

## HISTORY OF LA FOLIE DE VOUGEOT

The history of La Folie is one of romance and creativity in the development of a special residence in the center of the Clos de Vougeot. The vision and drive to create La Folie resided with Paul Martini-Rosé who purchased the Clos Vougeot property in 1890 from the Guichard-Potheret trading house in Chalon-sur-Saône, that had purchased the property the year before from Jules Millon one of the last two owners of all of the Clos de Vougeot. The exact date of construction of La Folie is not known but based upon historical archives and photos of the Clos de Vougeot, we can confidently state that the building was erected between 1891 and 1895.

The physical structure of La Folie did not take on either the Belle Epoque nor the emerging Art Nouveau architecture of the time and instead embraced the regional country weekend home, but with one substantial difference. The construction of a commanding tower as part of the building made La Folie unique for not only that time but even through to today. This is a building that truly is one of a kind in Burgundy and across the wine world in Europe. It's simple exterior belied a sophisticated and secretive interior created for privacy and romantic intimacy that even today is uncommon to find.

It was thought that La Folie was used for quietly private weekend getaways from the noise and visibility of Dijon and was used for relaxing visits by the owners, to host important guests for intimate dinners, and very discretely for both romantic and secretive interludes.

The fact that it was hidden away in the heart of the largest enclosed vineyard in Burgundy, it spectacularly overlooked the Chateau Clos de Vougeot, the main floor had separate entrances for the cooks and support staff vs the tower entrance that led directly to the first floor living area, bath and bedroom helped maintain the secretive nature of the guests.

The use of shuttered windows, a large bath that overlooked the vineyards, separate enclosed toilet, intimate lounge that romantically overlooked the Chateau Clos de Vougeot, large bedroom with a small fireplace, and a substantial dumbwaiter for sending and receiving hot water, wine and food, ensured discrete privacy for the guests – with no one able to ascertain who was actually in La Folie.

The following information comes from the work of historical researchers and scholars in the history of the Clos de Vougeot, the Chateau de Clos de Vougeot and the La Folie de Vougeot. It is our hope that this information provides you with some memorable insights into La Folie and its history.

**The following summary provides the history of the ownership of the Clos-Vougeot according to historical archives and published research.**

The entire vineyard was planted with vines from the Middle Ages to the 19th century, with no doubt a few different uses close to the château: herb and vegetable gardens, orchards and grasses for the livestock. The history of the Clos de Vougeot estate can be summarised in several phases.

From 1818 to 1861 there was one owner of the entire Clos Vougeot property, the Ouvrard family had a monopoly following the purchase of the Cistercian vineyard and château after the Revolution and during the Empire period. All of the Clos Vougeot wines were sold by the Compagnie des Grands Vins de Bourgogne, a Paris-based wine merchant.

From 1861 to 1889 there was a period of transition between the hands of the Ouvrard heirs: the de Rochechouart, de La Garde and de Montalambert families. The heirs eventually sold all the vines in 1889 to two main buyers: Léonce Bocquet and Jules Million. During this period, Burgundy

merchants, especially from Beaune, began to supplant the Compagnie des Grands Vins de Bourgogne in the marketing and sale of the Clos Vougeot wines.

From 1889-1913 the Clos Vougeot which was basically two distinct estates, underwent two fundamentally different developments:

1) the Château Clos Vougeot and around 15 hectares of vines were now owned by Léonce Bocquet, who extensively renovated the buildings, which became a luxurious reception venue, and who tended and replanted the vines after the phylloxera crisis.

2) the remaining vineyards now owned by Jules Millon, were soon divided up and sold to an increasing number of wine merchants from Beaune and Chalon-sur-Saône: There were 15 new buyers/owners in 1889, growing to more than 25 by 1913.



The two pillars of the entrance gate of La Folie are engraved with the words "Compagnie des Grands Vins de Bourgogne" on the left and "Martini-Rosé Beaune" on the right, confirming the involvement of the Ouvrard wine merchants of the time and the purchase of the vines corresponding to La Folie by Paul Martini-Rosé.

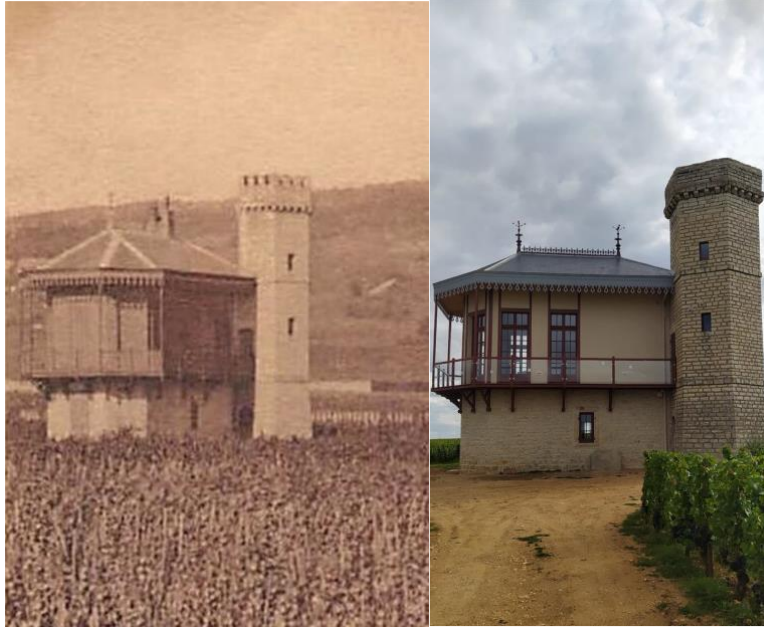
After 1913 Léonce Bocquet conducted the gradual sale of the Château Clos Vougeot and the surrounding plots (there was a total of 48 new owners by 1920), in particular to Etienne Camuzet, who in turn sold off various plots that led to the current fragmentation of the Clos Vougeot vineyards (with more than 80 owners).

### **La Folie Construction**

The construction of La Folie is part of the historical development of the properties described above.

Château de la Tour was built in 1890 by Alphonse Beudet, a wine merchant and breeder in Beaune, following the purchase of the Millon vineyards. After being sold to the Nuits-based wine merchant Morin et Fils, the current owners are descended from the Beudet estate. The Château de la Tour building consisted of a "summer residence and a grape harvest residence".

At the same time, one of the original buyers in the 1889 sale, the Guichard-Potheret trading house in Chalon-sur-Saône, sold 2 ha 56 a 80 ca of vines to Paul Martini-Rosé in 1890. He in turn built his "chalet" or "châtelet de Vougeot", which is the present day La Folie.



Shortly afterwards, in 1901, Paul Martini entered into ruinous divorce proceedings in favour of his wife Fanny Rosé.

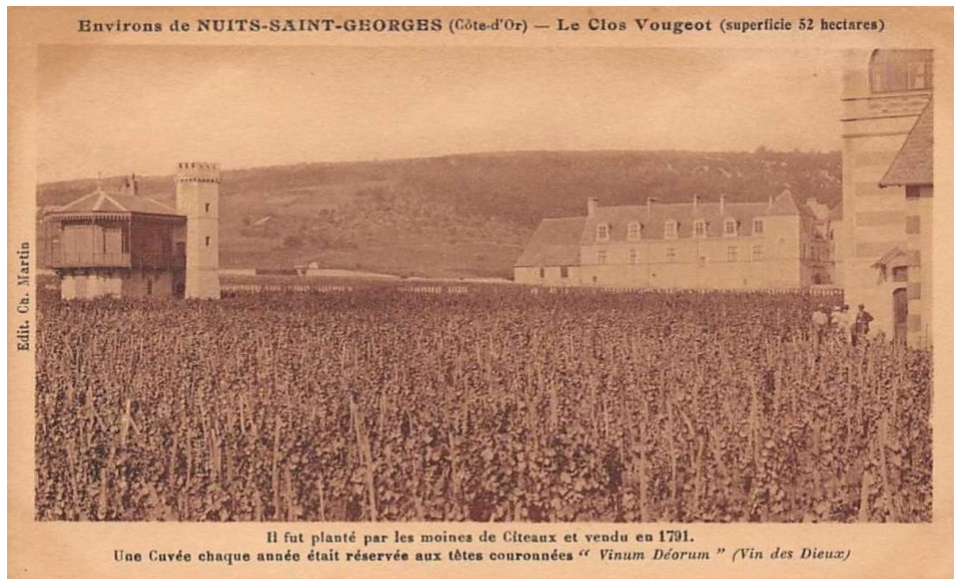
An inventory of the household goods (totalling 3947.40 francs) on site in 1904 at the time of the divorce settlement provides a brief description of the interior of La Folie.

The small and cozy residence was "luxuriously decorated" with "several reception rooms, including a sitting room decorated with a large bevelled mirror with an oak frame, several armchairs and stools, a lacquered chaise longue, a wardrobe and two tables, ...".

La Folie was certainly built between 1891 and 1901 by Paul Martini-Rosé, but most likely between 1891 and 1895.

#### **Historic Photographic Iconography Assessment**

A postcard from the "environs de Nuits" shows La Folie in the oldest state that we can document at present: the tower with crenellations in exposed stone like the ground floor, while the first floor, with an encircling balcony, appears darker (due to painted cladding and shutters made of metal).



Judging by the hats and costumes of the figures in the photo, the post card could date from the years 1900-1910. This photo also confirms that the vines were planted in rows on stiles, before the complete post-phylloxera reconstruction of the vineyard, where the vines were planted in rows on wires, which was only completed in those same years.



The above postcard photograph was taken after 1913.

### La Folie Architectural Design

A quick look at the Folie building reveals a certain eclecticism in terms of materials, associated architectural forms and internal and external decorations. The exterior combined an excentricity not seen in the region (crenellated tower, pavilion with a courtyard, encircling balcony, neo-Gothic metal roof decorations, extensive interior oak hand carvings and internal entrance mosaic), with a simplicity which, like the Château de la Tour, is similar to certain "cottage" type manor houses and suburban and seaside resort pleasure homes. This was unique, for a building dating from the Belle Epoque / Art Nouveau era of the 1890s.

### Date of La Folie Construction

All the evidence gathered (plans, photographs, bibliography, architectural style and décor, etc.) points to the construction of La Folie in the 1890s and most likely at the beginning of this period, i.e. immediately after the break-up of the Ouvrard and Clos-Vougeot heirs monopoly in 1889.



The existence of building stones (of the Nantoux limestone type) never before found on the Côte de Nuits, shared by both La Folie and Château de la Tour (phase 1 beginning in 1890), means that the two buildings can be linked by the same construction process (same architect or contractor, even though the owners were different), with their distinct architectural styles: La Folie with its neo-Gothic châtelet style vs the cottage-style pleasure villa for the Chateau de la Tour.



The abundance and arrangement of Nantoux limestone in both buildings (the majority in the case of La Folie, but used only as a building base or for occasional repairs in the case of Château de la Tour) suggests that La Folie slightly predates Château de la Tour, i.e. at the very beginning of the 1890s, or even in 1891 if the construction of Château de la Tour actually dates from 1890.



The historical archives and the inscription in the stone at the La Folie entrance clearly show Paul Martini-Rosé and his wife Fanny Rosé as the owners of La Folie in its functional state. Coming after the first two ephemeral owners of the vineyards following the sale of the estate in 1889, Jules Millon and then the Chalon-sur-Saône merchant Guichard-Potheret, and given the above chronology and the origin of the building materials from the Hautes-Côtes de Beaune or Côte Chalonnaise, it is not impossible that construction may have been started by Guichard-Potheret before Paul Martini-Rosé bought the property in 1890.

The layout, with its fireplace and wood panelling, and the inventory of the furniture in the divorce drawn up in 1901-1904, suggest that this was the Martini-Rosé's maison de plaisance, a "four o'clock house" as they are known in the Côte-d'Or, providing the owners with a place to relax and enjoy a holiday and asserting their status as landowners in the vineyards. However, based upon the

ability to have discrete and secretive visitors, its distance from Dijon's prying eyes and ultimately the Martini-Rose ruinous divorce, there were likely other happenings in La Folie,,,