

Singular Terroir

TWO ESTATES BECOME ONE IN SAINT-EMILION

by Sarah H. Bray

MOUEIX IS A BIG NAME IN THE WINE

industry, both for the family's long history as négociants and for their ownership and production of great wines such as Bordeaux's Hosanna and Napa's Dominus. Christian Moueix, the current President of Établissements Jean-Pierre Moueix, as well as renowned viticulturalist and producer in his own right (he helmed Pétrus for 38 years and currently

to the fact that, as contiguous sites, they shared similar terroirs on the limestone plateau of Saint-Émilion. The question was whether the single estate would continue to produce wines of great significance, a question settled by the 2012 Classification, which confirmed that the single estate would remain Premier Grand Cru Classé. The 2011 was the final vintage for Château Magdelaine as a separate estate; the 2012

he calls it, an immemorial quality, that are fresh, complex and taste distinctly of this singular place.

Highlights included the 2005, which he called a classic vintage on both sides of the Garonne, with complexity and finesse, ripe berry, chocolate, mushrooms and chalk on the nose. It is a wine which he said was "not about power, but about pleasure, about poetry"; and a taste of the '88, a



Château Magdelaine shares a terroir similar to that of Château Bélair-Monange on the limestone plateau of Saint-Émilion. Both are owned by Établissements Jean-Pierre Moueix.

produces wines from eight family estates), recently discussed the 2012 Saint-Émilion Classification of Château Bélair-Monange after the decision to absorb the vineyards of neighboring Château Magdelaine into this property.

Château Magdelaine was one of the original Premiers Grands Crus Classés in 1954. When Moueix acquired Château Bélair-Monange in 2008, he studied the possibility of a merger between the two estates. Moueix explained that this decision was not taken lightly but was instead due

Château Bélair-Monange will include the parcels from Magdelaine.

Moueix led a tasting of select vintages of Magdelaine to highlight the unique terroir. The wines are known for their lighter, more restrained style, an intentional winemaking decision, says Moueix, who tends to pick in Saint-Émilion a little earlier and avoids over-extraction in order to maintain elegance, character and longevity in the wines. This, combined with technical innovations and minimal oxygen exposure in barrel, produces wines with a sort of "evanescence,"



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vintage he recalled as "vivid, austere," difficult for the grapes to reach full maturity, but which has settled into a delicate yet vivid wine full of gorgeous tertiary notes and great staying power."

The 2015 vintage, he hinted, will be something extraordinary: "I find some of the vats extravagant—rarely have I tasted wines like them in my life." Promising news for the next phase of Châteaux Bélair-Monange and Magdelaine. **||**

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