Introduction and Overview

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Who would have thought in 1990 what we have been able to achieve in 20 years? VDQS,¹ the old French certification neglected by the wine authorities, has become the beacon for the Vineyard Data Quantification Society. It was founded by a group of academic researchers coming mainly from applied econometrics and members of the AEA (Applied Econometrics Association, founded in 1973) and was based on the challenge of developing contributions of knowledge on the economics of the wine and grape sector. After more than 20 international conferences, our initial challenge can be regarded as having been met largely successfully; each year, new studies, scientifically validated by a rigorous process, provide new elements of reflection (and action) to the decision makers of the wine world.

When Henri Serbat, misuses of authority as President of the VDQS-EuAWE,² suggested that the time had come to collect the best research papers in order to create a handbook, we immediately agreed, even though we did not at the time realise the magnitude of the task required to create such a work of reference. But now we are able to offer you a collection of writings embracing all economic aspects of the wine sector. The following 16 chapters show the richness of the contributions of economists in their preferred area (not only for tasting). The works presented in this book have in common the use of econometric techniques and mathematical formalisation to describe today’s new challenges facing consumers, producers (growers and traders), investors and the public regulators of the sector. Some of the topics discussed have been recently developed by economists (for example global warming, wine tourism, etc.) although they had previously mostly been covered by specialists in management, marketing and geography. Other fields correspond to new investigations into traditional topics (for example ranking wines or consumer behaviours) and new analyses in strategic choice (for example how to bottle wine or to sell bulk wine, to select grape varieties for replanting, or to distinguish attitudes, intentions and behaviour in exporting). This book also provides an opportunity to draw up an inventory of the positioning of
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