

Flavours of France

INGREDIENTS

CENTRE

For 10.5oz (300g) ganache:

- 7oz (200g) milk couverture chocolate, 35% cacao, chopped
- 150ml heavy whipping cream
- 10g invert sugar

EQUIPMENT

- Silicone half-sphere mould, diameter 1½ inch (3cm)
- Disposable pastry bags
- Food-grade acetate sheet
- Scraper

DECORATION

- 3 tsp (10g) edible gold luster dust
- 2 tsp (1ml) kirsch

CHOCOLATE SHELLS

- 7oz (200g) couverture chocolate of your choice, chopped

Eat...

MOULDED BONBONS

TO MAKE THE GANACHE

Melt and heat the chocolate to 95°F (35°C) in a bowl over a saucepan of barely simmering water (bain-marie). In a saucepan, heat the cream and invert sugar to 95°F (35°C). Carefully pour the cream over the melted chocolate whisking constantly. Continue whisking to create a very smooth ganache.

- 1 Dissolve the gold dust in the kirsch.
- 2 Dip the tip of your finger into the solution and use to draw swirls inside the moulds. Let the alcohol evaporate.
- 3 Meanwhile, temper the couverture chocolate by placing it in a heatproof bowl over a saucepan of barely simmering water. Stir until melted and allow to cool before putting the bowl back over the pan and raising the temperature to 31-32°C for dark or 29-30°C for milk chocolate. Using a pastry bag, pipe the tempered chocolate into the mould, filling it completely.
- 4 Invert the mould to allow excess chocolate to drain out. Save the excess chocolate for sealing the bonbons.
- 5 Scrape the top of the mould to obtain clean edges. Stand the mould upright and let the chocolate set for at least one hour.
- 6 Using a pastry bag, pipe the ganache into the shells, filling them to within 1/16 inch (2mm) of the top. Leave to set for 12 hours.
- 7 Re-temper the couverture chocolate left over from making the shells and pipe it over the ganache to seal the bonbons.
- 8 Lay the acetate sheet over the mould. Use a scraper to smooth out the chocolate.
- 9 Put the mould in the refrigerator for 15 minutes to allow the chocolate to release from the sides of the mould. Carefully turn the moulds upside down to remove the bonbons.

Chocolate: Recipes and Techniques from the Ferrandi School of Culinary Arts (Flammarion, £24.95). Photography © Rina Nurra2019.



On the menu next month:
La couronne des rois (King's cake)

Drink...



In his final column, **Richard Hemming** reflects on France's history and bright future in winemaking

Over the last four years and 55 columns in *Living France*, I've recommended 165 French wines, ranging from £5 to £3,540 per bottle.

Along the way, we've explored mouth-watering food matches, toured beautiful vineyard regions, assembled the perfect case and considered wisdom on wine from such luminaries as Winston Churchill and Basil Fawlty. Wine is a prism through which we can refract every aspect of life: gastronomic, geographical, economic and cultural. In my final column for *Living France*, I want to celebrate all of the wonder of French wine by considering its past, present and future.

France has grown grapes for over 2,500 years. They were first planted around Marseille and spread north with the Roman Empire. In the Middle Ages, monasteries took over, establishing many of the vineyards and winemaking practices which are still in use today. From then on, production boomed all

over the country, until the mid-19th century, when mildew and phylloxera (a louse) devastated the national vineyard.

The 20th century wasn't easy either, with overproduction and two world wars to contend with. But since the 1980s, a new golden age arrived. Today, top French wine is universally acknowledged as the best in the world and it sells for unprecedented prices. Quality has never been better, but many fine wines are now priced out of reach of regular drinkers. Meanwhile, a new wave of natural wines has challenged traditional expectations and shows that France is still at the forefront of winemaking trends.

All around the world, wine quality is getting better and better, so France can't be complacent. Fashions change, so continual evolution is vital if France's wines are to retain their premiership in the future.

Here are three wines representing the past, present and future of French wine.



Château d'Yquem 1831 Sauternes (£39,404.70 hedonism.co.uk)

What better way to celebrate French history than a wine made nearly 200 years ago? Yquem is the world's most famous sweet wine, which is still produced in the same way today. It is miraculous to think of the changes this bottle has witnessed: from the building of the Eiffel Tower to two ruinous world wars. This isn't a mere drink: it's an ancient artefact – and it's priced accordingly!

MIP* Rosé 2018 Côtes de Provence (£14.95 leaandsandeman.co.uk)

Provence rosé is one of France's great contemporary successes: a sophisticated, dry rosé that has found fans the world over. Hailing from the region where vines were first planted in France, this fragrant and suave 'made in Provence' pink is the ideal way to mark France's current status as the best quality wine producer for not only red and white, but pink wine too.



Ducourt, Metissage 2016 Vin de France (£12 boroughwines.co.uk)

Predicting future trends in wine is foolhardy, but it seems likely that there will be increasing reliance on new varieties that are resistant both to disease and a changing climate. This innovative white from Bordeaux is made from a hybrid grape bred especially to be futureproof and it tastes delicious: crisp, zesty and vivid.

Next month: Our new food and drink columnist unearths some delicious facts about the Périgord truffle