtes-du-Rhône, *Grands Crus* of Burgundy, Pomerol, Barsac, Tain-l'Hermitage, Fleurie, Morgon, Juliénas, Nuits-Saint-Georges, and Néac, as well as the municipalities of Tavel, Pouilly, and Chénas, the agency had greatly expanded its activities. In two years, it contributed to the passing of the Jacoulot law for the elimination of fancy brands (December 31, 1930), numerous conferences in France and abroad, regular monitoring of restaurant wine lists, and the creation, logically based on the burgundian model, of a *Paulée de Paris* in 1932 (Chevrier 1933, 10-11). The guests at the fourth lunch in 1930 thus supported and sponsored «a private, independent initiative to defend the most legitimate interests of those who take pride in seeking quality in the production of France's great wines, the most elegant and richest in the world» (Chevrier 1933, 12). Finally, in the same vein as the initiatives led by the *Union des Sommeliers*, the agency organized an original meal/tasting competition, since for the first time in French prescriptive literature, the wines were rated (Baudoin 1933, 7-8).

But why does lunch symbolize a turning point, a contextual shift? At the time it is held, a separation begins to take place between two types of production: appellation wines and cru wines on the one hand, and ordinary wines (or table wines) on the other, soon to be officially categorized as wines of current consumption. In addition, a less visible but equally decisive separation takes place between a form of institutional propaganda and private propaganda, spearheaded by the «RVF». In a way, although it would not be the only time, far from it, the lunch in 1930 brought together all the protagonists of the gastronomic and wine world that was emerging

between the two world wars. Gastronomes, sommeliers, journalists, unionized winegrowers of crus or ordinary wines, the OIV, and public authorities were thus united for the same cause.

However, with the promulgation of the decree-law of July 30, 1935, creating the AOCs as well as the *Comité National des Appellations d'Origine* (National Committee of Appellations of Origin) (INAO), appellation wines became more institutionalized and could now count on the support of the public authorities, particularly the ministry of Agriculture. The creation of the *Comité National de Propagande* (National Propaganda Committee) in 1931 had already contributed to this return to state control. By 1935, appellation owners now had their own mouthpiece and dedicated propaganda.

As a result, private propaganda and editorial advertising developed mainly in parallel with these official initiatives. This was even more so in a world of negociants that had long been timid with regard to the Appellation of Origin system. In these circles, which included public authorities and winegrowers, people continued to meet and develop increasingly original and promising ways of promoting wines. This is evidenced by another dinner, scheduled in 1938 by the *Club des Cents* at the *Château du Clos-Vougeot*. In conjunction with the *Confrérie des Chevaliers du Tastevin*, whose creation in 1934 marked the culmination of the process of commercial wine folklorization that began in 1923 with the *Paulée de Meursault*, this meal, commissioned from Alexandre Dumaine, the newly «Michelin» starred chef from Saulieu, was intended to bring together the elite of this private wine propaganda around Burgundian food and wine. Postponed following the invasion of the Sudetenland in September 1938, it was ultimately canceled a year later due to the outbreak of World War II, marking the transition to a wine world of AOCs and their promotion which the conflict would largely reconfigure (Lucand 2017).

Notes

- 1 As early as 1896, for example, Alfred Contour's *Le cuisinier bourguignon* featured 30 Burgundian recipes out of the 878 listed. However, it was not until 1913 and the publication of Pampille's *Les bons plats de France* that a book was finally devoted to systematically cataloging regional cuisines. Alain Bourguignon's menu, published in 1929, would then constitute "the apotheosis of regional cuisine" (J.R. Pitte 2022).
- 2 The monthly magazine «Le Sommelier» predicted that it would be a day «that will go down in the history books of gastronomy» (Fage 1930, 2254).
- 3 As illustrated in part by readers' letters.
- 4 The boundaries established prior to 1919 are unique. Strictly speaking, they are not «appellations of origin», but rather production areas defined by administrative means. Cognac, Clairette de Die, Banyuls, and Bordeaux were also affected by this process, in 1909, 1910, and 1911, respectively.
- 5 As early as 1923, and as we can now see from an archive recently found in a private found, the first major commercial wine folklore initiative, the *Paulée de Meursault* (Laferté 2003), originated from an invitation to Burgundy by the Meursault wine syndicate a few months earlier (September 29) to a delegation of Belgian restaurateurs. 56 bottles of red and white Meursault were tasted that day for the occasion!
- 6 Cote 242QQ/2437, Archives diplomatiques, La Courneuve.

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