

find fast track to French AOC recognition

By Vitisphere June 28, 2021

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For Christian Huyghe, Resdur grape varieties must rise to the “challenge of making France a benchmark in producing wine with a low environmental impact”. - crédit photo : INRAE

Developed by the French National Research Institute for Agriculture and the Environment (INRAE), the first four French vine varieties resistant to fungal diseases have been affiliated to the Vitis vinifera L. botanical taxon by the Community Plant Variety Office (CPVO). Now officially related to traditional European varieties, the new cultivars – Artaban, Floreal, Vidoc and Voltis – could find their way into appellation vineyards, a move that was previously unthinkable. Community regulations only recognise grape varieties of the European species Vitis vinifera L. for the production of appellation wines, whereas grape varieties with resistance to downy and powdery mildew stem from crosses between Vitis vinifera L. and other Vitis species (American and/or Asian, which carry the resistance genes).

“This is a strong signal. If the decision had gone any other way it would have put an immediate stop to the varieties”, says INRAE's scientific director for agriculture, Christian Huyghe. “The fact that the Community office has recognised them is a game-changer. This is no isolated talk shop. It coordinates designations for all plant species across Europe”, stresses Huyghe, who urges people to “view the varieties for what they contribute to the French winegrowing system, namely substantial resistance to downy and powdery mildew”, with a 95% reduction in fungicide spraying out in the field (according to results collected through the Oscar network).

“Until now, amongst experts at the International Organisation of Vine and Wine (OIV), a cross was immediately considered to no longer be a member of the Vitis vinifera group. Acceptance by the CPVO is a gateway to a new perspective”, confirms Jean-Pierre Van Ruyskensvelde, managing director of the French Institute of Vine and Wine (IFV), which partners with INRAE in rolling out the Sustainable Resistance varieties (Resdur). The four new varieties are “apparently eligible for producing PDO wines. Feedback from the Ministry of Agriculture is pending”, adds Van Ruyskensvelde.

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William Shoemaker Le 30 juin 2021 à 18:45:10

This is a rational step toward a more sustainable approach to viticulture. Even though they are interspecific hybrids, it shows that when done well, hybridization does not necessarily lead to diminished quality in wine grapes. Similarly, interspecific hybrids recently released by the University of California are resistant to Pierce's Disease, a devastating affliction with no cure in pure vinifera vines. These new hybrids, also 94-97% vinifera, are turning heads in California for the quality of wine they produce. We have many other opportunities through hybridization to address problems that conventional viticulture can only spray for. Its time to make use of tghis simple, effective opportunity to become more sustainable in the wine industry.

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Michael Neal Le 29 juin 2021 à 00:17:34

Nice to know that research is ongoing with disease resistance in grapes, especially PM and DM. Perhaps as more research and varietal development occurs, other diseases may be virtually reduced, especially with so many Grape Trunk Diseases, Red Blotch and others.

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