

• PREFACE •

Jules Lavalley's seminal work *Histoire et Statistique et des Grands Vins de la Côte d'Or*, which appeared in 1855, offers thoughtful insights on Burgundy as well as a historical background on the region that is too often neglected in today's race to find the next "100 point wine." I was surprised that Dr. Lavalley's work had never been translated into English, and for years I dreamt of undertaking this task. One of the things that discouraged me, however, was the very long section at the book's beginning covers grape growing and winemaking in 19th century Burgundy. This material is interesting as history, but it tells us little about today's wines. Grape growing after the phylloxera epidemic is so completely different as to be almost a new endeavor, and new techniques in winemaking have also changed cellar work greatly. However, Lavalley's evaluation of the many vineyards in Burgundy was of enduring importance. This portion of his work has changed little during the past 150 years. The climats of Burgundy date back in their present form 1,000 years, and with luck they will remain essentially the same 1,000 years from now. Once I found time to translate this portion of Lavalley, I posted my translations on my blog winealpha.com.

As I wrote, however, I realized that Lavalley owed a great debt to Dr. Denis Morelot, whose work *Statistique de la Vigne dans le Département de la Côte d'Or* had appeared a generation earlier, and I decided to translate the relevant portions of Dr. Morelot as well. Morelot led me to Andre Jullien and his *Topographie de Tous les Vignobles Connus*, whose first edition was published in 1815, and I translated passages relevant to the Côte d'Or from Jullien's work as well. These three works summarize the essence of pre-modern thought about Burgundy - i.e. what people thought about the terroirs of Burgundy before today's system of Appellations d'Origine Contrôlée (AOC) came into being. These opinions were codified between the beginning of the 18th century and the beginning of the 20th century. Discovering the sources of Jullien, Morelot and Lavalley, I also translated the relevant portions of *Dissertation sur la situation de la Bourgogne, sur les vins qu'elle produit* by Claude Arnoux (1728) and the relevant portions of the *Description Générale et Particulière du Duché de Bourgogne* by Abbé Claude Courtépée and Edme Béguillet (1778). Moving forward in time, I included the classification that appeared in the work credited to Charles Albert d'Arnould Bertall in 1878 entitled *La Vigne, Voyage Autour de Vins de France* and portions of *Les Grands Vins de Bourgogne* by René Danguy and Charles Aubertin (1892) and of *Le Vin de Bourgogne* by Camille Rodier (1920).

The Original Grand Crus of Burgundy brings together the thoughts of these authorities and compares them with today's official AOC system. This system was put into place in the 1930s as a reaction against fraud and deception in the wine trade, and it has been enormously successful. Its foundation was the idea of codifying the rules using the concept of *usages locaux, loyaux et*

constants: the “local, honest and traditional” practices of the region. The system, however, departs from these practices in intriguing ways. This book is an appreciation of the thoughts of past generations about the fundamental land units themselves - the *climats*. My hope is that by learning more about these climats that the reader may be drawn to discover new wines and further their appreciation of the unique treasures of this wonderful region.