



**DE TRAFFORD 1997 VIN DE PAILLE
RELEASE OCTOBER 1998**

This is the first wine to be released under the entirely new category "**Wine from Naturally Dried Grapes**", recently formed by the Wine and Spirit Board specifically to accommodate this wine and others to follow.

Vin de Paille is French for "**straw wine**", a group of wines made from grapes dried on straw mats. Described by British winewriter Jancis Robinson as "... necessarily expensive, but often quite delicious, long - lived sweet white wines ... Today, production of this rarity is virtually confined to particularly ripe vintages and the most conscientious producers of Hermitage, Arbois, occasionally L'Etoile, and Cotes du Jura."

Other wines produced by various raising techniques include :

"Vini Passiti" of Italy, including the Recioto della Valpolicella / Amarone and Vin Santo of Tuscany. These wines are made from grapes left to dry on racks or hanging from rafters in airy loft spaces.

"Strohwein" of Germany, similar in principle to the "straw wines" of France.

In various Mediterranean countries including Greece and Cypress isolated examples are found. These are typically laid out to dry in full sunshine on straw or plastic sheets.

Driven by the curiosity of these mysterious, unobtainable wines, I decided to try something similar. In **1995** we produced a tiny experimental batch, which turned out to be quite delicious. The 1996 vintage was not quite as rich and the wine fermented to an amazing 16.6% alc. Although uncertified, the wine was quickly sold out. These wines are still very much in an experimental stage and are presented as an ongoing process to develop a new wine style.

VINEYARD

The following is a description of the **1997** production :
Only top quality **Chenin Blanc** grapes are used, mostly from a 25 year old block on a neighbouring cool high altitude SW slope. The vines are unirrigated and yielded 6 tons / hect. 1997 was a difficult growing season with a lot of rain, particularly in our area, but the ripening season was very cool and produced grapes of exceptional quality.

Harvest date: 7/3/97 – 27/3/97 @ 22 - 24° Balling.

PRODUCTION

The grapes were picked at **optimum**, not over **ripeness** (approx. 25 deg. balling). They were laid out carefully on **specialty constructed racks in partial shade** (80%) to slowly shrivel over a 3 week period. The grape sugars, acids and fruit flavours are naturally concentrated before reharvesting in the cool morning. Due to the cool and wet weather at least 1/3 of the grapes had to be discarded before vinification.

The raisined grapes were crushed and pressed in a traditional basket press and transferred by gravity directly to **new oak barrels**. Barrel fermentation was completed using **natural yeasts** only. The wine matured for a little more than a year



in 2/3 French, 1/3 American new 225 litre oak barrels. Racked to remove heavy sediment and lightly bentonite fined before being bottled **unfiltered**.

Matured for one year using 2/3 French, 1/3 American new 225 litre oak barrels.

Racked while in barrel to remove heavy sediment and lightly bentonite fined before bottling unfiltered.

Bottling date : 25 / 5 / 98.

TASTING NOTES

Attractive deep yellow / light gold colour.

Intense honey, dried apricot, nutty fudge, spice and ripe tropical fruit aromas.

The palate is almost overly rich and concentrated with a welcome dryness from the acidity and oak tannins balancing the sweetness.

Wonderful with ice cream and other creamy desserts or simply to enjoy after a meal. Definitely not a palate cleanser!

ANALYSIS

Alc. 13.81 Sugar 113.5 TA 9.0 pH 3.57 VA 1.31 SO₂ 13 & 126

ONLY 60 CASES PRODUCED, PLEASE ORDER NOW TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT.