

# Eau de Vie

a wine, spirits, and travel newsletter

Vol. 19 July 2020

## A VERMOUTH PROGRAM

If you haven't noticed, it's hot. Not Arizona hot, but hot nonetheless. And this heat makes me remember the tiny French Mediterranean fishing village of Marseillan.

Sara and I had the good fortune of visiting Marseillan twice last year and this sun kissed French seaside village is quintessentially perfect. When I imagined villages on the French Mediterranean, it's this town that my mind's eye conjured even before I visited. Once there, I couldn't believe that such a place could actually exist. One of my traveling companions remarked on her first view of the village, "Is this a movie set?" It really is that pretty.

But like a new romantic relationship, first based on physical attractiveness, the true character of your future together is often proven in times of stress. Stressful times are where beauty fades and how your partner deals with stress is where you truly learn to love someone. I think places can be like that too.

When we pulled into the Marseillan harbor and tied the boat to the large iron rings on the top of the limestone seawall the sun was relentlessly beating down on us. The water was calm, there was no breeze and the glinting from the sea and the blondness of the stones

was blinding. This place was pretty but it was very hot. The iron rings were hot to touch, the limestone was smooth but dusty and the boat, lashed to and slightly below the top of the harbor wall, offered no relief from the heat.

But Marseillan harbors a secret and that secret is vermouth. I can imagine your shoulder shrug and the "who cares about vermouth" thought in your head. You wouldn't be alone in thinking that, but you are missing out on a great aperitif.

In the heart of Marseillan, along the quayside, and at the same spot since 1859, is the Noilly Prat Vermoutherie. Inside the front gates, the aroma of fermenting wine hits your senses and if your timing is right, a tour takes you into the heart of the facility. Once inside, the first room entered is a dark cool chamber that is lined with enormous oak barrels for fermenting the local Picpoul grape.

This chamber had an immediate affect on my attitude. Cool, dark, and perfumed, it was the antithesis of the harbor's blinding summer afternoon heat. The tour concludes with a tasting and this helped change my attitude as well.

Noilly Prat makes four styles of vermouth, each a bit different and

for different purposes. They are: Extra Dry and Dry - suitable for your martini and other cocktails, and Rouge and Amber - these are best when consumed straight and ice cold on a hot day.

The Rouge is slightly sweet and also slightly bitter. It is full of complex and interesting aromas. It can be enjoyed neat or with an orange slice or mixed into a cocktail.

We left the Vermoutherie like Vikings plundering the seaside, our arms were full and we were giddy with our treasure of vermouth. Back on the boat we paired cold glasses of vermouth with salty potato chips, an awning and the view of the village harbor. It was instantly restorative.

Marseillan is a true beauty. Physically attractive but also harboring complexity and intrigue, a place I can honestly say I loved visiting.

You don't need to go to Marseillan to taste their vermouth. It is widely available. The Rouge is available in Duluth at Mount Royal and Lake Aire, although the stock at Lake Aire is a bit low at the moment as I just bought 4 bottles... A bottle of Noilly Prat should cost \$9.99. Once opened you should drink it within the week. Drink it cold, paired with salty foods and a hot summer afternoon in the shade.



The Wines for Summer pairing class has been canceled. Is anyone surprised? Me neither. Sara and I consulted the Privy Council and it was decided that, no, the country isn't really ready for primetime and this makes hosting a wine pairing event irresponsible.

The wines I was gathering for the event will keep until next year. We will continue to hope to host *Diner en Blanc* and the possibility of the Fall pairing class.

## VIEWS OF MARSEILLAN

Here are three pictures and a [link to a video from Marseillan](#). Just because we can't go there this year doesn't mean we can't enjoy the view or dream of a future visit. The picture below is from last year's return trip from the vermoutherie. Cheers!



## 2020 Pairing Club Classes

November 7th ~ *Automne*  
Wines for Fall

Practical Information:

Class starts @ 6:00pm @ 2620 E. Superior Street. Cost is \$20/pp.  
Class size is limited to 12.

R.S.V.P. required.

Class includes: Nose Testing, 6 wines, tasting cards, information, and custom wine pairings.

Each class needs 5 volunteer pairing cooks. Email: david@savvynomad.com to volunteer to bring a food pairing.

August 15th ~

*Diner en Blanc Duluth*

If we can host *Diner en Blanc*, I'll let you know in future editions of this newsletter.

# THE VACCINE TRACKER

As Coronavirus numbers continue to climb you might find yourself, like I do, wondering if you'll ever get to travel again. There is hope.

The New York Times is keeping track of the progress of worldwide vaccine development and currently there are over 125 vaccines in pre-clinical trials, 15 in Phase I, 10 in Phase II, 4 in Phase III and 1 approved. This is all very good news. Organizations worldwide are racing to develop and distribute a vaccine. I have hope that by this winter we will have access to a cure.

[Here is a link to the NYTimes Coronavirus Vaccine Tracker.](#)

