

PRUNES WITH A PEDIGREE

By Curtis S. Morse, Ph.D.

Acknowledgments: I thank my long-time friend, Sam Fuller, for his assistance with the photographs.

THE PRUNE JARS

The shapely jars with interesting closures in **Photos 1-3** did not contain ordinary prunes like those made in a domestic American home kitchen setting or a factory. Instead, they contained a very special and world-famous type of prune known as prunes d'ente¹ and were made from a variety of plums cultivated in the Agen, a commune in the Aquitaine, an historic region in southwestern France, whose capitol is Bordeaux. **See Photo A.**

Prunes d'Ente has been a celebrated product of the Agen at least as far back as the 1500s, has been protected by the European Union since 2002, and is a sweet, tasty delicacy.



PHOTO A: Agen, a commune in the Aquitaine, an historic region in southwestern France, whose capitol is Bordeaux.



PHOTO JF2: PRUNES D'ENTE J. Fau de Bordeaux Trade Mark advertising trade card. Notice the boxes in the window and the little girl's hand with the prune jar printed on the box.



J. FAU BORDEAUX

PHOTO 1:

J. Fau Bordeaux Prune Jar.

This melon-shaped jar dates circa 1850, is about 8 inches tall with a base diameter of 3 5/8 inches, and has a disc pontil scar. The “frog eye” knobs are for opening and closing the lid, which is of the inside screw type. The jar probably had a cork gasket to seal the cover tight and is embossed J FAU BORDEAUX within an oval cartouche. The author has seen a plain cylindrical jar with an identical lid embossed with the name of the inventor, N. Malineau. *Author's collection.*



PHOTO JF3: Sick child in Bed. Prunes d'Ente J. FAU BORDEAUX

PHOTO JF1: J. Fau ad with Plum Vines. PRUNES D'ENTE J. Fau Bordeaux. [left]

PHOTO JF4: Cupids. PRUNES D'ENTE J. Fau de Bordeaux Trade Mark advertising trade card. [far left]



A. DUFOUR & CIE BORDEAUX BORDEAUX FRANCE

PHOTO 2:

Sapphire Blue Prune Jar.

This most unusual jar with tapered and faceted sides has a ground top, is 5 ¾ tall with a 4 ½ inch wide base in the shape of a dodecagon, dates circa 1890, and has an embossed perfect label in the shape of a crown. The lid is iron, and the label reads A. DUFOUR & CIE BORDEAUX FRANCE PRUNES SANS RIVALES. A trade card for this product is shown in **Photos 5a, b**.

Author's collection.



[5a]



[5b]

PHOTO 5a: Trade Card of A. Dufour.

PHOTO 5b: Back of Trade Card.

The front reads A. Dufour & CIE No 3 Declarations passionnees horizontally and SPECIALITES PRUNES D'ENTE & FRUITS Conserves Alimentaires vertically. The back is shown in Photo 5b. This card was found on Amazon! *Author's Collection.*



PHOTO 5c: Billhead for A. Dufour & Co., 1940



A. DUFOUR & C BORDEAUX

PHOTO 3:

Barrel-Shaped Prune Jar.

This jar has three rings above and below the lettering. A. DUFOUR & C BORDEAUX, is 8 ½ inches tall with a base diameter of 3 ½ inches, dates circa 1850, has a glass-tipped pontil, and has several good-sized white pot stones. The pewter lid has a cork underside and an inside screw thread that mates with an applied pewter threaded ring band around the top of the jar. Around the perimeter of the top of the lid is embossed BOUCHAGE DE LABAT JEUNE BREVETE S. C. D. C. and A. DUFOUR & CIE SEULS CESSIONNAIRES POUR LA PRUNE, which translates to “capped with a newly patented and labeled lid” and “A. Dufour & Company soul assigners for the plum.” This is the only complete jar of its type the author has seen. Some are plain cylinders and others have vertical flutes. *Author’s collection.*

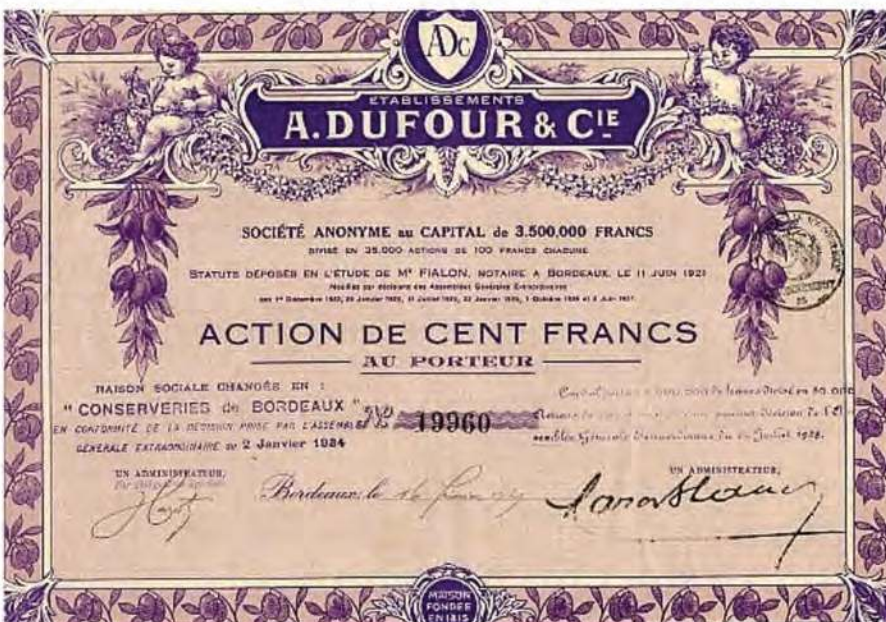


PHOTO 5d: Ets A. Dufour & Cie
(Conserveries de Bordeaux)
Share of 100F - Bordeaux 1929

References:

1. Pikovsky, Scott, *These Are Not Your Grandmother's Prunes, Fruits & Fruit Purees Newsletter*, April 25, 2011
2. Van den Bossche, Willy, *Antique Glass Bottles, Antique Collectors Club, UK & NY*, 2001
3. Ets A. Dufour & Cie Share of 100F - Bordeaux 1929, *Numistoria*

