

## **Wine**

From Dionysus to Jesus Christ, wine has been considered as a drink of the gods, their gift sent to the human being, and the blood of the sacrificial God. Already produced in the most ancient civilizations as a result of the sedentary life of man, it has acquired multiple and often contradictory meanings. The divine aspect of wine involves offerings, purification, consecration, blessing, resurrection and salvation. It has become a symbol of an elixir and the Eucharist, allowing eternal life. Although it often represents initiation, inspiration, truth, and wisdom, wine also has several sinister qualities attributed to it. Often associated with the Devil, wine can also induce savagery, enmity and betrayal. It can evoke feelings of sweetness, forgetfulness and consolation as well as feelings of regret and repentance. Obviously, wine can also illustrate drunkenness, cheerfulness, courage, youth, good company, and of course, desire and eroticism.

Wine, an essential element of centuries-old Mediterranean tradition, is the quintessential national drink of France, a country proud to have some of the world's best winemakers, oenologists and sommeliers. It is omnipresent in all aspects of French life: on the daily table, as a widespread passion, a general source of pleasure, and finally as a luxury product for export. Through its creation, production and consumption, it encompasses so many aspects of the cultural order, elementary to the French spirit, that it can in itself be considered the symbol of all that is France. Given its importance and its long tradition in this country, wine was naturally one of the major subjects of "The Appearances", my extensive photographic monograph, made between 1999 and 2002, concerning the main themes of French culture and civilization. With the support and patronage of the City of Paris and the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, this monograph was exhibited for the first time at the National Museum in Warsaw in 2002.

The idea for this tribute to wine and its long French tradition of production and consumption came to life in the most prestigious cellars of Paris. Among the many famous oenologists and sommeliers whom I had the opportunity to meet, Philippe Faure-Brac helped me in an exceptional way in creating this monograph. Since then, my work has been dedicated to this man, elected Best Sommelier of France (1988) and of the World (1992), as well as to all those who, throughout the world, create, love and appreciate wine.

**Andrew Aitch**

Paris, 2002