



Teresa Severini
(seated) and
Chiara Lengarotti

WINE, WOMEN, AND...

When you next sip a flute of Veuve Clicquot, Pommery, Krug, or Bollinger, offer a toast to France's renowned "Champagne Widows" of centuries past. Taking over from their husbands, they helped build those great Champagne houses still celebrated today. Still, until recently wine was a distinctly male-dominated world. Now university programs (University of California–Davis, University of Bordeaux, University of Adelaide, and others), corporate acquisition of wineries, and growing acceptance of daughters in family businesses have removed the bottleneck for women vintners. Females are no longer an oddity, but a real force in the wine business.

In France, **Lalou Bize-Leroy** of Domaine Leroy (who gained her fame as winemaker at Domaine de la Romanée Conti) makes legendary Burgundies. In Italy, the women's wine association, *Le Donne del Vino*, lists more than 60 female wine producers in the Piemonte (Piedmont) region alone. Notable are **Chiara Boschis**, who crafts DOC Barolos at E. Pira & Figli, and **Anna Maria Abbona**, who makes superb DOC Dolcetto under her own name. Umbria's Cantine Giorgio Lungarotti is run by a dynasty of women—**Maria Grazia Lungarotti** and her daughters **Chiara Lungarotti** and **Teresa Severini**, the first female oenology

graduate of the University of Perugia—while Trentino's **Elisabetta Foradori** has revived the almost-forgotten Teroldego grape, to great acclaim. In California, an estimated 15 to 20 per cent of winemakers are women, many producing coveted cult wines, including La Sirena (**Heidi Peterson Barrett**), Marcassin (**Helen Turley**), Merry Edwards (**Merry Edwards**), and Selene (**Mia Klein**). Australia's **Vanya Cullen**, winemaker at Cullen Wines, has followed in her mother's footsteps, while Argentina's first female winemaker, **Susana Balbo**, now makes notable wines under her own label. In South Africa, **Ronell Wiid** of Hazendal Estate has won a number of awards, and empowerment programs in her country are bringing the first black women into the wine business.

On the management side, women now helm three of Bordeaux's five prestigious *premier grand crus classés* châteaux: Margaux (**Corinne Mentzelopoulos**), Mouton Rothschild (**Baroness Philippine de Rothschild**), and Haut-Brion (**Joan Dillon, Duchesse de Mouchy**). And today a woman, **Cécile Bonnefond**, once again heads Veuve Clicquot—not because she's a widow, but because she was chosen by the brand's owner, LVMH, as the best person for the job.

—G.K.