

THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE

The Latest from the French Food & Wine Industry

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NEW FORMAT COMING

GRAPEVINE IS GOING ONLINE



Future issues of *Through the Grapevine* will be distributed only via email.

So — if you want...

- The very latest news about the French food, wine and spirits industries
- Important facts and figures from the French Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
- Timely commentary from key industry players, and
- Tasting and seminar event listings

Please email us at grapevine@sopexa.com

FRENCH WINE NEWS

NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN VINS DE PAYS

You have probably heard of *Vins de Pays* or Country Wines of France. They are quality wines that must follow a defined set of regulations but which are less strict than those of AOC (appellation) wines.

Vins de Pays are both affordable and creative wines owing to the wider range of varietals and blending possibilities allowed. In fact, a lot of AOC wine makers also produce *Vins de Pays* as part of their wine portfolio because it gives them the opportunity to add more original, modern wines to their offerings.

The U.S. represents the 5th export market for Country Wines of France and their sales have expanded significantly since 2006. In order to further increase the visibility of *Vins de Pays* in the U.S., the Country Wines of France council (ANVIT) has launched a U.S. promotion campaign, which began in late 2007.

New Designations

The national designation *Vignobles de France* translates literally to Vineyards of France. Officially launched in spring 2007, this new designation allows the blending of any qualified varietal wines coming from France's Country Wines production area. If the direct link to an area is not obvious at first it is actually still related because those varietal wines must come from the specific area covered by Country Wines regulations.

The designation allows for the creation of a range of branded wines for the international market that can offer consumers:

THE COUNTRY WINES OF FRANCE ARE DIVIDED INTO FOUR DESIGNATED GROUPS:



- consistent quality and taste
- guaranteed availability even in the face of increasing demand
- a simpler, clearer offering, as they will be mainly produced in higher volume and as branded wines.

Since autumn 2007, wines with the designation of *Chamaré Vignobles de France* can also be found in U.S. markets.

The Regional VDPs

Vin de Pays de l'Atlantique was launched in October 2006. This regional designation includes wines that come from the renowned area of Bordeaux, which mainly produces AOC wines. Specifically, they come from the departments of Dordogne, Gironde, Charentes and Charente Maritime, and Lot and Garonne. The first millesime of *Vin de Pays de l'Atlantique* was in 2006, representing some 200 producers with a volume of production that is close to 5 million bottles of mainly red wines (around 60%). These wines are made of Cabernet, Merlot and Sauvignon grapes. Around 20% of the production is dedicated to export markets and will increase as these markets further develop. *Vin de Pays de l'Atlantique* recently arrived on U.S. soil.

Vin de Pays des Gaules was launched in November of 2006. This is a local

designation and wines carrying the *Pays des Gaules* designation are wines coming from the Beaujolais area, specifically from the départements of *Rhône* and *Saône et Loire*. The varietals that can be used are Gamay (king of the area), and also Chardonnay, Pinot, Syrah and others. In terms of production, its volume equals between 1% and 10% of *Vin de Pays de l'Atlantique*, because it is a local designation.

In 2006, the designation *Vin de Pays du Jardin de la France* was renamed *Vin de Pays du Val de Loire*. It is more in accordance with the rest of the regional designations that express the areas they represent. *Vins de Pays du Val de Loire* are made in the 14 départements (counties) that comprise the Loire Valley, which is the largest wine growing area in France. From this area come wines that are either made from one single grape variety (varietal wines) or are blended. White wines are mainly made from Sauvignon or Chardonnay, red from Cabernet Franc or Gamay, and rosé from Grolleau.

For more information on the exciting, affordable French Country Wines, be sure to visit the website (www.vins-de-pays.info), which provides a wealth of information on these delicious wines.

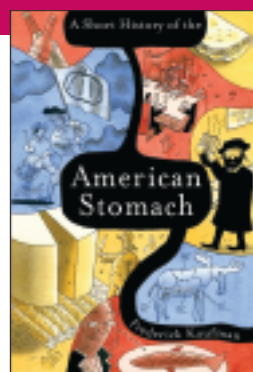
INTERVIEW

A Short History of the American Stomach, a new book by Frederick Kaufman, hit stores early February, 2008. Here, Kaufman shares his views on American consumers and their perception of French food.

TTG: What are the current food trends in the U.S.?

FK: The majority of consumers remain hungry for new, unique products. What's more, among the ever-increasing numbers of our haute-bourgeois foodie elite, there's always a market for whatever may be the next flavor of the month.

TTG: Do you think the changes of food habits have an



Frederick Kaufman's new book hit stores early February

impact on the retail channel and the emergence of new outlets such as *Whole Foods* and *Trader Joe's*?

FK: Absolutely. Since the earliest days of this country's food markets, Americans have known selections that could outdo the most advanced European markets. Grocers' lists of seafood for sale in eighteenth-century New York markets boasted blackfish and weakfish, toadfish and dogfish, sheepshead, snook, and porpoise, to name but a few. Markets from Cleveland to Iowa offered black bear steaks and panther chops as late as 1823, and bison, elk, reindeer, and moose remained available far into the nineteenth century. All of which means that

America has long been and will long remain a strong retail environment for any and all food products, no matter how seemingly exotic or bizarre.

TTG: How, in your opinion, do American consumers view French food products today?

FK: Since Benjamin Franklin outlined the path for a perfect life, Americans have hungered for perfect foods, and French food has long fit the bill.

TTG: How do you see French food products evolving in the U.S. in coming years?

FK: The *sense* of the authentic will remain important. "French food" will retain its cachet as long as Americans are able to spot what to them *seems* authentically "French." And in a pinch, better to become more and more unapologetically "foreign."

EVENTS 2008

French Wine & Spirits Expo*
FEBRUARY 26-27 Dallas, TX
FEBRUARY 28-29 San Francisco, CA

Cercle Rive Droite†
MARCH 10 New York, NY

Mini Wine French Connection II*
MARCH 10-13 Denver, CO, Milwaukee, WI & Cleveland, OH

French Food Connection
MARCH 31 New York, NY
APRIL 1 Dallas, TX
APRIL 3 San Francisco, CA

RSVP website: www.frenchfoodconnection.com/

French Spirits Connection*
APRIL 6-9 Las Vegas, NV
APRIL 10 New York, NY

Today's Bordeaux Wine Expo†
APRIL 14 New York, NY
APRIL 15 Chicago, IL
APRIL 17 Los Angeles, CA

The 2008 French Wine Roadshow†
APRIL 28 Seattle, WA
MAY 1 Washington, DC

Alsace & Rhône Valley Wine Expo†
JUNE 9 New York, NY
JUNE 11 Boston, MA

Summer Fancy Food Show
 Visit our French Pavilion
JUNE 29-JULY 1 New York, NY
 R.S.V.P. website: www.specialtyfood.com

*To R.S.V.P. and for more information, please email: anne-marie.bazzani@missioneco.org.

†To learn more about these events and to R.S.V.P., please go to www.SopexaUSAevents.com or email eventsUSA@sopexa.com.

FRENCH MINISTRY NEWS

2008: A BANNER YEAR FOR TASTING FRENCH FOOD & WINE IN THE U.S.

American consumers and professionals are in for a real treat this year, resulting from the commitment by the French Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries to increased U.S. exposure for foods and beverages from France.

The following surveys the high-profile U.S. festivals, galas and other fabulous events where a delicious array of foods and beverages will be featured in 2008. So get out your date books, read on and don't miss this year's French food, wine and spirits events on U.S. soil. *Bon appétit!*

FEBRUARY 22-24: South Beach Wine & Food Festival 2008 (Miami, FL)

From February 22-24, St. Tropez met Miami during the 7th annual Food Network South Beach Wine & Food Festival. Following the success of the 2007 "Celebrate France!" pavilion, the French Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, along with Gold sponsors The Bordeaux Wine Council and Wines of France, presented a true "Bistro on the Beach" featuring a wide array of delicious French wines and food products.

MARCH: European Wine Council Gala Dinner (New York)

When members of the European Wine Council and 100 influential journalists met at the 12th annual European Wine Council Awards Dinner, fine French wines were poured to toast this year's winners:

- Educator of the Year Award – Michael Weiss, The Culinary Institute of America
- European Wine Ambassador's Award – Peter Nolis, Garnet Wines & Liquors, New York City

OCTOBER-DECEMBER: Omni "Flavors of France" Promotion (Nationwide)

Unique program – executed at Omni's 40 hotels nationwide – represents the first upscale, fully-integrated French promotion in the on-premise channel. It will include: 8 to 10 French wines offered by the glass and bottle with a special French menu featured at bars, in restaurants, by room service and at banquets; a consumer contest; POS; and other elements. The program will be supported by an in-depth education program for key food and beverage buyers, as well as a full public relations plan.

JUNE 5: French Cocktail Hour / Apéritif à la Française (Worldwide)

Taking place in over 20 cities around the world, the French Cocktail Hour (FCH) highlights the uniquely French ritual of the "Apéritif moment" and aims to put the spotlight back on French gastronomic offerings, their diversity and their excellent quality/price relationship.

Now in its 5th year, FCH goes nationwide through a partnership with upscale boutique hotel chain Kimpton Hotels. Each evening in June, guests at 38 properties will enjoy an evening "French Cocktail Hour." To promote the month-long event, a media tour in tandem with Kimpton and spokesperson Leslie Sbrocco will visit New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles, before heading back to the Big Apple in time for the 5th annual French Cocktail Hour Day on June 5th. *Santé!*

Date TBD: Wines and Foods of France Culinary School training program

In order to expose the next generation of industry leaders, opinion-makers and interested consumers to the culinary magic of France, seminars are being developed at top schools throughout the U.S., including the Institute of Culinary Education and the International Wine Center, allowing students to become familiar with French foods, wines and spirits, their preparation and their pairing.

For more information on any of these events, please contact Valerie Gerard-Matsuura at 212-386-7446 or by email at valerie.gerard@sopexa.com.

MEDIA NEWS: WEBSITES

BORDEAUX SHINES... IN CYBERSPACE!

While Bordeaux wines are always known for the fine company they keep, it's unusual that they're grouped with such mass market behemoths as Coca-Cola, Starbucks and Jack Daniels. But now, the website of the Bordeaux Wine Council (CIVB) has won a 2007 Web Award for Outstanding Achievement in Website Development.

After 15 months of development, the redesign of Bordeaux.com was launched in late 2006, with more dynamic and effective design and content. Creating the site "from the ground up," the web team — led by CIVB, with input from Sopexa North America and Sid Lee Canada for design — consulted consumers the world over. From London to Shanghai, Düsseldorf and Paris to New York, they surveyed a large number of people in order to pinpoint a worldwide positioning and common visual identity for Bordeaux wines online.

The new site and its content now truly reflect the image of Bordeaux wines around the world. What's more, it's a Web Award winner for outstanding website, proving quality and innovation in Internet marketing.



Web Award-winning new website, www.Bordeaux.com