



KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

DOMAINE COMTE ABBATUCCI

Country: **France**

Region: **Corsica**

Appellation(s): **Ajaccio**

Producer: **Jean-Charles Abbatucci**

Founded: **1950**

Annual Production: **5,000 cases**

Farming: **Biodynamic**

Website: **www.domaine-abbatucci.com**



In the colorful, picturesque city of Ajaccio, capital of Corsica, you can't get very far without seeing the name Abbatucci. There are streets, monuments and plazas that carry the name, which is normal given that General Jean-Charles Abbatucci from Ajaccio was a hero of the French Revolution and comrade in arms of another local hero, Napoléon Bonaparte. Step into a wine bar or a restaurant there, chances are these days they'll pour you a glass of Domaine Abbatucci. The domaine is run by Jean-Charles Abbatucci, a direct descendant of the General, who has now become a local hero of another kind—for providing the local populace with its most sought-after libation.

Corsicans are proud defenders of their traditions and environment, and with Abbatucci they indulge guilt-free. His wines are certified biodynamic, and he believes in following even the most far-out biodynamic practices to the letter. On his large estate south of Ajaccio he keeps a pristine poly-culture ecosystem in place, complete with herds of sheep foraging through his vines, groves of olive trees on ancient terraces, and large swaths of untouched forests. His vines come from cuttings of indigenous grapes, sourced decades ago high up in the isolated and mountainous interior of the island from elderly peasant farmers, effectively saving several native varieties from extinction. To keep his vines happy, he's known to drive his tractor out to his vineyards and play traditional Corsican polyphonic songs over loudspeakers for their benefit. After the harvest he'll treat his cellar to the same music as his grapes ferment and come of age. All part of the terroir, he says. Does all this have an actual effect on the wine? Have a taste for yourself. The proof just might be in the pudding.



DOMAINE COMTE ABBATUCCI (continued)

| <u>Wine</u> | <u>Blend</u> ¹ | <u>Vine Age</u> | <u>Soil Type</u> | <u>Vineyard Area</u> * |
|---|--|------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Ajaccio <i>Blanc</i> “Cuvée Faustine” | Vermentinu | 40 years | Granite | 18 ha total |
| Ajaccio <i>Rosé</i> “Cuvée Faustine” | 90% Sciaccarellu 10% Barbarossa | 20 years | N/A | |
| Ajaccio <i>Rouge</i> “Cuvée Faustine” | 70% Sciaccarellu 30% Niellucciu | N/A | N/A | |
| Vin de France <i>Rosé</i> “Gris Impérial” | 90% Sciaccarellu 10% Barbarossa | 20 years avg | Granite | 2 ha |
| Vin de France <i>Rouge</i> “Monte Bianco” | Sciaccarellu | 25 years avg | Granite | .6 ha |
| Vin de France <i>Rosé</i> “Valle di Nero” | Carcajolu-Neru | 10 years | Granite | .5 ha |
| Vin de France <i>Rouge</i> “Valle di Nero” | Carcajolu-Neru | 6 years avg | Granite | 1.5 ha |
| Vin de France “Rouge Frais Impérial” | Sciaccarellu | 20 years avg | Granite | 2 ha |
| Cuvée Collection <i>Blanc</i> “Général de la Révolution : Jean-Charles Abbatucci” | 25% Carcajolu Biancu 25% Paga Debbiti 20% Riminese 15% Rossola Brandica 10% Biancone 5% Vermentinu | Planted from 1960-1962 | Granite | 2 ha |
| Cuvée Collection <i>Blanc</i> “Diplomate d’Empire-II Calvalière-Don Jacques-Pascal Abbatucci” | 37% Vermentinu 20% Rossola Bianca 19% Biancu Gentile 14% Genovese 10% Brustiano | | | |
| Cuvée Collection <i>Blanc</i> “BR” | Barbarossa | | | |
| Cuvée Collection <i>Rouge</i> “Minstre Impérial : Jacques-Pierre-Charles Abbatucci” | 22% Sciaccarellu 18% Niellucciu 15% Carcajolu-Neru 15% Montaneccia 12% Morescono 10% Morescola 8% Aleatico | | | |
| Cuvée Collection <i>Rouge</i> “CN” | Carcajolu-Neru | 6 years avg | Granite | 1.5 ha |
| Vin de France Extra-Brut “Empire” | Barbarossa | Planted from 1960-1962 | Granite | 2 ha |

¹ Corsican spellings of grape varieties

* “ha”=hectares; one hectare equals roughly two and a half acres



DOMAINE COMTE ABBATUCCI (continued)

VITICULTURE/VINIFICATION

- Vines are planted at a density of 3,500 vines per hectare
- Natural grass ground cover between each vineyard row
- Biodynamic practices have been followed since 2000
- All fruit is harvested by hand
- Abbatucci's Barbarossa grapes are red (not a white mutation). However, because he presses immediately after picking, the wine color comes out clear and white.

Ajaccio Blanc "Cuvée Faustine":

- 100% old-vine Vermentinu selected from a parcel with very low yields (20 hl/ha)
- Hand harvested in the morning at prime maturity and immediately pressed
- Wine is vinified in stainless steel *cuves*
- Fermentation takes place after a brief cold-soaking
- Slow fermentation at 18 degrees Celsius

Ajaccio Rosé "Cuvée Faustine":

- Rosé made from direct press
- Does not undergo malolactic fermentation
- Wine is vinified in stainless steel *cuves*
- Brief cold-soaking of grapes
- Slow fermentation at 18 degrees Celsius, the depending on the vintage, the wine undergoes malolactic fermentation

Ajaccio Rouge "Cuvée Faustine":

- Fermented entirely in stainless steel *cuves*

Vin de France "Gris Impérial" Rosé:

- Grapes are directly pressed
- Wine is fermented and aged in stainless steel
- No malolactic fermentation

Vin de France Rouge "Monte Bianco":

- Fermented in stainless steel and aged in *foudre*

Vin de France Rosé "Valle di Nero":

- Grapes are directly pressed
- Wine is fermented in stainless steel tank
- Aged in *demi-muid* for 6 months
- Wine undergoes partial (50%) malolactic fermentation



DOMAINE COMTE ABBATUCCI (continued)

Vin de France Rouge “Valle di Nero”:

- Carcajolo Nera (Carcajolu-Neru) is a true, native Corsican grape once planted widely in southern Corsica and recently abandoned to the point of near extinction
- Grapes are not crushed and put directly into conical wood tanks
- Fermentation lasts 2 weeks, with alternating punchdowns and pumpovers
- Aged in 600-L *demi-muids* for 12 months, then stainless steel tank for a few months
- Aged in bottle 6 months

Vin de France “Rouge Frais Impérial”:

- Grapes are fully de-stemmed
- Short maceration period with light punching down
- Short aging period in cement and stainless steel

DOMAINE COMTE ABBATUCCI COLLECTION

The Domaine Comte Abbatucci Collection wines all come from a single parcel planted by Antoine Abbatucci in the early 1960's. At the time, Antoine (Jean-Charles's father) was president of the Chamber of Agriculture in Corsica, and noticed that the subsistence farming lifestyle of the mountain villages was rapidly disappearing as the villagers left the countryside for the coastal towns. Several villages farmed old vines of indigenous varieties that were left abandoned as the population left. To save these varieties from extinction, Abbatucci took cuttings of each threatened vineyard he came across and planted the cuttings on his estate near Ajaccio, in a single plot of granite soil. By 1962, eighteen different varieties had been planted. More recently, Jean-Charles has begun propagating the vines using sélection massale on his own estate, as well as supplying cuttings to other vignerons all over Corsica. He blends these native grapes from the original plot planted in the 1960's together into four different cuvées, each one named after an ancestor (except for the barbarossa which is named for the grape variety). All four cuvées have exceptionally low yields to produce a mere 1,500 bottles.

Cuvée Collection Blanc “Général de la Révolution : Jean-Charles Abbatucci”:

- Named for a military hero of the French Revolution of 1789, who became a Brigadier General at age 25 and was killed that same year on the battlefield. His name is engraved as an “Officer of the Empire” on the Arc de Triomphe in Paris.
- Vinified in *cuve*
- Aged in older 600-L *demi-muids*

Cuvée Collection Blanc “Diplomate d'Empire-II Calvalière-Don Jacques-Pascal Abbatucci”:

- Named for a childhood friend of Napoléon Bonaparte, who served under the Empire and spent several years as a diplomat in Naples. He was faithful to the end, and fought at Napoléon's side in the Battle of Waterloo.
- Vinified in *cuve*
- Aged in older 600-L *demi-muids*



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DOMAINE COMTE ABBATUCCI (continued)

Cuvée Collection *Blanc* “BR”:

- Although the exact origin of the Barbarossa grape are disputed, the cuttings comes from a lineage of Barbarossa which has been in Corsica for at least 800 years
- Vinified and aged in *cuve*

Cuvée Collection *Rouge* “Minstre Impérial : Jacques-Pierre-Charles Abbatucci”:

- Named for a leading military figure under Napoléon Bonaparte’s Premier Empire, and then became a prominent consul under Napoléon III.
- Grapes are crushed by foot and macerate for 15 days
- Aged in older 600-L *demi-muids*

Cuvée Collection *Rouge* “CN”:

- Carcajolo Nera (Carcajolu-Neru) is a true, native Corsican grape once planted widely in southern Corsica and recently abandoned to the point of near extinction
- Grapes are crushed by foot and macerate for 15 days
- Aged in 1/3 older 600-L *demi-muids* and 2/3 stainless tank for 8-10 months

Vin de France Extra-Brut “Empire”:

- Fermentation in 12 HL *foudre*
- Aged on fine lees for 4 months
- Méthode traditional, aged in bottle for 12 months before release
- Dosage: 4 grams/liter