



THE KEY TO THE VAULT

By Jen Shek Voon

IT IS CRUCIAL TO HAVE SOMEONE MAN THE FORT TO THE CASTLE, ESPECIALLY FOR WINERIES WHERE VINEYARDS ARE MEASURED IN HECTARES. TO BE ABLE TO PRODUCE GOOD WINES, IT IS NOT JUST THE HARVEST THAT PLAYS A PART. MANY A TIMES, IT IS THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE VINEYARD,

MANAGING AND GOING HANDS ON TO PRODUCE THESE SCARCE AND UNIQUE WINES. PRACTICE THE ART OF WINE WITH ANNA ABBONA, BID FAREWELL TO BORDEAUX WITH JEAN-GUILLAUME PRATS, AND LEARN THE TRADITION OF GUILLAUME D'ANGERVILLE BEFORE THE TRADITION DIES.



Wine is the only form of art; which you can share tasting with friends, and not only enjoy by looking at it.

Anna Abbona
Director
Marketing & Hospitality
Marchesi Di Barolo SpA

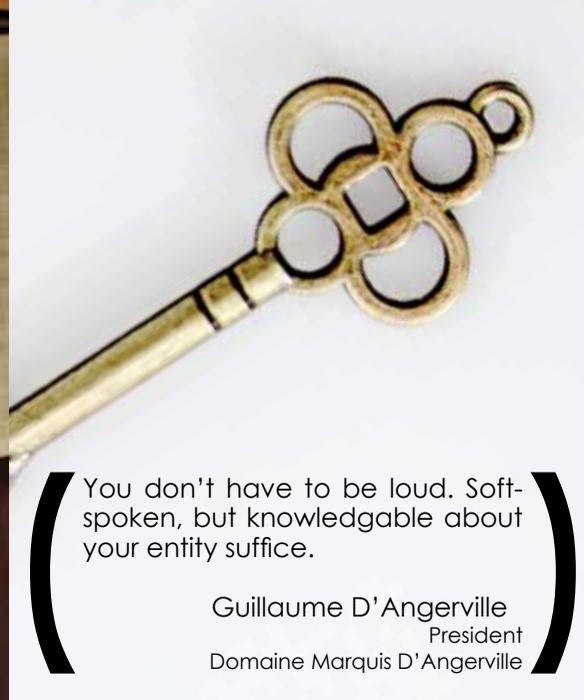
It was the 9 December 2013, and, I was on my way to the InterContinental Singapore lobby at Bugis Junction to meet the charming Anna Abbona (pictured, top right), and her lovely and engaging daughter, Valentina, 25 years the sixth generation of the Abbona family, from the family estate of Cantine Dei Marchesi Di Barolo SpA. Anna looks after the Cantine vineyard's export markets and the hospitality division, assisted by Valentina, who was educated in business and economics in Luigi Bucconi University in Milan, and has done a year's worth of consulting stint in Shanghai, a couple of years ago, and speaks excellent English without a hint of the Mancunian accent.

Anna was married to Ernesto Abbona, the fifth generation and president of Marchesi Di Barolo, when she was very young. She pursued an independent career after the marriage, whilst combining her role as a homemaker to Valentina and her bambino (baby). Anna independent career took off, when the president of the "Movimento Del Turismo Del Vino" (movement of wine tourism) organisation, Donatella Cinelli Colombini, convinced Anna to take on the vice-presidency, and, empowered her to create the "Guida Del Movimento Del Turismo Del Vino" (guide of the movement of the wine tourism), issued by the Touring Club Italiano. Thirty years ago when she visited the Stellenbosch wine region; she was very impressed by the manner in which the wine tourism was integrated along the Stellenbosch wine route, established in 1971 by Frans Malan.

But after a few years, Anna was lured by the challenge of doing something with the family business, leading her to co-operate with Ernesto to develop the hospitality division at the Cantine vineyard. This resulted in the restoration and design of the reception area of Marchesi Di Barolo cellars, and a restaurant was set up where professional tastings could take place, matching their wines with typical Italian cuisines. They also have a charming hotel called the Villa Beccaris Hotel, nearby Monforte D'Alba. The Abbonas told me they lived very happily in the old family mansion in the historical town of Barolo, with the single vineyards of Cannubi in the slopes of the hills overlooking the Marchesi Di Barolo historical cellars, the building of which adjoins the castle of the Marquis Falletti, and in the foreground, where the single vineyards of Sarmassa and Coste Di Rose are.

The Cantine vineyard produces ten different wines portfolio, from the 50 hectares in Barolo; two vineyards in Paigallo, in Barbera D'Alba and Boschetti in Dolcetto D'Alba, and the 130 hectares of controlled vineyards that is managed by Dino Bevione, their 40-year-old agronomist; of which the 2006 Cannubi remains a hallmark of the best tasting Barolos that you will find from the DOCG. We left the interview with a passing refrain from Anna in Piedmontese, which I fully endorse: "El vin l'è l'unica cosa artistic che t'pori tostè cun i amis, non mac beichè con ihoi." (Wine is the only form of art; which you can share tasting with friends, and not only enjoy by looking at it).

任錫文
酒編



You don't have to be loud. Soft-spoken, but knowledgeable about your entity suffice.

Guillaume D'Angerville
President
Domaine Marquis D'Angerville

It was a sunny afternoon at Ang Siang Hill, when I met Guillaume D'Angerville of Domaine Marquis D'Angerville on 20 November 2013 for an interview at Goto Japanese Restaurant, just before a pairing of his much sought after Volnay Bourgogne wines with the kaiseki fare of Goto; a lunch hosted by Corney & Barrow, their London distributors of over 40 years, and now in Singapore. It was D'Angerville's first visit to Singapore.

D'Angerville is the perfect consummate gentleman from Volnay, soft spoken, urbane, and yet thoroughly knowledgeable about his wines and vineyards. He is the six generations and his son, Augustine, the seventh. I inquired about the lessons he learnt from his father, Jacques, who passed away tragically from a fatal bug he caught when he was hospitalised in July 2003. D'Angerville said that when he was a teenager, his father told him that he should not be expecting to work with him at the domaine, that he has his own life and should discover other things in life, and there will come a time when he will return to the domaine. So in 1968, D'Angerville went to public and business school in Paris, and, in 2003, after 28 years in investment banking, he returned to the domaine to take over from his late father. In 1804, D'Angerville's ancestors, the Baron Du Mesnil, sub-prefect of Autun, a mercantile town some 48 kilometers west of Volnay, acquired 12.5 hectares of what is now the 110 hectares of premier crus and village vineyards in Volnay in Côte D'Or, the

heart of the Côte De Beaune; comprising the 2.15 hectares of the Clos Des Ducs Monopole, together with the seven other 1er Cru vineyards in Caillerets, Champans, Clos Des Angles, Fremiet, Mitans, Pitures, Taillepieds, and two village vineyards of Grandchamps and Pluchots. The 12.5 hectares as it now stand is unique, as it is at almost exactly, as described by the state of the royal officer in 1507, who drew an act of the state of the field of Volnay, of which 38 Volnaysiens witnessed, what were left in the area by the dukes of the House Of Burgundy. The domaine also has one hectare in Meursault 1er cru - Meursault-Santenots, 0.4 hectares in Pommard 1er cru - Combes-Dessus, and 1.5 hectares in Autres. D'Angerville has carried on the family winemaking tradition of non-intervention and to rely primarily on the wines that are made from grapes specific to the terroirs. D'Angerville said that the beauty of Burgundy is that the wines are produced in limited quantities from adjoining parcels, and each has their own unique characteristics. For example, the wines from the monopole of Clos Des Ducs has greater depths arising from its superb rocky limestone soils, and the Champans wines have finesse, and generosity of flavours derived from more iron rich soil over a rocky limestone. Do try and get hold of the wines from D'Angerville as they are now becoming very scarce due to violent weather disruptions. The 2013 harvest is now expected to be one-sixth of the normal year at just nine hectolitres per hectare. Described by D'Angerville as the "archetype" of Volnay, I agree: finesse, depth, generosity of flavour, sap and precision.



It is not just about staying in the boardroom, but rather by being there in the vineyards, hands on.

Jean-Guillaume Prats
President & CEO
Moët-Hennessy
Wine Division Estates & Wines



I have met Jean-Guillaume Prats, managing director of Château Cos-D'Estournel, (starting with the 2001 vintage), on a number of occasions in Singapore. But this time, he is visiting Singapore as president and CEO of Moët-Hennessy wine division, estates and wines. I caught up with him for an afternoon interview in the lobby bar of the St Regis on 25 November 2013, and very much wanted to find out why he bade farewell to Bordeaux for a life of travel worldwide outside France, representing 13 pre-eminent wineries in eight countries, including six Domaine Chandon properties. Prats told me that it was in late 2012 when Christophe Navarre (55 years), president of Moët-Hennessy Wines & Spirits telephoned him and made him an offer, the challenges of which he could not refuse. And in October 2012, his appointment, effective February 2013, based in Paris, and a board member of the Louis Vuitton Moët-Hennessy Committee Operational (LVMH), was announced internally within LVMH, of which wines and spirits division is one of six global divisions within the world's largest luxury brands group. Navarre, is a selected few of the division presidents that sits on the ExCo of LVMH. Prats said that he succeeded Xavier Ybargüengoitia, a Basque, who retired at 63 years, at the end of May 2013 after ten years in the position. Prats stated that Ybargüengoitia did a great job consolidating the overseas wine estates. His job is now to take it to the next level. The LVMH works on the separation of maisons, of which there are over 62 that operate

the brand names independently, and the group manages the brand names on a regional basis. Prats has global responsibility, in France, United States, Asia-Pacific, Europe and Latamex. So what are the developments at the next level, I inquired of Prats. He said that Domaine Chandon in India has just launched their sparkling wines, Brut NV, in Mumbai in October 2013 for the domestic market. The Nashik vineyards will be planted with the traditional sparkling grape varietals of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, and Chenin Blanc. They are also currently building their own winery outside of Nashik, a four hours drive northeast of Mumbai.

So I inquired of Prats as to what the next level would be? He said that his primary responsibility includes expanding the portfolio, of both still and sparkling wines with the maisons in his regions. The current plans, including growing grapes in Shangri-La, Yunan, in the stunning landscape of the mountainous region east of Tibet, some 35 kilometers away. They have begun to harvest a few acres of this unique, high-altitude grape, with the aim of making the best red wine in China. When we parted, I now know why Prats took on the challenge to be the preeminent manager of the spreading agronomy of the wineries in the division, and to be closely involved in the development of their quality worldwide, by being there in the vineyards, tasting the grapes and looking at soil conditions; and not just in the boardroom. JSV