

Lumière du Jour presents



# VITIS PROHIBITA

a film by **STÉPHAN BALAY**



**RESISTANT GRAPES  
COMING OUT  
OF THE SHADOWS**

international edition



DVD  
VIDEO

## SYNOPSIS

This is the incredible true story of six “innocent” grape varieties that were deemed outlaws by the French government. Their grapes were falsely accused of being toxic when made into wine. Selling their wine was prohibited.

Their crime? They were grapes of resistance. Resistance to pests and diseases that, for more “noble” grapes, must be controlled with chemical sprays.

In spite of laws specifically banning these grapes from European soils and attempts to demean their wines, rebellious farmers have defended their value and defied their prohibition.

Resistant grape varieties may yet have the last word.

This film takes you inside stunning rural landscapes in France, Italy, Austria, Romania and the United States where the resistant vines are living history and their unique wines have a passionate following.



Gilbert Bischeri  
association Fruits Oubliés Réseau  
Cevennes - France

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

In recent years clandestine sales of unauthorized wines have tended to disappear, becoming instead, open declarations of independence: protesting formulaic norms for personal taste, demanding farming that is respectful of the environment, and insisting on removing a prohibition founded on baseless, unjust and obsolete laws.

In this film, I wanted to give voice to the elders who have maintained the tradition of making wine from their outlaw family vines; to young people with a clear vision of the potential future for the varieties in the marketplace; and to the activists who champion these historically maligned grapes and their wines.



Greg Taylor  
Bully Hill Vineyards  
Finger Lakes - USA

## REPRESSION IN EUROPE, FREEDOM IN THE US

Although the European Union prohibits the culture of resistant Euro-American grapes in all member countries, rebellious wine growers continue to find ways to make and distribute their wines. An example is the Clinton grape that crossed the Atlantic in the 19th century and spread across Europe only to be banned 1934. Here we visit Clinton growers in Italy's region of Treviso where it is officially taboo.

To conform with the rules of the EU, Romanian grape growers are being forced to destroy their resistant grape varieties. In addition to being ecologically unwise, this has caused tremendous socio-economic hardship to farmers.

Austrian producers have banded together to win a partial victory to produce their very popular Uhdler wines made with forbidden fruit!

We visited the US where east of the Rocky Mountains there are many thousands of hectares of resistant vines producing many millions of dollars worth of grape juice and wine each vintage.



Martin Weineck  
winemaker (Uhdler)  
Burgenland - Austria

## NEW GRAPE VARIETIES FOR A VITICULTURE WITHOUT PESTICIDES

Aware of the limits of traditional organic farming, winegrowers are choosing another approach: replacing traditional varieties with new ones.

These new grape varieties are multi-species, the result of many crosses between European and rustic American vines. They are naturally resistant to powdery and downy mildews.

Vineyards with these new varieties will need very few or no fungicide treatments.

Meet here the winemakers already using these grapes. Hear the excitement of young winemakers about varieties new to the vineyards of Europe.



Vincent Pugibet  
Domaine La Colombe  
association Piwi France

## WINEGROWERS RENEWED QUEST FOR RESISTANCE AND EXCELLENCE

The renewed interest in breeding for new sustainable varieties that make enjoyable wines has at its roots an intermingling of vines originating from different continents (Asia, North American, Europe) and from genetically distinct ethnicities (*V.amurensis*, *V.aestivalis*, *V.sylvestris*).

Thus celebrated European grapes like Chardonnay and Cabernet franc combine with complex French American crosses from the past or with Asian *Vitis* from the Amur Valley in Russia and China.

These entirely new grapes being created around the world now present new opportunities for future winemakers.



### Classification of registered grape varieties in France

In order for a grape variety to qualify for commercial production and distribution, it must meet two conditions: be included in the official catalogue and be classified there as a wine grape vine variety.

The first definitive classifications of resistant grape varieties took place at the beginning of 2017. However, some varieties only benefit from a temporary classification, even if they are officially permitted in their country of origin. It is then possible to plant experimental plots on limited areas.

### Are these new grape varieties permitted for use in AOC (controlled appellation) wines?

Currently the answer is clearly no. Normally, in order for a grape variety to be included in the specifications of an AOC, it is necessary - in addition to its registration and classification in the catalogue - to prepare a file for the modification of the specifications with the INAO (National Institute of Origin and Quality). Each major modification of the specifications must be preceded by studies and trials.

The grape variety in question must be tested for ten years in the AOC zone before it can be included as an accessory grape variety, with a share in the blends not exceeding 10%. Any new introduction can only be made if it maintains or reaffirms the typicity of the AOC and its link to the terroir.

However, there is a legislative brake on the arrival of resistant grape varieties in AOP (Protected Designation of Origin): European regulations prohibit the inclusion of varieties resulting from interspecific crossings (EU Regulation 1308/2013), which is the case for resistant grape varieties (obtained by crossbreeding between *Vitis vinifera* and other species). Note: this does not apply to Protected Geographical Indication that may introduce grape varieties resulting from interspecific crossings in their specifications.

source : [www.observatoire-cepages-resistants.fr](http://www.observatoire-cepages-resistants.fr)

### Resistant grape varieties authorized in France (total 35)

- 4 developed by INRA's Resdur 1 program: *Vidoc* (B), *Artaban* (B), *Floréal* (W), *Voltis* (W).
- 13 developed in other countries: *Bronner* (W), *Cabernet Blanc* (W), *Cabernet Cortis* (B), *Johanniter* (W), *Monarch* (B), *Muscaris* (W), *Pinotin* (B), *Prior* (B), *Saphira* (W), *Sauvignac* (W), *Solaris* (W), *Soreli* (W), *Souvignier Gris* (R).
- 18 early French-American hybrids: *Baco Blanc* (W), *Chambourcin* (B), *Colobel* (B), *Couderc Noir* (B), *Florental* (B), *Garonnet* (B), *Landal* (B), *Léon Millot* (B), *Maréchal Foch* (B), *Oberlin Noir* (B), *Plantet* (B), *Ravat Blanc* (W), *Rayon d'Or* (W), *Rubilande* (R), *Valérien* (W), *Varoussel* (B), *Villard Blanc* (W), *Villard Noir* (B).

### Grafting

The joining of the bud from a desired fruiting variety (scion) to the stem of another variety (rootstock) chosen for characteristics such as resistance to phylloxera and adaptation to soils and climate. The grapes and wine of grafted vines retain the organoleptic characteristics of the scion. Below the graft union (where the scion and rootstock are joined) the resistant roots come from the rootstock variety.

### Hybrid

Grapevine *Vitis* species are able to crosspollinate both in nature and with deliberate human intervention. The pollen from a male variety is applied to the pistil of a female variety to create seeds in the grapes. Each seedling is a unique genetic combination that makes a new variety. This is an ancient process in nature and not a laboratory process like GMO. If that variety is found to be desirable, it is propagated by vegetative means, usually by rooting cuttings from the mother vine.

### Hybrid Direct Producer

These are multi-species grapes between European and American *Vitis* that can sometimes be grown without grafting (ex. *Clinton*, *Jacquez*, *Cunningham*, *Concord*).

### Phylloxera

Grapevine phylloxera (*Daktulosphaira vitifoliae*) is an aphid-like insect that feeds and forms galls on the roots and leaves of North American grapes causing little damage. However, the soft roots of *Vitis vinifera* did not evolve to tolerate this feeding and its root will decay leading to vine death.

### Downy mildew

Called mildou in France this is a disease caused by the fungus *Plasmopara viticola* that is indigenous to North America where the native vines have developed a tolerance for it. When it travelled to Europe in the 19th century, it caused enormous damage to the crops, esp. those in the regions with high humidity and summer rainfall. French scientists found that spraying the vines with various formulations that included copper sulfate was an effective control.

### Powdery mildew

Another North American fungus (*Uncinula necator*) that became a blight in vineyards planted to European vines starting in the 19th century. Unlike downy mildew, this fungus does not need rainfall to reproduce and spread in vineyards so it is the main fungal problem in Mediterranean climates. The earliest method of control was to protect foliage and fruit with sulfur sprays.

## CONTENTS OF THE DVD



### the movie

French audio 1h31



### subtitles

- English
- French
- German
- Italian
- Spanish
- Portuguese
- Romanian



### chapters

- introduction
- the curse
- the rebels
- resistance in Europe
- the bad name
- the birthplace of the forbidden grapes
- the return of the resistant grapes varieties
- credits





*«This is a movie that starts from a very small corner of the Cevennes in France and takes us to the United States to learn with precision, detail and intelligence, what is a resistant grape and a hybrid or multi-species vine, but also what is an act of resistance, an act of responsibility, an act of freedom, an act of love for wine. Here is a film that made us laugh and moved us, and which, while telling us about the past and the present, is talking mostly about the future.»*

Jury of the International Grape and Wine Festival Oenovideo

**BEST FEATURE FILM**

Oenovideo International Vine and Wine Festival  
2019 - Marseille - FRANCE

**BEST DIRECTOR**

Alive Documentary Film Festival  
2019 - Los Angeles - USA

**GRAND PRIZE OF THE JURY**


MOST International Festival of Cinema, Wine and Cava  
2019 - Vilafranca del Penedès Barcelona - SPAIN

**BEST PRODUCTION FEATURE FILM**

Five Continent International Film Festival  
Dec 2019 - VENEZUELA

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Festival Internacional de Cine del Atlántico - COLOMBIE  
Short Long World Festival - ARGENTINA  
Gold Movie Awards® - ENGLAND  
Festival des possibles - FRANCE



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