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life's refinements

2018 ASIA PACIFIC  
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OF THE YEAR  
GOLD

2018 MPAS AWARDS  
FOOD MEDIA  
OF THE YEAR  
GOLD

2018 MPAS AWARDS  
ILLUSTRATION OF  
THE YEAR  
SILVER

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the 3Cs

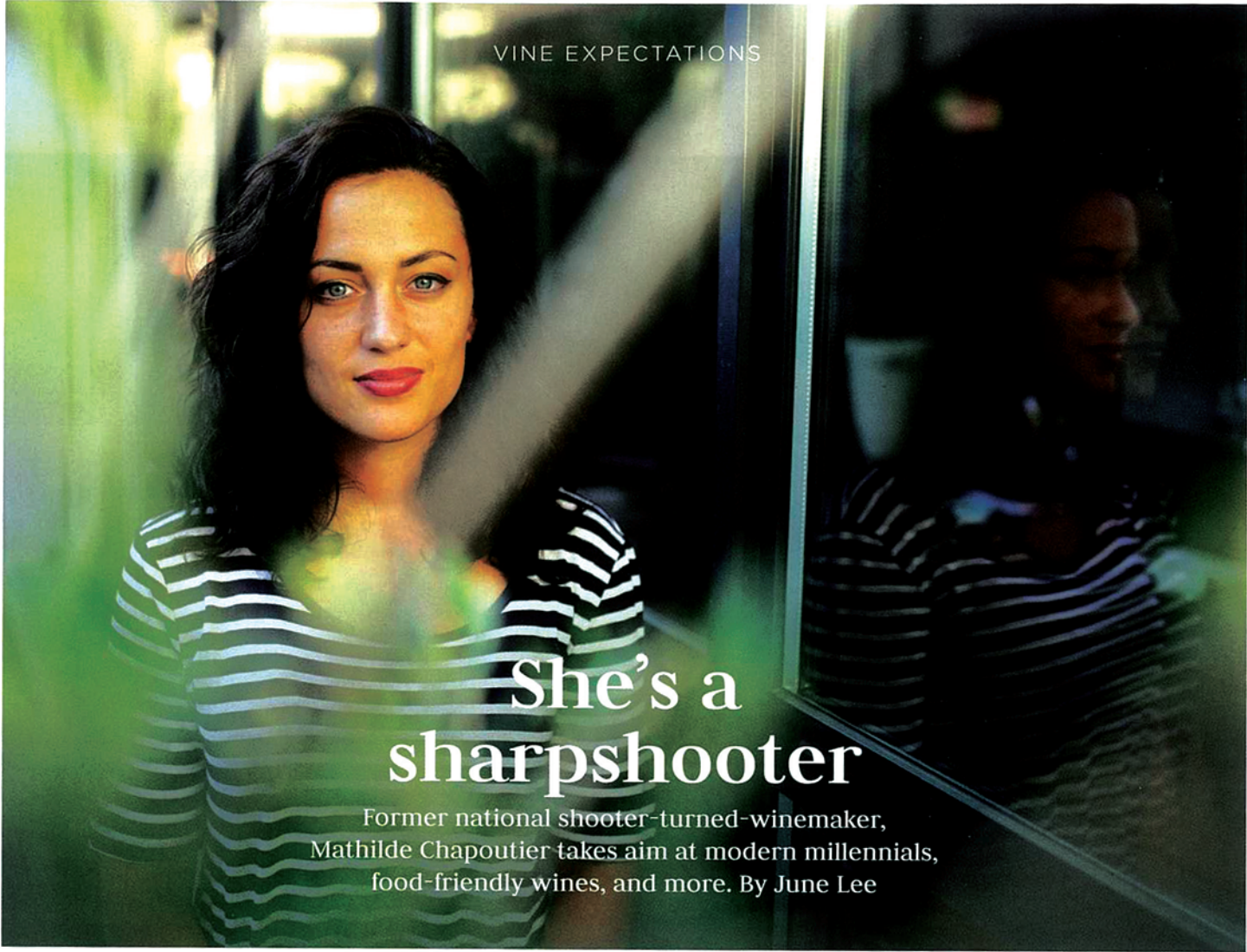
Rise of **CHOCOLATE**  
artisans in Asia

What's brewing in  
Spore's **COFFEE** scene?

Indonesia's farm-to-table  
**CHEESE** movement

"I DON'T  
HAVE TIME  
TO BE A  
TV CHEF."  
-Jean-Georges  
Vongerichten





# She's a sharpshooter

Former national shooter-turned-winemaker, Mathilde Chapoutier takes aim at modern millennials, food-friendly wines, and more. By June Lee

The holdings of M. Chapoutier is so vast it would take a book or more to cover all of its activities. Much ink has been spilled on the formidable Michel Chapoutier, who took over the domaine in 1990 by buying out his siblings' share of the business. Michel, then 26, went on to achieve far greater success for the business than the family had before. His moniker these days? King of the Rhone, and The Man with the Most Parker 100-points in the World.

His daughter Mathilde – who is coincidentally 26 turning 27 this year – is in Singapore to do a whirlwind publicity tour. The petite and reserved brunette is rapidly catching up to her destiny as the eight generation of the family to lead the firm. Her mother Corinne and brother Maxime are also variously involved in the company.

## An adventurous streak

Though she grew up in Ardeche among the vineyards, always helping out with pruning, harvesting and tasting, Mathilde initially had no intention of joining the company. She was a prodigious shooter, starting out at age 10 at the gun shooting range and spending years pursuing medals for the French national team. Her independent streak led her to pursue her degree and learn Mandarin in Beijing, which is where her father cannily nudged her in the door – he offered her the

role as the brand's China/Asia ambassador. It suited her perfectly as she could run things autonomously, away from parental supervision.

Surprised that she enjoyed her stint, she joined the company full-time in 2015 as business development director, in charge of the group's subsidiaries and overseeing expansion. "We have been buying a beautiful organic vineyard in Ribera Del Duero (Dominio Del Soto), a very nice property in Provence (Château des Ferrages) and also an old family house in Beaujolais (Maison Trenel). We're looking at converting these estates to organic/biodynamics and making sure they produce the best wines possible. It's always a fantastic adventure to work on new terroirs, new grapes, for me and for all our teams," she explains. Combining these different responsibilities, she also assumed the role of sales director in 2017. "I'm the first woman to head the family business, but Maison Chapoutier employs almost as many women as men. In the top management, it's mainly women. That happened pretty naturally and no one seems to complain so it must be working efficiently," she grins.

Across their 344 hectares cultivated organically, of which 315 are biodynamic, the wines are allowed to faithfully represent the terroir, even if that means the flavours vary from year to year. "We believe a good wine is made in the vineyard, not the cellar," Mathilde explains. In

## In Rhone



**M. CHAPOUTIER SAINT PERAY LA MUSE DE RW SPARKLING 2012**  
**Grapes:** 100% Marsanne  
**Taste:** A fine bubbly made from Marsanne, with 3 years bottle ageing for its notes of hazelnuts, honeysuckle and acacia honey. RW is an homage to composer Richard Wagner, and this rare Marsanne sparkling does sing with a freshness and acidic tension. \$71



**M. CHAPOUTIER CHATEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE LA BERNADINE ROUGE 2015**  
**Grapes:** 60% Grenache, 25% Syrah, 15% other varieties  
**Taste:** For lovers of the appellation, this spicy licorice and bold cherry CDP is a hallmark. Fermentation at high temperature extracts the deep colour and tannin structure, though its balance means the 14.5% ABV feels smooth and approachable. \$91



**M. CHAPOUTIER ERMITAGE LE PAVILLON ROUGE 2012**  
**Grapes:** 100% Syrah  
**Taste:** Low yielding 100-year-old vines from this fabled single vineyard produces an impeccable 100-pointer stunner. Tar and smoke on the nose, with concentrated red fruit with lingering cocoa and licorice. Age as long as 60 to 80 years, though its finesse is approachable now. \$700

Available from Culina (culina.com.sg)



terms of house style, they pay attention to the time of picking, to ensure the right level of ripeness, which is typically complemented by using a lower ratio of new oak. Another tack is looking at less obvious grapes, such as her personal favourites Marsanne and Grenache. In terms of wine, she sees that young drinkers are drinking less but demanding more quality, with an emphasis on enjoying wine with food – a bistronomic approach.

"My typical day would consist of arriving early at the office, going through all the emails from my teams and then meeting with both the production and sales team to ensure all goes smoothly. I'm between the head office and the winery while also welcoming clients to our home of Tain l'Hermitage," she rattles off.

Does she ever feel overwhelmed sometimes, with a team of 90+ staff under her? Mathilde pauses to consider before confidently shooting back, "I was born to pressure. I just deal with it." e

## In Australia



**DOMAINE TOURNON - M. CHAPOUTIER MATHILDA VIOGNIER MARSANNE 2015**  
**Grapes:** Viognier, Marsanne  
**Taste:** In Australia, Michel Chapoutier found new opportunities to blaze a trail with Rhone varietals. With dual meaning, the Mathilda range pays homage to both the iconic Aussie slang as well as to Mathilde. This white blend is crisp and supple, with ample minerality and stone fruit flavours. \$45



**DOMAINE TOURNON - M. CHAPOUTIER LANDSBOROUGH GRENACHE 2015**  
**Grapes:** Grenache  
**Taste:** In the Victorian Pyrenees, this full-bodied Grenache stays fresh, thanks to its restrained winemaking style. Cool fermentation with ageing in concrete tanks bring out the wine's bright ruby hue and summer strawberry character. A light hint of white pepper adds complexity. \$58



**DOMAINE TOURNON - M. CHAPOUTIER LADY'S LANE HEATHCOTE SHIRAZ 2015**  
**Grapes:** Shiraz  
**Taste:** The domaine is named after a commune in Hermitage, so naturally Shiraz (Syrah) is key. The grapes are grown on rare Cambrian soils in the Pyrenees, Victoria, with ageing in French oak. The very silky tannins support expanding flavours of ripe raspberries and spices. \$79

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