Message from the Chancelier - September 26, 2026
Introduction to our new Grand Master

Grand Master, Ladies of the Duchess Anne, Brother Knights, dear friends

Today, I have the responsibility—and, inevitably, the pleasure—of introducing you, as part of this formal endorsement. So I'm going to try to create something faithful, kind… and brief enough that no one starts checking their watch.

Gildas, "some life paths seem to be written in advance…and then there's yours!"

Born on February 20, 1966, in Saint-Nazaire, Gildas began by studying computer science, reaching the level of an engineer. So, fundamentally, a man of logic; a man of well-organized systems and a man accustomed to analyzing, understanding, and structuring. Qualities that, in the end, will serve you well later on… especially when it comes to trying to understand how our Order functions!

- Married to Séverine and a father to three boys—Enguerran, Aloys, and Malo—you spent about twenty years in Lyon working in business intelligence. And then, finally, things become clearer - Gildas observes;
- Gildas analyzes;
- Gildas investigates

and, above all, Gildas likely knows far more about us than he is willing to let on…

In 2003, a new family venture began: off to Nantes - and not just anywhere. The family settled directly in Vallet, in the heart of the Nantes wine region. Gildas had known about Muscadet since he was a child, but his arrival here transformed that interest into a genuine attachment to our region, its wines and the people who bring them to life. Before long, he also became involved in local life.

Having served as mayor of Vallet for two terms, he was inducted as a "Bretvin" at the Vignoble Nantais Fair in 2022 and from that point on… everything accelerated: Vice-Chancellor under Claude NICOL, then Chancellor under Yves CAILLER - 2 Grand Masters—both of whom, sadly, passed away far too soon—each left a profound mark on the Brotherhood, and from both of whom Gildas learned a great deal and shared a great deal…… and, evidently, he took on a bit more responsibility each time. So, today, he is called upon to succeed them as Grand Master. A succession, naturally, that is deeply moving—yet one that also represents true continuity. Moreover, having served alongside two Grand Masters, one can at least be reassured of one thing: Gildas knows the role inside out… at least in theory! Now it's up to him to write the next chapter. And he certainly has the resources to do so.

He's an automotive enthusiast, a member of three clubs, and a huge fan of the 24 Hours of Le Mans. He also has a soft spot for BMW. But take note: for Gildas, "BMW" doesn't necessarily refer to the car. It's also a very personal cocktail: Beer. Muscadet. Whisky. Needless to say, with a lineup like that, the pit stops at the 24 Hours of Le Mans take on an entirely different dimension. And since we're on the subject of drinks, I asked him a rather cruel question: "If only one wine could remain—other than Muscadet—what would it be?" His answer: Champagne Bollinger. So, he certainly has taste… but no apparent desire to save money. And his favorite *communale* [village-appellation wine]?

With great diplomacy, Gildas assured me that he was fond of them all.

Twenty years in commercial intelligence… that tends to leave one with certain ingrained habits. Beyond all that, Gildas brings a very clear vision for our ORDER: to continue working in a collegial manner, to forge even closer ties with winegrowers, to attract new generations, to rejuvenate, to bring new energy… all while preserving the very essence and history of the Bretvins…and that, surely, is what we look for in a Grand Master: respect the road already traveled…while knowing how to open up the path ahead.

So, Gildas—since the 24 Hours of Le Mans is one of your passions—we aren't asking you to run a sprint today. We're handing you the wheel for an endurance race. With a solid team by your side. And rest assured…at the Bretvins, pit stops are all part of the plan.

Grand Master, welcome to this new mission, and continue to uphold our motto: "Drink the wine, be as good as it is."



Gildas VIAUD, Vallet, 9th Grand Master

Mathilde OLLIVIER
Chancelier
26th September, 2026

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Ladies of the Duchess Anne, Brother Knights, Bailiffs, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear friends,

First of all, my thoughts go out to all those who have recently left us, specifically, Michel Bassompierre, Bernard Le Pan, Vincent Barbier, and our late Grand Master Yves Cailler, who was taken from us far too soon. He left our Order bereft of its leader. At his own investiture, he had expressed the wish to present his successor - the 9th Grand Master-at the end of his term. Sadly, he never had the chance to do so. I dedicate this title to him.

Yet, I would never have become the 9th Grand Master without all of you: you who welcomed me and shared wonderful moments with me; you who introduced me to the Order and its workings, helped me rise through the ranks, and ultimately entrusted me with this weighty responsibility. Without you, I would be nothing.

My deepest thanks and respect go to everyone who has worked to make the OCB what it is today: an ambassador for our beloved Muscadet, as well as for the culture and gastronomy of our vineyards and the Nantes region-all in a spirit of mutual respect and conviviality.

There is still work to be done, but my predecessors have left behind a a magnificent legacy and a a path to follow. I intend to follow that path, building upon the foundation they established.

We possess a tremendous asset in La Fremoire and our closer ties with the wine federation. We must continue along this course, drawing ever closer to the world of viticulture and the winemakers themselves. Let them know they have our full support; we are well aware of the difficult times they have faced in recent years, but we also recognize that a brighter future lies ahead.

We are not here to take advantage of them, but to join them in promoting what unites us, a: passion for this vineyard and for these exceptional Muscadet wines.

A case in point is the event organized for the reopening of Nantes Cathedral, where we made our own modest contribution to promoting Muscadet. I wouldn't call it a triumph, as that would be an exaggeration, but if we brought happiness to people, it was thanks to the high-quality wine we served and our genuine desire to promote them. We have nothing to gain personally; being *Bretvin* is about sharing.

Another matter close to my predecessors' hearts: we do have young people in our ranks - Knights or Dames of the Duchess Anne - but we must continue to bring more youth and more women into our Order. The future of our brotherhood and our image depends on it. We welcome young people, along with their fresh ideas and skills. Yes, it requires commitment; being a *Bretvin* is something one earns. But it is up to us to welcome them and ensure they stay.

This applies regardless of the age of our new recruits. I recently heard someone say, "You know, you're actually really nice!" Yes, our black robes hide big hearts, though we tend to be reserved about showing it. And yes, the goal is not to keep to ourselves, but to share and exchange ideas. That is the spirit that should drive every *Bretvin*.

We share a common passion and bring a wealth of experience, skills, and diverse international backgrounds. It is up to us to keep this vision alive. A fitting transition to my next point is the arrival of the *Bailliages*, who have honoured us with their presence. I wish to thank them, personally, and on behalf of the Order, for participating. I will not name you all individually, but

your journey here demonstrates your deep attachment to our region, and that commands our utmost respect.

In conclusion, and as time is short (the horn players are signalling that their reeds are drying out), the moment has come to thank everyone:

- Dear Seneschal Gerard Gouraud, for staging this ceremony;
- Our *Baillis*, for their presence and contributions;
- The horn players, for the entertainment;
- The *Echansons* (wine stewards), for their expertise;
- The municipality of Monnieres, for making the hall available;
- All our partners and friends;

and last, but certainly not least, all of you for your heartwarming presence, your support, and the message you send regarding your attachment to our brotherhood and the people who bring it to life.

To finish, I shall perform the first major duty of my office: I invite you all-Ladies of the Duchess Anne, Knights, and all those present to join in the ceremonial glass of Muscadet. But first, I ask you to stand and sing the *Bretvin* anthem.

Long live the Order of the Knights *Bretvins*, in keeping with our motto: "drink.the.wine?.be.good.like.it‽"

Gildas VIAUD
Grande Maître
26th September, 2026