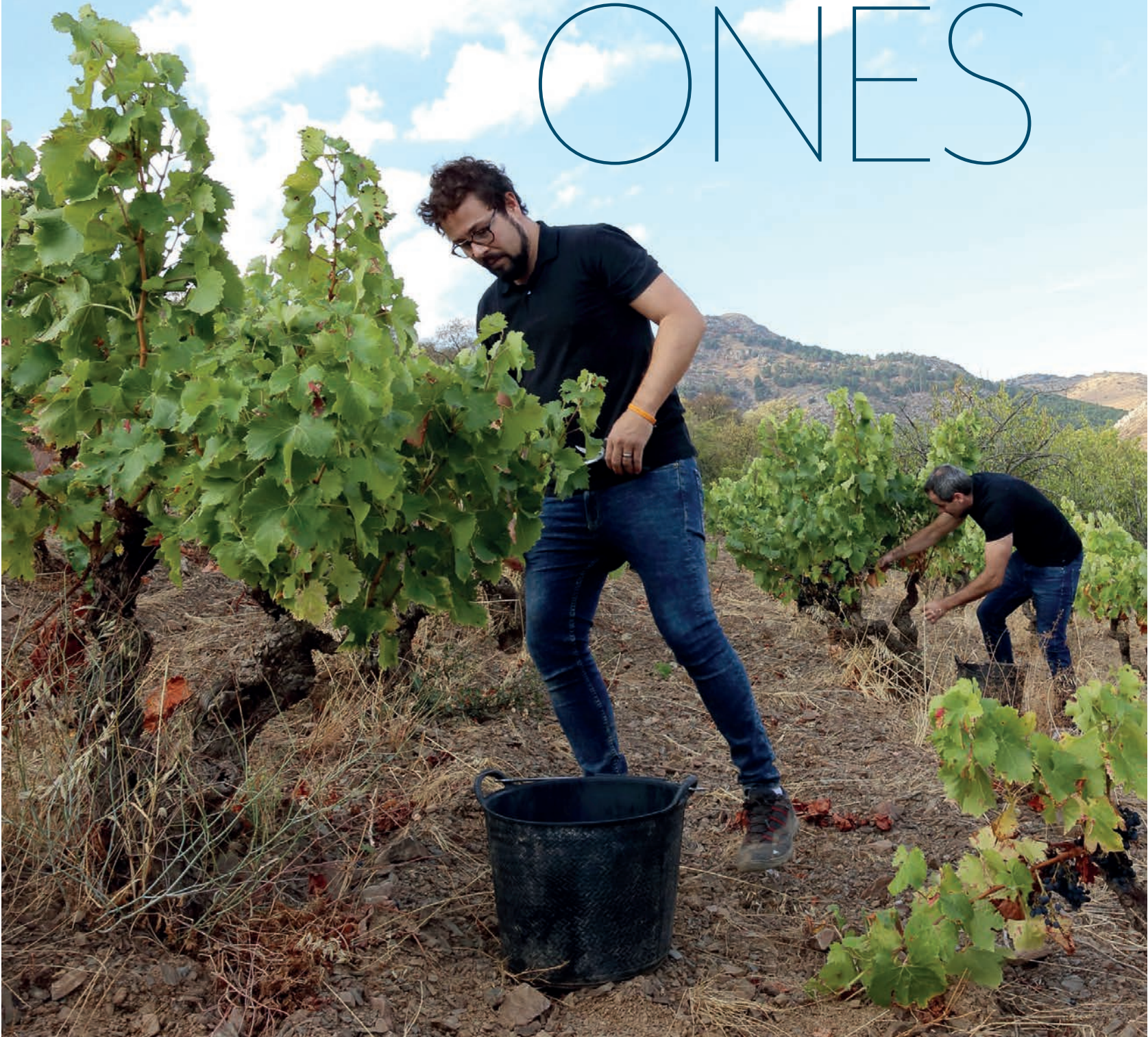


THE SPECIAL ONES



From Didier Dagueneau to Eben Sadie, every generation has its standout winemakers. We asked a team of experts to pick the stars of tomorrow – making wines you can afford today

SPAIN

FERNANDO MORA MW, BODEGAS FRONTONIO, ARAGON

One of Spain's brightest stars, Fernando Mora's journey in the world of wine has been incredibly rapid. His first vintage was 2008, and he's already getting scores of 94 and 95 for his wines. He works in the historic region of Aragon and has built his reputation on that formerly unloved variety, Garnacha, recently launching a campaign to protect and defend old vines.

He began his professional life as a mechanical and electrical engineer with no background in wine. The turning point in his career was a trip he made with his wife to the Vivanco wine museum in Rioja, where he realised he was 'fascinated by this very diverse, complete world'.

They went on to visit Bodega Blecua, in Somontano. 'As we left the building, I said to my wife, "We're going to make wine". Three months later, I converted a room in our flat into a microbodega, and made the wine in the bath.'

Determined to enter the wine world, Mora got to know Mario López, whose family had a vineyard and a local bodega for bulk wine production. Along with two friends, Mora and López launched a project in 2010 to make fine wine.

Some of their vines date back to 1890, and the result is Frontonio, which came out in 2013. 'But we didn't have the first idea about how to sell it or at what price,' he admits.

He's a quick learner, though. His diary at Prowein is now stuffed full of appointments, and he passed the Master of Wine exams at the first attempt. His MW research paper was on old vines.

'So much of what you need to know comes from people,' he says. In 2016 he spent 36 weeks away from home, travelling the world selling wine, and 'talking, tasting, studying'.

Mora is focused, driven, constantly enquiring – and he's also great company. He makes friends easily and is quick to acknowledge the debt he owes to two who were already experts in Aragon: Norrel Robertson MW, and Jorge Navascues Haba, who is now winemaker at Contino in Rioja.

In just five years, Frontonio has established itself as a name to watch, even if its appellation – IGP Valdejalón, in Zaragoza province – is obscure. The wines are improving every year. His Cuevas de Arom wines (a play on his name and on the word aroma), made in underground caves in Campo de Borja, will be out soon.

Mora is only at the beginning of what promises to be a fascinating journey in wine: telling the story, making friends and winning converts along the way...

Sarah Jane Evans MW is the author of The Wines of Northern Spain (Infinite Ideas Classic Wine Library, 2018) >>

TWO TO TRY

Bodegas Frontonio, Supersónico Garnacha 2016

Forget the cliché of leathery Garnacha, this is elegant and spicy, with red berries and cherries, fresh with fine tannin, and a long finish. Polished by six months in 500-litre oak barrels. £15.96, Jascots, jascots.co.uk

Bodegas Frontonio, Telescópico Cariñena 2016

From a young vineyard, this is the second vintage of a distinctive variety that is becoming ever more fashionable. It has keynote vivid freshness, with concentrated black fruit and redcurrant. £17.26, Jascots, jascots.co.uk



FRANCE

JÉRÔME BRESSY, DOMAINE GOURT DE MAUTENS, RHÔNE

There is a certain category of southern French winery that transcends its appellation: see the likes of Mas de Daumas Gassac or Domaine de Trévallon on a wine list, and you know you're in good hands. To this list you can add Domaine Gourt de Mautens from the southern Rhône Valley.

The domaine may be new, but its vines are old and its tale is familiar. A vineyard holding is amassed over generations, grapes sold to the local co-op until a hot-headed youngster pulls out and starts making his own wine.

The 15 hectares (ha) dotted around Rasteau were already farmed organically when that hot-headed youngster, Jérôme Bressy, started making wine in 1996. By 1998, he had built a small winery.

Learning from friends in Châteauneuf-du-Pape such as Henri Bonneau, Le Vieux Donjon and Domaine de Marcoux, Bressy increased plantings of lesser-known local varieties like Vaccarèse and Picpoul Gris and converted to biodynamics.

The turning point came in 2010. Rasteau was promoted from top Côtes-du-Rhône Village to AOC Rasteau, and in doing so the rules of production were tightened. To be permitted to use the appellation name, only 15% of the blend could be made from 'lesser' varieties. Bressy's red contained 40%. Instead of forcing his wines to conform, he chose the lower classification of IGP Vacluse, and he still does.

Rather than causing sales to drop, this decision worked in his favour. Unconstrained by expectations, Bressy concentrated on creating 'the greatest fine wine possible'. Old vines, co-planted heritage varieties and biodynamics all helped, as did goblet training his vines, which produce loose bunches of thick-skinned berries, naturally yielding just 8-15hl/ha.

He says what makes him different is his capacity to take risks. He may talk of the importance of listening to nature, but in character he's more platoon commando than dope-smoking hippie.

Bressy harvests as late as possible, waits for the first rains before picking and makes zero additions to the juice except a little sulphur. His fermentations can take a year to finish, and he matures the wines for years in large old barrels before bottling.

Bressy's path is an expensive and stressful one to follow, but the results it yields speak for themselves.

In a normal year, he makes just one red wine and one white. Most of his stock goes to top restaurants, including Alain Ducasse, Le Taillevent, Troisgros, Guy Savoy...

He doesn't talk about trying to make the best wine of Rasteau, or the even the Rhône. He wants to make 'a great Mediterranean wine'. I would say he's already achieved it.

Matt Walls is an award-winning wine writer and broadcaster with a special interest in the Rhône



TWO TO TRY

Domaine Gourt de Mautens, Rouge 2015

Rich red fruits, juniper, black pepper. Lively, with a grand tannic structure. Characterful and assertive but still speaks of the Rhône. £45.63, Corney & Barrow, corneyandbarrow.com

Domaine Gourt de Mautens, Blanc 2015

Fresh, citrusy, floral and slightly waxy aromas alongside light reductive notes. Expansive, distinctly textural. A fine, complex and beguiling white. £43.33, Corney & Barrow, corneyandbarrow.com





CHILE

FRANÇOIS MASSOC, CALYPTRA, CACHAPOAL

Intuitive, emotional, impulsive and passionate are adjectives you rarely hear in a Chilean context – and yet they are what define François Massoc. Perhaps it's the French heritage or the fact he's from Concepción, Chile's second city, renowned for nurturing creative, abrasive, anti-establishment types.

Either way, this is a man frequently moved to tears talking about wine, or people. Massoc clearly dotes on his family, yet when the massive 2010 earthquake struck, according to his wife Noëlle, his first instinct was to run to save his barrels.

You have to leave extra time when driving with him in Chile because he's prone to stop the car and just stand and admire a vigneron's dedication and craft. Or to get into a heated argument.

Potential careers in law or diplomacy were never going to suit, nor was professional life as a company man. His destiny was wine. So when, after studying in Dijon, an opportunity arose to make small-batch wine (Calyptra) in a promising site in the Andes foothills in Cachapoal, Massoc leapt at the chance.

He hooked up with his close friends Louis-Michel Liger-Belair (of Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair in Vosne-Romanée) and terroir consultant Pedro Parra to create the Aristos brand, and then teamed up with Parra, plus Paco Leyton and Albert Cussen, to create Clos des Fous. Most recently, he launched the Massoc Frères brand with his brother.

Massoc may not be the youngest winemaking turk out there, but he is at the forefront of redefining Chilean wine.

Whites are his strongest point: the Aristos Duquesa d'A Chardonnay is a case in point as a superlative, expensive and ground-breaking wine. The Calyptra Gran Reserva Sauvignon Blanc – rare in being an exceptional, oaked Sauvignon Blanc from the mountains rather than from the coast – and Pandolfi Price Los Patricios Chardonnay from Itata also pay testament to his impressive skill.

Massoc, however, doesn't believe in talent. 'Great artists are made, not born,' he says. 'I inherited intellectual laziness from the French – my technique is more about omission than inclusion. I sit and I think in detail: do I need to do something? If not, I won't.'

His non-interventionist yet ambitious approach chimes with the times, as do his endeavours in the south of Chile, working with the likes of old-vine País, Cinsault and Malbec. Not lacking in innovation, he also makes a delicious fortified red in a tawny port style, and has plans to do a similar white from Moscatel, as well as a 'Chilean Chartreuse'. Watch this space.

Peter Richards MW is an award-winning writer and broadcaster and a leading authority on Chilean wine >>

TWO TO TRY

Aristos, Duquesa d'A Chardonnay 2011

An immensely complex, savoury, refined Chardonnay made with Louis-Michel Liger-Belair and Pedro Parra. Justerini & Brooks is moving onto the 2012, but this was a cooler year. The result is magnificent. £43.36 (2012 vintage), *Justerini & Brooks*, justerinis.com

Clos des Fous, Toca Malbec 2013

Made from ancient Malbec vines in the rural heart of Chile's deep south, the Bío Bío Valley, this is a wild and unreconstructed style, with grippy tannins, minty blueberry flavours and a spicy finish.

£37.99, *Liberty Wines*, libertywines.co.uk





AUSTRALIA

BRENDON KEYS, BK WINES, ADELAIDE HILLS

Brendon Keys and I first met when I was visiting the Adelaide Hills for a tasting run by a group of like-minded, cool winegrowers who work in an area called the Basket Ranges. The next morning I popped round to his house for coffee and was surprised to find a home-made skate park in his garden. Keys is definitely a cool kid.

A Kiwi, he started out as a chef before he came to wine, and then went on to study winemaking in Gisborne, New Zealand, before embarking on a journey round the wine world that ended up with him and his wife Kirstyn settling in South Australia.

They started BK Wines in 2007, and the model has been to make single-vineyard wines with grapes sourced from a network of growers. As well as some excellent Chardonnay and Pinot Noir from the Adelaide Hills, he's also sourcing from the McLaren Vale and makes some stylish pét-nats, too.

His winemaking style is best described as minimal intervention. Although it is pretty natural, he isn't one of the natural wine crowd. In a sense, this is one of his strengths. His wines sell based on their merits rather than what's on their labels.

For his red wines he uses a lot of whole-bunch fermentation, and for the

whites he tries to bottle early, in December, so he can use less sulphur dioxide (SO₂).

'Wines that go through a summer in the winery always need more SO₂. They displace carbon dioxide and when they cool down they take up oxygen and display aldehyde. This way we get to bottle with better free-to-total SO₂ ratio. I'm not anti-SO₂, but there's a lot of lazy SO₂ use in wineries.'

He's also been using concrete eggs as fermentation vessels (p.94). 'I like what oak does to the fermentation, but you always get some oak flavour out,' he says. 'We purchased an egg and it has done what we want it to do. You still get the purity of the wine but you get fullness, richness and roundness.'

These are wines of purity and balance, with the grapes picked appropriately early, and the winemaking very much in the background. They aren't showy, but they are delicious, and with their lower alcohol levels they are 'smashable'. There is an authenticity to them, and the packaging is also very stylish. The skateboarder image isn't just for show, as his back-garden skate park suggests.

Jamie Goode is a wine writer and author

TWO TO TRY**BK Wines, One Ball Chardonnay 2017**

This is sourced from a vineyard in the Kenton Valley, so named because the grower is missing a testicle. It shows taut citrus fruit with subtle toast and peach richness, and a sense of precision and finesse.

£16.95, *Swig, swig.co.uk*

BK Wines, Skin 'n' Bones White 2016

This 100% Savagnin is a well-behaved skin-contact wine: lovely linear, textured citrus fruit with hints of pear and mint. There's some spicy, white-pepper bite under the fruit, and a long, clean finish. Beautifully made.

£16.95, *Swig, swig.co.uk*



SOUTH AFRICA

LUKAS VAN LOGGERENBERG, VAN LOGGERENBERG WINES, STELLENBOSCH

A moment of epiphany? That's how South African winemaker Lukas van Loggerenberg describes drinking a bottle of Domaine de la Chevalerie 1989 on a trip to the Loire in 2014. 'I had felt under-appreciated by the various owners I'd worked for back home and I realised it was time to go it alone. The Loire producers don't get much exposure and they are so humble, but they make terrific wine.'

He identified a 1960 vineyard of Chenin Blanc in Paarl, which he started pruning and suckering during 2015 with a view to making a knockout white. By 2016, he was ready to do his own thing.

That Chenin would go under the name of Kameraderie (meaning, unsurprisingly, 'camaraderie'), reflecting the help he had from his peers in setting up his own label. Meanwhile, Geronimo – as in the yell made when taking a great jump – is what he called his Cinsault. Both were immediately considered among the best in their respective categories by local and international critics.

Van Loggerenberg's travels in the Loire clearly made a big impression on him: one of his standout wines is a Cabernet Franc called Breton. Whereas most producers in South Africa working with this variety take Bordeaux as their inspiration, van Loggerenberg makes a much lighter style – the 2017 features partial whole-bunch fermentation and 10 months of maturation in old oak. The alcohol, meanwhile, is a modest 12.5%, and it is much praised for its lightness and elegance.

All of van Loggerenberg's wines have done well for him so far, but he is particularly proud of the Break-a-Leg – a blanc de noirs from Cinsault. 'I'd like to think I've proven to other producers that it is possible to make serious pink wine,' he says.

Van Loggerenberg's entire ethos is based on a low-intervention mindset. He works out of a simple shed in a part of Stellenbosch called Devon Valley, barrels packed higgledy-piggledy. 'A bigger cellar would be nice but I haven't managed to find any rich investors just yet,' he observes wryly.

For all of van Loggerenberg's success to date, he is quick to give credit to the various growers he works with. 'I could not have done it without the farmers. I don't work with any yeasts or enzymes so I need very good grapes.'



What's next for van Loggerenberg? He reckons the next 10 years will be 'crazy exciting' for South African fine wine as he and his compatriots gain experience. 'The new wave isn't necessarily going to sustain an entire industry, but at least we're changing minds about what South Africa is capable of,' he says.

Christian Eedes is the editor of winemag.co.za

TWO TO TRY

Van Loggerenberg, Kameraderie Chenin Blanc 2017

A haunting nose of citrus, peach, herbs and talcum powder.

A wine of great harmony – pure fruit, coated acidity and great length. Intensely flavoured but remarkably light, with no apparent gaps from entry through mid-palate to finish.

POA, *Dreyfus Ashby, dreyfus-ashby.co.uk*

Van Loggerenberg, Breton Cabernet Franc 2017

Black cherry, violets, fresh herbs and a touch of earth on the nose. Medium-bodied with lovely freshness and pleasantly grippy tannins. Balanced, nuanced and oh-so-very pleasurable.

POA, *Dreyfus Ashby, dreyfus-ashby.co.uk*

