

Louis Latour continues quest for affordable sites outside of Burgundy

By Jo Gilbert

Maison Louis Latour has been ramping up its search for the best slopes for its hero Pinot Noir grape outside of Burgundy as a way of offering customers “stable” wine prices.

The Burgundian producer has an extensive domain of 48 ha across the Cote D’Or, where it has been making wine for over 200 years.

More recently however, and in light of ever increasing land prices, the estate has been pushing outwards to **Beaujolais** in the south – where the 2011 regulation change has made it possible to produce Pinot Noir in a traditional Burgundian style, with elevation and on limestone soil – as well as to Provence.

The newest releases of the two newer sites were discussed at a virtual tasting yesterday (May 20), where around 35 participants joined Maison Louis Latour brand ambassador Florian Migeon to talk through making flagship grape Pinot Noir outside of its **Burgundy** homestead.

“We think it’s good to think ahead of time and be visionary in our approach to keeping affordable options in our price range,” Migeon said.

“It’s what we did with Ardèche and Chardonnay back when we first moved outside of Burgundy in the 1970s and 1980s. The Bourgogne Chardonnay was fluctuating in price, and the quality was not always linked with the price.

“Every year we have this now, because of the scarcity of the product, things become more and more expensive, even in vintages that are not seen as great vintages. So we decided to push out of Burgundy for that exact reason, so we can have vineyards that enable us to progress, and to make great wine that remains stable in price over a longer time period.”

Migeon also explained how the introduction of the Coteaux Bourguignons regulation that was introduced in 2011 factored in to the creation of Les Pierres Dorees Pinot Noir, first released in 2015.

The appellation covers wines made across the greater Burgundy area, including Beaujolais – a fact that caused much controversy at the time of its introduction.

For **Maison Louis Latour**, it was the chance to plant around 23 ha of Pinot Noir in lighter densities than in Burgundy, but at the same altitude, with the aim of “producing a really quality domain entry level wine”.

As in Ardèche in the northern Rhône and Domaine de Valmoissine in Côteaux du Verdon, the Beaujolais grapes are machine harvested – another decision made to keep things affordable, as well as using around 5 ha of grower grapes.

“The one big weakness of this is we cannot put ‘domain’ on the label because we buy part of the grapes. There is nothing simple in Burgundy. We wanted to have domaine wines, but we also wanted the local people to be involved in the project,” Migeon said.

The new releases, Louis Latour Les Pierres Dorees Pinot Noir (2018) from Beaujolais and the launch of the first ever Louis Latour Domaine de Valmoissine Pinot Noir Bellevue (2017), from Côteaux du Verdon, Provence, are both available via Louis Latour Agencies in the UK.

