



LE GRAND *NEWS*

WELCOME TO OUR 5TH LE GRAND NOIR NEWSLETTER

IT'S OUR WAY OF SHARING NEWS OF THE BRAND WITH OUR PARTNERS ACROSS THE GLOBE. WE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU, WHAT YOU THINK OF IT, AND ANY SUGGESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE FOR FUTURE EDITIONS.

LE GRAND NOIR IS CELEBRATING ITS 20TH BIRTHDAY IN 2025

TODAY, LE GRAND NOIR IS SELLING NEARLY 4M BOTTLES PER YEAR IN 67 COUNTRIES. WITH 15 INDIVIDUAL WINES, INCLUDING SPARKLING AND ZERO-ALCOHOL, IT OFFERS A UNIQUELY BROAD RANGE THAT HAS SEDUCED WINE DRINKERS ACROSS THE PLANET. LE GRAND NOIR IS UNUSUALLY DYNAMIC, WITH REGULAR LAUNCHES OF NEW STYLES AND WINES, LIKE OUR LIGHTER LEGER RED. ALL OF THESE ARE CREATED IN RESPONSE TO OUR DISTRIBUTOR-PARTNERS AND EVOLVING MARKET DEMANDS.



LE GRAND NOIR IS THE **11TH BIGGEST SELLING FRENCH WINE IN THE US AND NUMBER ONE IN INDIA AND THE BALTICS**. LE GRAND NOIR IS TO BE FOUND IN TOP LONDON RESTAURANTS, SUPERMARKETS IN NORTH CAROLINA – AND WINE SHOPS IN AZERBAIJAN AND BURKINA FASO. WITH STYLISH AND MEMORABLE LABELS DESIGNED BY THE AWARD-WINNING STRANGER & STRANGER STUDIO, IT IS AT HOME ON ANY RETAIL SHELF AND RESTAURANT TABLE. LE GRAND NOIR IS COLLECTING A GROWING NUMBER OF HIGH SCORES AND **BEST BUY RATINGS FROM PUBLICATIONS LIKE THE WINE ENTHUSIAST**. NO OTHER FRENCH BRAND CAN OFFER LE GRAND NOIR'S ACCESSIBLY-PRICED QUALITY, BREADTH AND DEPTH. THAT'S WHY YOUR SALES TEAM WILL ENJOY PRESENTING LE GRAND NOIR TO YOUR CUSTOMERS.

..... 2025 WAS NOT AN EASY YEAR – BUT FEW ARE THESE DAYS

2025 was not an easy year - but few are these days. There were intense heatwaves in July and August, and some vines suffered from drought and heat stress. Fortunately, our broad range of altitudes and soils meant that we escaped the worst of these problems, as well as the wildfires that tragically affected some of our neighbours in August. Our vines also benefited from the heavy rains in May and June that mitigated the drought



impact in the Summer - especially in the plots with the oldest vines and deepest roots. Despite our happiness with the quality of the wines we made this year - especially the reds - we were sorry to produce 5-10% less wine. 2025 was yet another year when our strategy of creating Le Grand Noir as a 'vin DES terroirs' - blending fruit from different vineyards in our 6,000ha estate, really paid off.

RECOGNITION FOR THE SOLISTE TÊTU PINOT NOIR

WE WERE TRULY DELIGHTED TO GET A 92 POINT AND EDITOR'S CHOICE RATING FROM THE WINE ENTHUSIAST FOR THE SOLISTE TÊTU – OBSTINATE SOLOIST – PINOT NOIR. IF THERE'S ONE WINE THAT TRULY EXEMPLIFIES THE LE GRAND NOIR PHILOSOPHY, THIS IS IT:



A COMBINATION OF GRAPES FROM CAREFULLY SELECTED VINEYARDS WITH A RANGE OF ALTITUDES, SOILS AND MICROCLIMATES. WHAT MAKES THIS WINE EVEN MORE DISTINCTIVE IN AN EVER-WARMER CLIMATE IS THAT, AT 12.5%, IT PACKS FAR LESS OF AN ALCOHOLIC PUNCH THAN MOST PINOT NOIRS ON THE MARKET, BUT STILL OFFERS DELICIOUSLY RIPE FLAVOURS. AND, WITH THIS SCORE, IT HAS TO BE ONE OF THE BEST VALUE EXAMPLES OF THIS GRAPE ON THE MARKET.



OUR NEW VIDEO E-BOOK

One of the biggest challenges for a brand like Le Grand Noir lies in communicating our diverse and unique range of wines. After a lot of experimentation, we have come up with what we believe is a very different solution: a video e-book in several forms.

The first edition is dedicated to our distributor partners and includes details about the brand, and features clips in which Le Grand Noir co-founder, Robert Joseph, tastes and describes each of the wines.

A second edition, aimed at sales teams and their customers, will be tailored to each distributor and will include only Le Grand Noir wines available in their market. If/when the range expands, we will tailor-make a new version that includes them for each partner.



The third edition, on which we are still working, is targeted at consumers and will take the form of an individual e-book for each wine. Accessible via a dedicated QR code, these books will include recipes from our region that will enable Le Grand Noir customers across the world to prepare dishes to partner the wine they have bought. Tasting notes for these wines will be presented by Hortense, daughter of the brand's co-founder, Hugh Ryman. We're confident that the style of the clips will strike precisely the right chord with Millennial and Gen X wine drinkers and, for this reason, we will be using them widely on TikTok and Instagram.

[HTTPS://ONLINE.FLIPHTML5.COM/FVQNW/KQAR/](https://online.fliphtml5.com/fvqnw/kqar/)



Images from our new E-BOOK

LET THERE BE LIGHT

Le Grand Noir has never been associated with the big, super-ripe wines associated with some US critics; we've always preferred the contents of our glasses to be great company for a wide range of dishes, and to be enjoyable by themselves. Thanks to our range of altitudes and winds, and our efforts at blending, even in the warmest years, they never have strengths of over 13-13.5%. But in response to discussions with several of our distribution partners, we are launching **LEGER**, a light, juicy Grenache-Cinsault red that weighs in at just 12.5%. We haven't made very many bottles – yet – but we are very confident that this style will find a home in the growing global market for wines that fit between red and rosé. *Please let us know if you would like to receive a sample.*

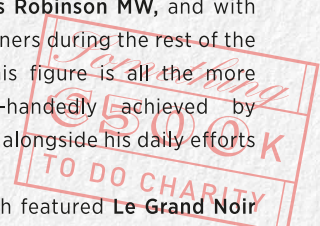


GIVING BACK IN ROMANIA

In November, we were delighted to be involved in the **Rovinhud WineShow** in **Timisoara, Romania**. The event was originally launched in 2014 by **Zoltán Szövérdfi-Szép** as a personal initiative to help raise funds to buy a minibus for the local **Ceva De Spus - Something to Do** - charity that helps young people with disabilities. Since then, with the help of local and international wine producers and top-level speakers, including **Jancis Robinson MW**, and with additional wine-focused lunches and dinners during the rest of the year, it has **raised over €500,000**. This figure is all the more astonishing in having been single-handedly achieved by Szövérdfi-Szép and a team of volunteers alongside his daily efforts to help these children.

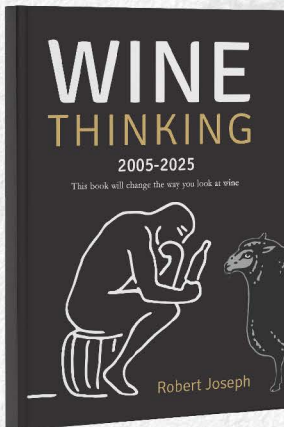
Robert Joseph's blending session, which featured **Le Grand Noir Chardonnay-Viognier, Cabernet Sauvignon-Syrah, GSM and Reserve White**, was in very distinguished company. It followed a fascinating comparison of **Pol Roger Brut Reserve, Taittinger Prelude and Charles Heidsieck Blanc de Blancs** in 75cl bottles and magnums. It was followed by a Bordeaux tasting led by **Rod Smith MW** featuring **Chateaux Pichon Baron and Suduiraut**.

We are always interested in contributing to society in a wide range of ways. **If you are involved in projects in your country that could benefit from Le Grand Noir's participation, please let us know.**



WINE THINKING

In addition to his role as co-founder of **Le Grand Noir**, **Robert Joseph** has continued to write widely-read regular commentary and analysis of the global wine industry for **Meininger's International** and other platforms. **A curated selection of these columns, covering the years from 2005 to 2025, will be published in January.** To mark **Le Grand Noir's 20th birthday**, we are producing a special print and e-book edition, copies of which will reach you in the New Year. *If you would like additional ones for staff or customers or are interested in having a translation for your market, we'd love to hear from you.*

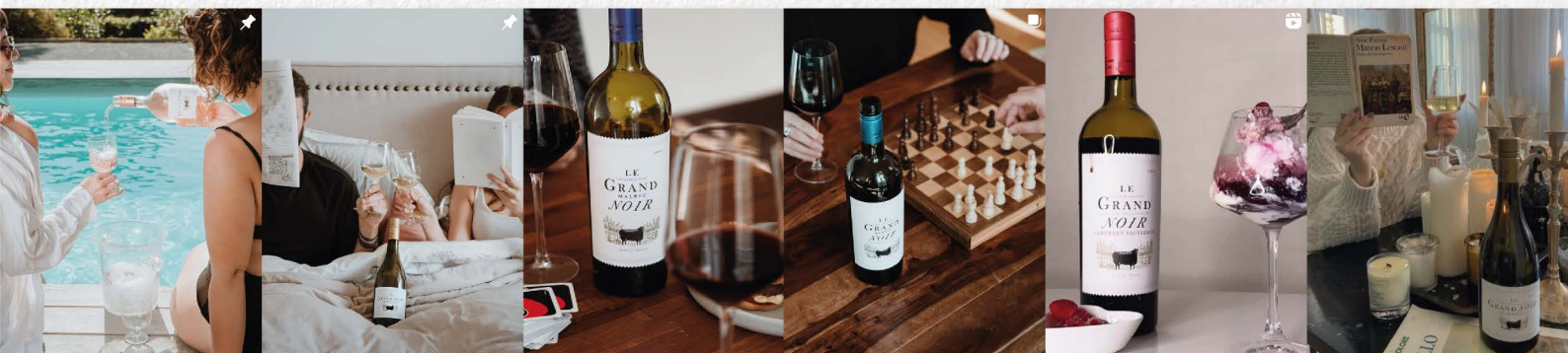


MORE SOCIAL

Since our earliest posters, featuring the **Big Black Sheep** in Venice and Paris, we have always emphasised the idea that our wines are at home everywhere. Today, after two decades, we are proud to say that our wines are enjoyed in top restaurants and at picnics in 67 countries. Being one of the world's most widely-distributed wine brands has led to a growing number of eye-catching images and clips appearing in platforms like Instagram and Facebook.

In 2026, we're going to encourage and reward our **Le Grand Noir** fans on social media by introducing a weekly prize programme for the best of these **"Les Grand Noir Moments"** images, and we'd love you to help us in this effort, which we believe will be very beneficial for us all.

<https://www.instagram.com/legrandnoirwines>



WINE FOCUS

LE GRAND NOIR CRÉMANT DE LIMOUX

WHILE THE CHAMPAGNE MARKET HAS BEEN STUMBLING RECENTLY, THOSE OF FRANCE'S CRÉMANTS ARE DOING REALLY WELL, GROWING THEIR SALES BY 47% SINCE 2016.

Our **Le Grand Noir Crémant de Limoux** has been a proud part of that success story, with increasing orders from our distributor partners worldwide. As its name and appellation reveal, this delicious Classic Method cuvée is the exception to our rule of producing all the **Le Grand Noir** wines in the Minervois region. Following our obsession with matching grape varieties and wine styles to the soils and microclimates that will bring out their best, when we decided to add a truly distinctive sparkling wine to the range, we knew that Limoux, around 50km/30 miles to the south west, has precisely the right conditions.



First, there's a unique cocktail of grape varieties that marries the *apley Chenin Blanc* with the local *quince-and-honey Mauzac*, and *Chardonnay* and *Pinot Noir*. Then there is a range of soils, including some limestone very similar to that found in Champagne, and altitudes from 200 to 600 metres.

This combination, together with cool initial fermentation and up to 15 months on its

yeast, makes for a truly distinctive wine with flavours of *white peaches*, *lemon peel*, *toasted brioche* and *grilled hazelnuts*.

Confirmation of its quality has come in the form of a **Silver medal from the 2024 New York International Wine Competition** and a **Languedoc Wine of the Year award** in the same year, as well as a great **91-point recommendation from the Wine Enthusiast**. This is a higher score than has been given to many big-name Champagnes, which, given our price point, explains why the **Enthusiast also gave it a coveted Best Buy**.



INDIA - WHERE LE GRAND NOIR REPRESENTS FRENCH WINE

ONE OF LE GRAND NOIR'S BIGGEST EXPORT SUCCESSES HAS BEEN IN INDIA.

ROBERT JOSEPH HAD MET RAJEEV SAMANT, FOUNDER OF SULA, INDIA'S LEADING DOMESTIC PRODUCER, ON PANELS AT A NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES, AND HUGH HAD MET HIM IN HONG KONG.

At that time, none of us was quite ready to take our wines into a market that was famous for its alcohol-free states, high excise duty rates, bureaucratic hurdles, and a preference for local whisky. But Rajeev remembers being struck by the passion we all shared for emerging wine regions and an instinctive eye for innovation".

It was almost inevitable that we would work together, and, when we all decided the time was right and, thanks to the efforts of the Sula team, **Le Grand Noir** has grown to become India's number one French brand, with sales rising by 16% this year in an otherwise flattish market.

As Rajeev says, "A key driver of **Sula's** growth has been its deep engagement with the Indian consumer. Early investments in wine education, the creation of the **SulaFest** festival of music, food and wine, and pioneering wine tourism helped build a culture where wine became accessible, aspirational and proudly Indian. This connection with consumers is what transformed **Sula** - and **Le Grand Noir** - into brands people don't just choose, but champion".



While those who know little about the country imagine that, given its population, India could easily make up for the fall in sales to China, sales volumes are still relatively limited. **Around 75% of wine drunk in India is produced locally, and Australia dominates the import market, thanks to the free trade agreement with India signed in late 2022.**



However, thanks to the quality image of **Sula's** own wines and its distribution strength, **Le Grand Noir** has grown to be almost synonymous with France for the growing number of Indians who are beginning to explore wine.

In October, Robert Joseph hosted an online training session for the Sula team. Sitting in the **Le Grand Noir** office in Bordeaux, he tasted all of the wines **Sula** is shipping and answered a wide range of questions. We believe that this kind of activity will help **Sula** maintain, or hopefully beat, this year's impressive sales growth - and look forward to hosting similar sessions for other distributor-partners.

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