



NEW CLASSIC WINES FROM REGIONAL FRANCE  
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## **2018 Wine List**

(Last updated 7 December 2018)

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**All prices shown are inclusive of VAT (at 20%) and UK Excise Duty.**

This price list contains all the wines that were in stock at the time it was published. We update this list periodically during the year - however it may be that some wines on this list will have gone out of stock before the next update of the list has been produced. This list does not include bin-ends or mixed cases, as they change so frequently.

The latest version of this price list can be downloaded from our website from [http://www.lsfinewines.co.uk/acatalog/Downloadable\\_Price\\_List.html](http://www.lsfinewines.co.uk/acatalog/Downloadable_Price_List.html) Please check you have the most up-to-date version.

Prices in this list include duty and VAT at 20%. All wines are 75cl unless otherwise stated. Orders may be placed via our website ([www.lsfinewines.co.uk](http://www.lsfinewines.co.uk)), via email ([sales@lsfinewines.co.uk](mailto:sales@lsfinewines.co.uk)) by telephone or by post. Full terms and conditions are to be found on our website.

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# LANGUEDOC

Grenache and Syrah are the mainstays of most southern French appellations, with Mourvedre, Carignan and Cinsault also featuring in many wines. The sheer range of blends and styles is amazing, with the best wines being extremely complex, yet truly elegant. White AOC wines are mainly Grenache Blanc and Clairette, although there are many whites made from varieties which fall foul of the rules and are thus labelled as mere IGP – and this is where the real quality and interest is. There are also some reds made under the IGP denomination, too. Basically, in Languedoc, variety (and innovation) is the spice of life. If you have ever tasted your way around this beautiful part of France, with its incredible variety of scenery and soil types, you will surely have come to understand the notion of “terroir”!

## **DOMAINE ADÈLÉANDRE – SAINT-SÉRIÈS**

Domaine Adéléandre was created by Sébastien Abonneau in early 2007, when he purchased around 1 hectare of very old (in excess of 70 years) Grenache, Carignan and Cinsault vines, situated around the villages of Saint-Series and Saint Christol, midway between Nîmes and Montpellier. Although Sebastien owns and runs a wine shop in Arles, he had no previous winemaking experience, so when he made his first wines later that year, it was under the tutelage of his friends Lucien and Robert Creus of Terre Inconnue. 2007 was a relatively hot, dry year, and with the vines having been pruned hard by the previous owner, only 1,000 bottles were produced (a miserly yield of just 7.5 hectolitres per hectare). Yields in subsequent years have been \*slightly\* more generous at an average of 15 to 18 hl/ha - such old vines are naturally very low-yielding anyway - resulting in an annual production of around 2,000 bottles. The upside of course is that the resulting wines are concentrated, structured and hugely complex. Adéléandre is an amalgam of the names of Sébastien's two daughters, Adèle and Léandre, after whom his two cuvées are named. Adèle is 100% Grenache, aged for between 12 and 16 months in old oak barrels (which come from Chateau Rayas), whilst Léandre is 80% Cinsault and 20% Carignan, aged in stainless steel. The wines are essentially natural, with little or no SO2 used in either the winemaking or bottling processes, and Sébastien follows biodynamic practices in the vineyard and the winery. All of which results in some of the most complex and thrilling wines to be found anywhere in Languedoc. How could it not be thus, when they come from the same stable as the fabulous Terre Inconnue?!

### **Léandre 2013 Vin de France**

**£17.95**

80% Cinsault, 20% Carignan. A bright, semi-translucent cherry/blood red. The nose offers a fabulously complex array of fresh and crystallised red and black fruit aromas, with notes of blackcurrant leaf, leather, garrigue herbs and hints of autumn forest floor and vanilla ice cream. On day 1, the palate has a slightly prickly feel (courtesy, I presume, of a dash of CO2 at the bottling stage) which diminishes following a good shake and a little time in the glass. It is both refreshing and earthy, with bright cherry and raspberry fruit, married to leafy, earthy, gently herbaceous secondary flavours and cracking acidity. On day 1, the tannins are a little spiky. Not that this is a bar to its sheer drinkability, straight out of the blocks, but it is a wine that currently benefits from plenty of air. Fast-forward 24 hours and those tannins have melded together with the fruit and the acidity, making for a wine with such wonderful poise and balance. The transformation really is quite remarkable - much more than the sum of its parts (Cinsault, especially, is not regarded as a great variety for red wines), it attains a rather “Burgundian” elegance and charm - perhaps with slightly more body and overt fruit, but wonderfully balanced and supremely elegant, fresh and clean - and gloriously drinkable now, but with the capacity to age and evolve for a good few years. This is one of the most delicious red wine to pass my lips so far this year (tasting note written March 2016). Biodynamic. 14.0% abv.

### **Adèle 2011 Vin de France**

**£22.99**

100% Grenache. From around 1/3 of a hectare of gnarly old Grenache vines, with yields typically between 15 and 18 hl/ha, only around 600 bottles of this wine are made in each vintage. A semi-translucent cherry red colour with a bricking rim. The nose is gently savoury - though more herby than meaty - with black cherry and bramble aromas and a complex array of background aromas, including leather, damp undergrowth, truffle and freshly-baked bread. The palate is beautifully soft, with very fine tannins, a mix of fresh and crystallised fruit flavours, a hint of spiced orange and just the right amount of refreshing acidity - sweet-sour, spicy, grippy, but soft all at the same time. Something I would liken to a Chateaufort-du-Pape for Burgundy lovers, and a wine with a great future - though it is lovely to drink already. Biodynamic. 14.5% abv.

## **DOMAINE D'ARCHIMBAUD – SAINT-SATURNIN DE LUCIAN**

Jean-Pierre Cabanes, of Domaine d'Archimbaud, is one of just two private growers in the Saint-Saturnin appellation, and when you taste his wines, it is not hard to see why he left the local co-operative and struck out on his own. 2001 was the estate's first vintage, and the oak-matured La Robe du Pourpre was immediately awarded a star in the Guide Hachette. Whilst unmistakably Languedoc, the flavours in these wines tend to the more “cool climate” style, with the emphasis on finesse, balance and complexity. The grapes are mainly Syrah and Grenache, with a little Mourvedre and Carignan. The vines average 25 years of age and yields are restricted to 30 hl/ha.

### **White:**

### **Les IV Pierre Blanc 2017 IGP Pays du Mont Baudile**

**£16.75**

80% Viognier, 10% Grenache Blanc, 10% Muscat. A heady mix of peach and apricot, pink grapefruit, mandarin, with background notes of oregano, mint, nettles and honeysuckle. A complex mélange of white fruit flavours, citrus, mixed herbs and hints of star anise and spice, all tightly-knit and wrapped around a core of mouth-watering acidity. The finish is gently herby/spicy and very long. A seriously delicious and more-ish wine! 13.0% abv

## Rosé:

### **Les IV Pierre Rosé 2017 Languedoc Saint-Saturnin**

**£12.25**

50% Syrah, 25% Grenache, 25% Cinsault. A delightful, salmon pink/orange colour, with a nose of summer red berry fruits, peach and melon, with hints of spring flowers. Lively and refreshing to drink, with bags of fresh red berry and white tree fruits, gentle spiciness, juicy orange and zesty lime. With a sweet and sour red fruit finish, this is a fairly serious rosé, with none of the bitterness often found in many other Languedoc rosés. 13.0% abv

## Red:

### **Tradition 2017 Languedoc Saint-Saturnin**

**£13.50**

50% Syrah, 40% Grenache, 5% Mourvedre, 5% Carignan. Gently smoky, tarry, meaty, herby, tobacco-ey, floral and wonderfully fruity all at the same. Those glorious aromas all come through on the palate, which is full-bodied but wonderfully fresh and tangy/herby, with a complex array of both fresh and crystallised bramble, plum and blueberry flavours vying for attention. The super-ripe tannins are matched by truly mouth-watering acidity and real mineral depth, leading to a finish that is long, sweet-sour and very more-ish. Wonderful, quintessentially cool-climate Languedoc wine! 13.0% abv.

### **L'Enfant Terrible 2013 Terrasses du Larzac**

**£16.99**

60% Mourvedre, 20% Grenache, 20% Carignan. Masses of ripe bramble and raspberry fruit aromas and flavours, with a hint of leathery/meaty savouriness, a sprinkling of garrigue herbs and a twist of black pepper. Beautifully elegant and understated, with gorgeous acidity and fine, tea-like tannins - so much so that it is positively refreshing!. 13.0% abv

### **L'Enfant Terrible 2016 Terrasses du Larzac**

**£17.75**

60% Mourvedre, 20% Grenache, 20% Carignan. omplex array of tar, woodsmoke, leather, herbs and spices, but is at the same time fruit-filled, with bags of dark bramble, plum, black cherry, countered by a red fruit freshness, redolent of crushed raspberries. The palate is spicy, herby and gently tarry, with beautifully soft, ripe tannins and bracing acidity. Rich and warming, but fresh and elegant, with a long, sweet and sour finish. 14.0% abv

### **La Robe du Pourpre 2011 Languedoc Saint-Saturnin**

**£16.99**

Same blend as the Tradition, made from the estate's best plots and aged for a year in oak barrels. Red and black fruit aromas, with subtle garrigue herb, spice and forest floor notes. Bright and fresh, with ripe bramble and raspberry, countered by a lick of sour cherry, fine, tea-like tannins, a subtle mintiness and lip-smacking acidity. 13.0% abv.

### **La Robe du Pourpre 2016 Languedoc Saint-Saturnin**

**£17.99**

Same blend as the Tradition, made from the estate's best plots and aged for a year in oak barrels. Bucket-loads of ripe, elegant red and black fruit aromas combine with notes of tobacco, cedar and spice, with an attractive meaty/spicy/herby quality. On the palate, the oak is already beginning to integrate, especially with air, whilst the bright, fresh, gently jammy fruit combines with elegant tannins and super acidity. It is nicely grippy and sweet-sour on the long finish. 14.0% abv.

## **CHATEAU L'ARGENTIER – SOMMIÈRES**

Located in the town of Sommières, between Nîmes and Montpellier, Château l'Argentier has been run by the same family since 1937. Owners and winemakers Élisabeth & Francois Jourdan currently farm a total of 24 hectares of vines, producing a selection of AOP Languedoc wines, including 2 hectares classified under the Sommières cru and 6 hectares under the Grès de Montpellier cru. The AOP wines are made mainly from Syrah and Grenache, with a little Carignan and Mourvedre. The estate also produces a trio of excellent "varietal" IGP wines - reds from Carignan and Cinsault, plus an unusual (and quite delicious) rosé from Aramon. Many of the vines are very old (up to 80 years) and are planted on clay soils rich in flint. All of the wines are fermented in concrete vats, completely unfettered by the influence of (often ubiquitous) oak barrels. This refreshing approach to winemaking allows the resulting wines to fully express their fruit and terroir, which they do with great verve. The reds are aged in bottle for at least a couple of years before release, which means they are already very approachable, though undoubtedly capable of further ageing.

## Red:

### **Chateau l'Argentier 2011 Coteaux du Languedoc**

**£12.79**

40% Grenache, 40% Syrah, plus Mourvedre and Carignan. An intensely aromatic nose, combining curry spices and garrigue herbs, with notes of spiced orange, forest floor and leather, all wrapped around a core of summer fruits. An array of redcurrant, cherry and plum fruit flavours, again with a hint of spiced orange. Firm but ripe, tea-like tannins combine with juicy acidity and a hint of licorice, in a tangy, sweet-sour style. 13.5% abv.

### **Chateau l'Argentier 2013 Languedoc Sommières**

**£17.29**

70% Syrah, 20% Carignan, 10% Grenache. Crystallised red and black cherries and berries, garrigue herbs, black pepper, freshly-baked bread, soured dark fruitcake and a waft of burning incense. Delightfully high-toned and fresh, both on the nose and palate, offering myriad fresh red and black fruits and spiced Christmas cake flavours, with notes of dried herbs. Fine, ripe tannins and juicy, citrus-tinged acidity complete the package. 13.5% abv.

### **Chateau l'Argentier 2011 Languedoc Gres de Montpellier**

**£17.29**

65% Grenache, 17.5% Carignan, 17.5% Syrah. Crystallised red berry and cherry fruits and a mélange of herbs, spices, damp earth and eau de vie, with a subtle creaminess. The palate is packed with raspberry/cherry fruit and spice flavours, together with a subtle meaty/savouriness, fine, ripe tannins and ample acidity, all of which combine in a really rather elegant wine. 14.0% abv.

**Chateau l'Argentier 2013 Languedoc Gres de Montpellier** £17.29  
65% Grenache, 17.5% Carignan, 17.5% Syrah. Red and black summer fruit aromas, herbs, spice and eau de vie, win hints of flowers and polished leather. On the palate, it is fresh, vibrant and full of summer fruit flavours, but with fine tannins and excellent acidity, with a delightfully long, tangy, sweet-sour-dry finish. 14.0% abv.

**Vieilles Vignes de Cinsault 2011 IGP Pays de l'Hérault** £12.79  
Pure Cinsault from a vineyard planted in 1969. Aromas of red berry fruits laced with spices and herbs, with subtle hints of sous bois and freshly baked brioche. Soft and approachable, full of raspberry and redcurrant fruits, with soft tannins and a gently creamy texture and flavour. Light and ethereal, in an almost Burgundian sort of way, but with a softer feel. There's plenty of acidity though, and just the right amount of tannic grip. 13.5% abv.

**Vieilles Vignes de Cinsault 2016 Vin de France** £12.79  
Bright, limpid cherry red in colour, it offers aromas of red cherry and summer berry fruits, laced with subtle spice, garrigue herb, sous bois and orange notes. Although initially spiky and high-toned, it becomes softer and more approachable with air, full of raspberry and redcurrant fruit flavours. The grippy, gently rustic tannins are countered by a lightly creamy texture, but with bags of acidity and a long-ish sweet-sour finish. 13.0% abv.

**Vieilles Vignes de Carignan 2011 IGP Pays de l'Hérault** £14.50  
Pure Carignan from a vineyard planted in 1935. Rich fruitcake aromas and flavours, a touch of spice and a whiff of eau de vie. An initial slight tarriness on the nose dissipates to reveal a rather elegant wine, with a silky-smooth palate, soft, ripe tannins and a spicy warmth. Opens out beautifully after 24 in the decanter, revealing red fruit flavours, flowers, herbs and soft spices, tea-like tannins and a rasp of juicy, orange infused acidity. 14.5% abv.

### Rosé:

**É & F Jourdan Aramon Vieilles Vignes Rosé 2017 Vin de France** £12.79  
A riot of raspberries, strawberries and cream on the nose, quite floral too, with hints of garrigue herbs. The palate is smooth and gently creamy, with flavours of red berry and currant fruits and white peach, offset by a touch of granny smith apple tartness, along with gentle spice and herb notes, a hint of tannin and really juicy acidity. This is serious rosé, to match the best Provence has to offer, with a lingering sweet-sour finish. 13.0% abv.

## **DOMAINE DE CÉBÈNE – BÉDARIEUX (ORGANIC)**

Brigitte Chevalier was previously export manager for the Jean-Luc Thunevin négociant company in Bordeaux until, a few years ago, she decided to return to her native Languedoc to make wine. She makes top-notch wines from her own estate, Domaine de Cébène, situated in the far north of the Faugères region, and also also manages her own négoce company, Chevalier Vins, working closely with top quality growers to produce a range of "Vins de Talent". The wines of Domaine de Cébène compare favourably with the best in the appellation – and therefore the best in all of Languedoc.

### Red:

**Ex Arena 2016 IGP Pays d'Oc** £14.99  
Grenache grown on Villafranchien soil (a mix of red clay and smooth pebbles), plus a little Mourvedre, grown on a 40-metre-deep bed of sea sediment and alluvial deposits in Corneilhan. Red currant and berry fruits, soft citrus and a hint of white tree fruits combine with all manner of secondary aromas - woodsmoke, leather, molasses, mint, garrigue herbs and burning incense. Medium bodied, full of piquant red and black fruit flavours, with fine tannins, herbs and exotic spices, saline minerality and ample acidity. Rounded and elegant, with a long finish that keeps you coming back for more. 13.5% abv.

**Les Bancelles 2015 Faugères** £17.75  
60% Syrah, 20% Grenache, 20% Mourvedre. A delightfully perfumed wine, almost sweet-smelling, with masses of bramble, raspberry and redcurrant fruits, garrigue herbs, black pepper and subtle notes of blackcurrant leaf and dried orange peel. Quite dense and expansive, with spiced red and black fruits, savoury/herby notes, ripe tannins and juicy, cherry skin acidity - young, but already getting into it's stride. Additional notes of polished wood, undergrowth, leather and incense on the nose develop with air, with a slightly more savoury/meaty palate. 13.5% abv.

**Belle Lurette 2016 Faugères** £17.99  
70% Carignan, plus Mourvedre and Grenache. Packed with classic old Carignan aromas of bramble and blackcurrant, with hints of fresh bread, spice and eau de vie and a whiff of damp forest floor. Rich, ripe and concentrated in the mouth, with bags of fruity jam crumble flavours and garrigue herbs. At such a young age, the tannins need some time to soften, though there is plenty of underlying acidity to keep it nice and fresh. 14.0% abv.

**Felgaria 2014 Faugères** £32.50  
Mourvedre, Syrah, Grenache. Relatively soft tannins and gentle red fruits, with subtle hints of garrigue herbs and soft spices. Becomes powerful and serious with air, bramble and blackcurrant mingled with high-toned black cherry and seville orange, myriad herbs and exotic spices, blood/meat, new leather and a lick of really classy oak. Medium-rich and full of ripe fruit flavours, yet at the same time utterly mouth-watering, with amazing freshness and vitality, supple tannins and fresh, orangey acidity. The finish is spicy, zesty and long. Languedoc wine rarely gets any better. 14.0% abv

## **DOMAINE LA COMBE BLANCHE – LA LIVINIÈRE**

Our friend Guy Vanlancker is a Belgian former school teacher, who moved to the south of France in the late 1980's, in search of a complete change in lifestyle. He bought some old vines and, at vintage time, took the grapes to the local co-operative. Eventually, he bought some equipment and began to make a little wine himself. He now makes all the wine, in his own "cellar" (actually an old stone building, on three levels, crammed with barrels, vats and other winemaking equipment). With some of the best vineyard sites, amongst the "garrigues" in the hills above the village, the area in

production at La Combe Blanche is around 18 hectares. The red wines of the Minervois and La Liviniere appellations are made from the traditional southern grape varieties, including Syrah, Grenache, Carignan and Cinsault. Each grape variety is vinified and aged separately, some in oak barrels and some in vat, before blending and bottling. The wines are usually released for sale at two to three years old. Other grape varieties grown on the estate include Viognier, Roussanne, Pinot Noir and Tempranillo, most of which unfortunately do not qualify for the "Appellation Controllee" and must therefore be labelled as "vins de pays". But make no mistake - these wines are very high class.

### White:

#### **Four A Chaux Roussanne 2015 IGP Pays de l'Hérault** **£11.50**

Heady aromas of honeysuckle, peach, apricot and soft citrus, with subtle notes of vanilla, garam masala, grass and wet stone. Plenty of gently stony/saline minerality, with flavours of mandarin orange, nectarine, apricot and soft spice, making for a fresh, yet rather exotic wine of some complexity, with a medium-rich, slightly nutty texture. Beautifully focused, with plenty of soft citrus acidity and a hint of grape tannin grip, with a very long, tangy finish. 13.5% abv

### Red:

#### **Calamiac Terroir 2014 Minervois** **£9.95**

Carignan, Cinsault, Syrah and Grenache. Bright cherry red in colour, with a pot-pourri of damson, cherry and raspberry fruit aromas, crushed nettles, spices and garrigue herbs. The palate has plenty of bright, succulent red and black fruit flavours, with earthy undertones, a backbone of ripe, tea-like tannins, juicy acidity and a long, spicy, gently warming finish. This is the sort of wine that has you sticking your nose in the glass and keeps you coming back for more. Textbook Minervois. 14.0% abv

#### **Misunderstood Cinsault 2015 IGP Pays de l'Hérault** **£9.95**

100% Cinsault. Aromas of garrigue herb-infused red cherries, damsons and raspberries simply leap from the glass, with a touch of polished leather, spice and eau de vie. Succulent red and dark fruit flavours abound, in a wine that is rich in flavour, but surprisingly balanced and fleet of foot, with a seamless mix of warm spice, silky tannins and ample acidity, with a generous, long, tangy/spicy finish. Bargain! 14.5% abv.

#### **Calamiac Terroir Tempranillo 2015 IGP Pays de l'Hérault** **£10.99**

100% Tempranillo. Aromas of raspberry and loganberry, polished wood and damp earth, with a hint of citrus and subtle savoury notes. The palate shows plenty of tannic grip, but plenty of fruit and acidity to match, with lashings of strawberry/raspberry compote flavours and a hint of creamy vanilla. Whilst it shows lots of Tempranillo character, it is proudly Languedocien in origin. Full-bodied, rounded and lovely - and ready to drink now. 14.0% abv.

#### **La Galine 2014 Minervois La Liviniere** **£12.95**

50% Syrah, plus Grenache, Carignan and Cinsault. Highly aromatic, with multi-layered black cherry, bramble and raspberry aromas, accompanied by notes of damp earth, tobacco and freshly-baked sourdough bread, with subtle hints of flowers, older oak, savoury and spice. Relatively full-bodied but with more than a little complexity and elegance, with a multitude of fresh red and black fruit flavours, infused with garrigue herbs, peppery spice and again a touch of earthiness, wrapped around a core of supple tannins and juicy, orange-tinged acidity. The finish is long, spicy, warm and worthy of contemplation. The real "sweet spot" in the Combe Blanche range. Drink now, or age for another 5 to 10 years. 14.5% abv.

#### **Guy Vanlancker Clos du Causse 2015 Minervois La Liviniere** **£14.50**

75% Grenache and 25% Syrah, from a single (1.5 hectare) north-facing vineyard in the hills above Felines-Minervois. The nose has bramble, black cherry, kirsch, tobacco and spice aromas, all of which carry through onto the palate. Full-bodied and ripe, yet balanced and with the potential for elegance a few years down the line, it is a lovely wine to drink now, with masses of fresh (and refreshing) black fruit flavours, with ample acidity, very fine tannins and a long, spicy finish. 14.5% abv.

#### **l'Enfer Pinot Noir 2012 IGP Cotes du Brian** **£14.30**

100% Pinot Noir. The aromas, flavours and texture of this wine are very definitely rooted in the warm south, with rich, ripe red and black fruits and a hint of classy oak, perhaps even similar instyle to a Californian Pinot. The flavours are similarly rich and ripe, but far from heavy, with velvety tannins, a touch of red cherry sourness and a decent lick of acidity making for something really quite balanced and more-ish. 14.0% abv.

#### **Les Dessous de l'Enfer 2010 Vin de Pays des Cotes du Brian** **£15.50**

100% Tempranillo. Vibrant and full of life, with an expressive nose of black cherry, raspberry and bramble, with subtle hints of oak vanillin, mocha and dark chocolate, and develops further notes of roasted red capsicum and turkish delight. A richly tannic structure and a gentle oakiness, but immensely fruity, with real mineral depth, hints of spices and garrigue herbs. A wonderfully sweet and sour and considerably complex wine. 14.0% abv.

#### **Les Dessous de l'Enfer 2010 Vin de Pays des Cotes du Brian** **£15.50**

100% Tempranillo. An expressive nose of black cherry, raspberry and bramble, with subtle hints of oak vanillin, mocha and dark chocolate, with subtle notes of charred red capsicum, damp earth, tobacco and spice. Full-bodied, quite rich and powerful and crammed full of tangy black cherry and bramble fruit flavours, a firm tannic structure and the merest hint of oak, with hints of spice and garrigue herbs and ample acidity. It is good to drink now (preferably with food) but will also age and evolve for a further 10 years or more. 14.0% abv.

#### **La Chandeliere 2015 Minervois La Liviniere** **£16.99**

75% Syrah, 25% Grenache. Complex aromas of black fruits, leather, mint, garrigue herbs and a hint of forest floor. Rich and beautifully ripe in the mouth, the combination of spiced bramble and plum flavours with those oh-so-fine tannins, ample acidity, a gentle herbiness and just a hint of warming eau de vie, with a lingering, gently peppery-spicy finish. Drink it now or stick it in the cellar for a decade. 15.0% abv.

## MAS COUTELOU – PUIMISSON (ORGANIC/BIODYNAMIC)

The enigmatic and brilliant Jean-Francois (Jeff) Coutelou - bio/profile to follow.

### Macabeu 2015 Vin de France

£18.79

100% Macabeu. The only Coutelou wine that is aged in oak barrels. It has a lovely yellow/gold colour and massively complex aromas of lemon/lime oil, spiced apple, baked apricot, honey, brioche, garrigue herbs and mixed spice, all of which carry through onto the palate. Quite rich, with a gently oily/nutty quality and texture, but with a supremely balanced and really quite elegant structure, with masses of ripe stone fruit and raisiny flavours, soft spice, a touch of grape tannin, fabulous limey acidity and a finish that goes on and on. 13.5% abv

### Peilhan 2016 Vin de France

£18.79

100% Carignan Blanc. A veritable pot-pourri of lime, bruised apple, quince and apricot, with little notes of flowers, herbs, leather, woodsmoke, clarified butter and blackcurrant leaf! For the purists and anti-natural brigade, there's also something inescapably "natural" about it. It simply brims with life and is a real joy to drink - essentially bone dry, but with enough richness and generosity of orangey, apricotty, herb-tinged fruit (along with a modicum of grape tannin), acidity and minerality to satisfy the senses, with a really rather cool, almost minty finish. 13.5% abv

### 5SO Cinsault Simple 2016 Vin de France

£11.50

100% Cinsault. A perceptible spritz on the palate to begin with, though it quickly settles with air, and only serves to enhance what is a wonderfully vigorous and youthful red wine, so full of life. A riot of prickly, red berry, tree fruit, herb and forest floor aromas, all of which carry through on the palate, which is wonderfully light, airy, expressive and full of raspberry and redcurrant fruit. What little tannin has been extracted is meltingly ripe and soft, but it has more than enough bright, juicy, tangy cherry skin and soft citrus acidity to ensure plenty of grip and focus. What a lovely wine! 11.5% abv

### 7 Rue de La Pompe 2016 Vin de France

£11.75

40% Syrah, 40% Merlot, 20% Grenache. Plenty of dark, almost bitter-sweet fruit aromas and flavours, with plenty of gently rustic/tannic grip. There's an immense core of ripe, lush, juicy, black cherry, redcurrant and bramble fruit, with hints of spiced oranges, garrigue herbs, black pepper and wonderfully tangy cherry-kernel acidity - not to mention lots of cedary, earthy nuances lurking in the background. A wine which (literally) froths with life! 13.5% abv

### Flower Power 2015 Vin de France

£17.99

A single vineyard field blend of numerous grape varieties (10 in all), including Cinsault, Aramon Noir, Aramon Gris, Oeillade Noire, Muscaté, Clairette(s) Blanche, Grise and Musquée and at least one other (completely unknown) variety. Such aromatic quirkiness and complexity, with a remarkable weight of luscious, ripe, vivacious red and black berry and cherry fruits. It smells like summer in a basket, and tastes like it too, with a sprinkling of herbs and spices, fine, ripe tannins and bucket-loads of tangy, orange and cherry acidity. A delicious young wine, which is \*perfect\* to drink now. 13.5% abv

### Flambadou 2016 Vin de France

£17.99

100% Carignan. This may be the fruitiest, juiciest, most approachable example or its kind I have ever tasted. Aromas of bramble, blackcurrant and desiccated orange peel leap from the glass, with subtle notes of garrigue herbs, leather and polished old wood. And whilst there is a healthy dose of rich, ripe, mouth-coating tannin, the fruit is so dense and luscious on the palate that you hardly notice. And with oodles of mouth-watering, orange and red cherry-tinged acidity to hold it all together, and a long, sweet-sour, tangy finish, it really does feel like the complete package. 13.5% abv

### Mourvedre 2016 Vin de France

£19.99

100% Mourvedre. The nose displays myriad fresh and dried red and black fruit aromas, with notes of leather, curry spices and roasted red meat, with a generous sprinkling of garrigue herbs and flowers. Lively on entry, with a faint CO2 prickle and an immense core of juicy, sweet autumn black and red fruits and even a hint of white tree fruit (apricot, perhaps?) with refreshing cherry-skin acidity, countering the ripe, tea-like tannins. A voluptuous, sweet-sour wine, with more charm and elegance than you can shake a stick at. Perfect to drink now, or to age and evolve for a few years. 13.5% abv

### Vieux Grenache NV Vin de France (50cl)

£32.99

A solera blend of Grenache(s) Noir, Blanc and Gris. Some of these barrels (over 40 in total) have never been emptied for up to 150 years and are topped-up annually with new wine. Unfortified, dry-to-off-dry, intense and nutty. Full note to follow 14.5% abv. **Limited to 1 bottle per customer.**

## CHATEAU LA DOURNIE – SAINT-CHINIAN

Chateau La Dournie sits above the town of Saint-Chinian itself, on the fringes of the Haut Languedoc mountains, with a large chateau and courtyard set amongst the vineyards. Six generations of the Etienne family has overseen the winemaking here, and produce wines that combine the unique terroir-laden flavours of the Languedoc, with an almost Burgundian elegance. And with a high proportion of Syrah grown on the local schiste (shale) soil, there is often more than a little resemblance to the wines of the northern Rhone – indeed, this may just be the most distinctive of all the appellations in Languedoc. The rosé is textbook stuff, too.

### White:

#### Domaine La Dournie Marie 2016 IGP Pays d'Oc

£13.50

100% Roussanne. aromas of orange blossom, apricot and honeysuckle, with a sprinkling of aromatic herbs, very subtle oak nuances and a distinct whiff of mineral/wet stone. Roussanne normally tends to have a rich, slightly oily texture to the palate, but this one is beautifully fresh, fruity and crisp, like biting into a just-ripe nectarine or dessert apple, with subtle hints of fennel and clove. Essentially bone dry, with soft citrus acidity and a streak of stony minerality, which adds a rather delicious and refreshing orange peel and sherbert tang to the surprisingly long finish. Delicious! 13.0% abv.

## Red:

### **Chateau La Dournie 2015 Saint-Chinian**

**£10.99**

50% Syrah, 25% Grenache, 25% Carignan. One of the most distinctive, recognisable and refreshing styles of red Languedoc wine. Heady aromas of bramble, black cherry, pepper/spice, freshly-baked bread, leather, and the merest whiff of black olive tapenade greet the nose, all of which carry through onto the palate, with all that sweet-sour-savoury-umami fruit perfectly complemented by grippy, gently rustic, tea-like tannins and really mouth-watering orange and cherry skin acidity. Really cracking stuff, and a bargain, for a properly iconic Languedoc red. 13.5% abv

### **Etienne 2014 Saint-Chinian**

**£13.99**

50% Syrah, 25% Grenache, 25% Carignan. A riot of bramble, cassis and blueberry fruit aromas burst from the glass, with notes of parma violets, crushed black pepper, oregano, thyme and black olive. The palate is similarly bursting with fruit and savoury (herby, rather than meaty) flavours and possesses an earthy/stoney/slatey minerality, which - combined with fine tannins and wonderfully mouth-watering, tangy acidity - makes for a wine that is, at the same time, fruity, savoury, peppery, tangy and very more-ish. It is also very long, considerably complex and very, very lovely. 13.5% abv

### **Elise 2014 Saint-Chinian**

**£16.99**

80% Syrah, 20% old-vine Grenache. Wonderfully fragrant and complex, with black cherry, bramble and orange aromas and myriad notes of garrigue herbs, lilies, violets and subtle spice, with faint oak and forest floor/truffle nuances. Subtle, balanced and supremely refined, with fresh bramble, redcurrant and red cherry fruits, earth, a touch of savoury/spice and excellent levels of acidity and fine tannins. This will go 10 years. 14.0% abv

## **DOMAINE DE FOLTODON – SAINT-CÔME ET MARUEJOLS (ORGANIC)**

The Crouzet family of Domaine de Foltodon have been working the land in Saint-Côme et Maruejols on the Vaunage Plain, between Nîmes and Sommieres, since the 1850's. The estate has been handed down from father to son for the last 3 generations, with current owner and winemaker Olivier Crouzet at the helm since 1997. In 2003, he made the decision to convert to organic farming. By 2008, the conversion was complete, and full certification followed in 2011. The vineyards comprise 7 hectares, planted on low, south-facing terraces of clay-limestone, under a thin layer of flat stones. Syrah and Mourvèdre are planted for red wine, Syrah and Cinsault for rosé and Grenache Blanc, Viognier and Sauvignon for white. We first met Olivier in the summer of 2013, at a gathering organised for us by another winegrower, and were mightily impressed with the quality (not to mention the excellent value) of his wines. Having subsequently made a decision to add the wines of Domaine de Foltodon to our list, we were disappointed to find that the delicious 2012 white had already sold out, as had the 2010 red. Clearly, Olivier has no trouble selling his wines, and one obviously needs to move fast to get them! Fortunately, the 2011 red has recently been released, so we jumped at the opportunity to bring some in. With a little luck (and good timing) we will hopefully secure some of the 2013 white when it is released. Meanwhile, that red is a great starting point for us, for Domaine de Foltodon is definitely an estate to watch.

## White:

### **Les Féréoles 2015 IGP Pays d'Oc**

**£11.50**

30% Viognier, 30% Grenache Blanc, 40% Sauvignon. The nose is wonderfully inviting and fresh, offering zesty soft citrus, peach and spring flower aromas, with subtle notes of garrigue herbs, fennel and wet stone. A proportion of Sauvignon Blanc is less unusual than one might think in southern white wine blends, and this wine shows just how well it can work - it adds a touch of the herbaceous, without imparting any of the variety's "extreme" elements. And it combines beautifully with the gently floral/grapey perfume and flavours of the Viognier and the more secondary/non-fruit elements of the Grenache, in a wine that adds up to more than the sum of its parts. The palate has a zesty, gently pithy citrus quality, more orange than lemon, along with a touch of peachy ripeness, a creamy texture, a modicum of grape tannin and ample acidity. All-in-all, a really charming, refreshing and flavour-filled wine - and for the money, it really is great value. Organic. 13.0% abv.

## Red:

### **Sancti Cosmae 2014 IGP Pays d'Oc**

**£11.50**

90% Syrah, 10% Mourvedre, partly aged in oak barrels. A bright but deep, semi-translucent carmine/cherry red colour. The 10% Mourvedre in the blend really does make all the difference, adding a subtle meaty-herby savouriness to the fresh, ripe, red cherry, blackcurrant and raspberry aromas and flavours of the Syrah. On the palate, it is beautifully poised - crammed full of gloriously fresh, juicy, garrigue herb-tinged red and black fruit flavours, ripe tannins and a refreshing lick of cherry kernel acidity, with a welcome bite of peppery spice and cool mint on the finish. From vineyards wedged between the southern Rhône and eastern Languedoc (south-west of Nîmes), it certainly sings of the latter rather than the former, with a coolness and genuine elegance that one rarely, if ever, finds in the Rhône. Aged in vat, with no oak influence at all, it really is a delightful wine. Organic. 13.5% abv.

## **DOMAINE FORTUNÉ – SOUVIGNARGUES (ORGANIC)**

Domaine Fortuné has existed since 1907, when Fortuné Robert planted around 4 hectares of Aramon and Carignan vines around the village of Souvignargues, a few kilometres north-east of Sommières, between Montpellier and Nîmes. 4 generations and 110 years later, the area under vine now comprises 30 hectares, planted to Syrah, Grenache, Mourvèdre, Carignan and Merlot for red wines, Cinsault for rosé and Grenache Blanc, Vermentino and Sauvignon for the whites.

The current owner and winemaker Gilbert Robert (great grandson of Fortuné) began working for the family business in 1988 and took the reins completely in 1997, soon converting the whole estate to certified organic status. The terroir is

comprised of several different types of soils - hard limestone, marl and clay-limestone being the main types - set in gently rolling countryside, with the Camargue and Mediterranean to the south and the foothills of the Cevennes to the north. In the spring, natural grass is allowed to flourish in the vineyard, which helps to control/maintain the amount of moisture in the soil. In drier times, this grass is destroyed by plowing and buried in the ground, thus increasing the amount of natural humus in the soil. The estate is fully organic, with only a little copper sulphate and SO<sub>2</sub> - along with occasional herbal mixtures - used for treatment in the vineyards. The winery is equipped with modern stainless steel vats and just a handful of barrels (most of the wines see little or no oak). These are some of the purest and most delicious Languedoc wines it is possible to imagine.

### White:

#### **Angélique 2016 IGP Cévennes**

**£11.99**

A blend of Grenache Blanc and Vermentino (a.k.a Rolle). Whilst 10% of the Grenache is fermented in barrique, the remainder of the wine is fermented and aged in stainless steel vats. A complex array of fresh tree-fruit aromas (notably peach, orange and apricot) with subtle pea pod, floral, apple pie and freshly cut grass notes. The palate is gently creamy, although the overall mouth feel is almost bone dry, with those white tree fruit and soft citrus flavours to the fore. There's a hint of orange zest, with subtle fennel, herb and spice nuances and plenty of mouth-watering acidity. It also possesses a slightly savoury/saline quality, countered by a refreshing mineral/wet stone streak, which adds complexity and carries through to a long, cool finish. This really is top quality wine-making, with a flavour and texture profile similar to a white Chateauneuf-du-Pape or top Cotes du Rhone. 13.5% abv.

### Rosé:

#### **Oxalide 2016 IGP Cévennes**

**£10.75**

90% Cinsault, 10% Grenache. Ultra-pale orange-pink-onion skin colour, offering notes of white stone fruits, redcurrant, orange peel, strawberries and clotted cream, with a subtle whiff of garrigue herbs and plenty of wet stone minerality. Fresh, zingy and chock full of those summer fruit flavours, infused with garrigue herb nuances and hints of fennel seed and orange peel. The texture is focused, grippy and pretty much bone-dry, with a mountain stream freshness, laser-like acidity, the merest suggestion of grape skin tannin and a long, ever-so-slightly spicy finish. A beautifully-crafted rosé! 13.5% abv.

### Red:

#### **Obade 2015 Languedoc**

**£12.79**

Syrah, Grenache and Carignan. An initial meaty/smoky note blows off quickly to reveal bright, spicy/herby red fruit aromas, with additional notes of leather, brioche, damp earth and kirsch. The palate is generous, full-bodied and beautifully ripe, offering fresh and crystallised red cherry and redcurrant fruit flavours, with ripe, chewy tannins. There's a touch of saline minerality too, with background notes of pepper/spice and ample acidity, followed by a really quite Rhône-like long, warming, sweet-sour-savoury finish. Organic. 13.5% abv.

#### **L'As de Fortuné 2015 Languedoc Sommières**

**£13.25**

65% Syrah, 35% Grenache. a veritable pot-pourri of strawberry, raspberry, red cherry and floral aromas, accompanied by a hint of leather and a gentle waft of woodsmoke. It really is delightfully understated and elegant, so much so that there's an almost Burgundian feel to it, both aromatically and structurally. Piquant, sweet-sour red fruit flavours combine with gently rustic tannins and juicy, cherry skin acidity, leading to long, peppery-spicy finish. It's a lovely drop already, but will no doubt be even better after another year or two in bottle. Organic. 14.0% abv.

#### **Jadis 2015 Languedoc**

**£18.50**

50% Syrah, 15% Grenache, 12% Mourvedre and 17% Carignan (mostly aged in vat, though the Carignan is aged for 6 months in barrique). The nose is utterly compelling - a classic Languedoc pot-pourri of black fruit and garrigue herb aromas, with further notes of raspberry compote, redcurrant, soft citrus, leather, subtle hints of flowers and polished old wood. The palate has fresh bramble, black/redcurrant and damson flavours, with underlying spice and herb notes and again a real streak of wet stone minerality. All of those sweet-sour, fruity-savoury, herby-spicy elements linger long in the mouth and combine seamlessly around a core of lapsang tea-like tannins and mouth-watering soft citrus acidity. This really is such an elegant and complex wine which captures the essence of all that is so wonderful about Languedoc red wine. Organic. 14.0% abv.

## **MAS FOULAQUIER – CLARET, PIC SAINT-LOUP (BIODYNAMIC)**

Mas Foulaquier is a Pic Saint-Loup grower that had - until a few years ago - flown completely under my radar. Winemaker Pierre Jéquier, a native of Switzerland and formerly an architect, created Mas Foulaquier in 1998, following an exhaustive search for his dream wine estate. Situated in the most northerly corner of Languedoc's most northerly appellation, the eight hectares of existing vines were at the time just 8 years old, but happened to be planted on some great terroir. Now, at 25 years of age, those vines are the source of a quite brilliant set of wines. Pierre's wife and fellow winemaker Blandine Chauchet joined the team in 2003, bringing with her the ownership of a further 3 hectares of 50 year-old Grenache and Carignan vines in the "Tonillieres" vineyard in Claret. I first met Pierre in February 2010, at a small tasting event held in Béziers, and I was totally blown away by the quality of his wines. Their amazingly clean structure and the purity of the fruit was what struck me. It was only later that I discovered that the wines are actually biodynamic. They are also as natural as can be - no sulphites or added yeasts are used in the winemaking process and only the tiniest amount of SO<sub>2</sub> (between 10 and 30 mg) is added at the bottling stage. The wines are also unfiltered and unfiltered. Without a doubt, these wines are right up there with some of the best we have tasted from anywhere in Languedoc and Roussillon. Our most recent visit to Mas Foulaquier was in June 2013, during which we were treated to a delicious lunch of cold meats, local goat's cheese, olive oil and bread, to accompany a tasting of the full range of the estate's wines. And do you know what? From an already extremely high level of quality, their current vintages have raised the bar even higher, for this was one of the finest selections of wines from a single grower we have ever had the

privilege of tasting. And if you have any sort of claim to be a lover of Languedoc's finest wines, then you simply must try them.

### **Violetta 2015 IGP Saint Guilhem-Le-Désert**

**£15.95**

Mainly Grenache, with a little Merlot and Carignan. The nose exhibits notes of spiced red and black fruits, enveloped within a complex array of garam masala, woodsmoke, leather, damp earth and incense aromas. The altitude and orientation of the vineyards means a longer ripening period, and although there is plenty of fruit concentration, it feels relatively light-bodied and elegant, and more towards the red fruit end of the spectrum. The palate offers an abundance of sour cherry and redcurrant flavours, plenty of tannic grip, a twist of pepper and a sprinkling of garrigue herbs, with bags of acidity and an impressively long finish. 13.5% abv.

### **Les Tonillieres 2015 Saint Guilhem-Le-Désert**

**£17.99**

50% old vine Carignan, 50% Syrah. wonderful aromas of pickled brambles and raspberries, with an amazing array of secondary nuances - notably, leather, cigar box, beetroot, damp earth and fine eau de vie. The palate is delightfully fresh and full of vitality, chock full of sweet and sour raspberry and black fruit flavours, with subtle spicy and meaty notes and a long, minty, sweet-sour finish. With air, it becomes even deeper, more expressive, more elegant, whilst retaining all of its freshness and complexity. This really is a lovely wine, which any lover of fine Languedoc wine should try. 13.0% abv.

### **L'Orphée 2015 Languedoc Pic Saint-Loup**

**£17.50**

50% Syrah, 50% Grenache. Floral scents mingled with crystallised cherry and redcurrant fruits, garrigue, savoury/meaty nuances and hints of tar and eau de vie, with mahogany/woody/earthy notes, though this wine is not oak-aged. Generous in both fruit and savoury, with high-toned red and black fruits, meat and garrigue flavours, held together with fine, ripe, tea-like tannins and a touch of saline minerality, nicely off-set by a core of tangy, cherry kernel acidity, with a long, gently warming finish. A balanced and really quite complex wine, which will age for at least another 5 to 8 years. 13.5% abv.

### **Les Calades 2014 Languedoc Pic Saint-Loup**

**£21.95**

70% Syrah, 30% Grenache. Reeks of all manner of bramble, blackcurrant and red cherry fruits, polished old wood, dried orange peel, leather and burning incense, with subtle herby and spicy notes. Fresh and full of life, with all of those sweet, fruity, spicy/herby flavours coming through on the medium-bodied palate, allied to truly mouth-watering acidity, just the right level of spicy, ripe tannins and myriad secondary flavours and nuances that linger long on the finish, with relatively light alcohol allowing all of those qualities to shine, and to keep you coming back for another glass. 13.5% abv.

## **DOMAINE DE LA GARANCE – CAUX (BIODYNAMIC)**

Having fallen totally in love with the wines of Domaine de La Garance over a number of years (and a variety of vintages), we made our first actual visit to the estate during our 2013 summer holiday in Languedoc. Surrounded by beautiful vineyards in rolling countryside, a kilometre or two down a rough track to the south of the village of Caux, La Garance enjoys an idyllic setting, with lovely views of the distant hills and not another building in sight. It is so peaceful and tranquil that you almost feel like you are in the middle of nowhere. The wines are made in relatively small quantities and are much in demand in the local area, not to mention in various countries throughout Europe. Here's what their former importer Richards Walford had to say about them;

*"For whatever reason, this amazing Domaine remains stubbornly undiscovered by the majority of our customers ..... these are some of the most wonderful wines to have ever graced our list – unique, complex, and deeply delicious. A combination of diverse soils, including Villafranchien (a stoney, gravelly soil mixed with red clay), basalt, marl, gneiss, limestone, and granite add real character to the wines. The top white (Les Claviers) is based on Ugni Blanc (aka Trebbiano) – that normally quite unexciting grape variety often distilled in Cognac or used to make flabby Italian whites – but here, becomes something else entirely. Older vintages were blended with Grenache Gris and Clairette, more recent vintages with Chardonnay, which achieves a greater minerality on granite soils. The top red (Les Armieres) is based on old vine Carignan and Syrah (generally 90% and 10%) and spends a full 30 months in barrel before bottling. It is bursting with energy and ages particularly well. Though not certified biodynamic, the Domaine practices biodynamic principles and the wines are about as hand-crafted and natural as they get – Pierre describes them as "l'antithèse de la technologie" - hand harvested with habitually low yields of 17hl/ha, only indigenous yeasts are used, the wines are not fined or filtered, and very little sulphur is used."*

In recent years, winemaker Pierre Quinonero has introduced a couple of other wines - A Clara Blanc (100% Chardonnay, grown several hundred metres up in the hills above Bédarieux) and A Clara Rouge (a blend of Pinot Noir and Grenache, the Pinot also coming from Bédarieux) - and both are delicious, and very affordable.

### **White:**

#### **A Clara Blanc 2017 Vin de France**

**£13.75**

100% Chardonnay from vineyard, situated 600 metres above sea level near Bédarieux, in the Haut Languedoc national park. Pale straw colour with a slight orange glints. An intriguing and rather lovely nose of spiced apple pie, garrigue herbs and soft citrus fruit, with a hint of lemon zest and a definite note of peppermint. The palate is beautifully fresh and mineral, almost zesty and zingy, with tart apple, rhubarb and lime flavours and a hint of raisin and spice. Nicely rounded, with just a hint of grape skin tannin, excellent acidity and - like its red sibling - a cool, spicy, minty finish. 12.5% abv.

### **Les Claviers 2015 Vin de France**

**£24.95**

Ugni Blanc, Grenache Gris, Chardonnay. A fairly pronounced orange/gold colour, with a slight sediment that runs through it, which doesn't seem to completely settle, even after the bottle has been standing for a few days. Not that this should be of any concern, although some people may be alarmed! The nose offers an attractive mix of fruit and non-fruit aromas - very "natural", with hints of peach, dessert apple, raisin and spice, mingled with garrigue herbs and fennel seed, not to mention a really intense wet stone minerality. Unsurprisingly - given that Ugni Blanc is the main constituent variety - there is also a subtle but undeniable whiff of fine Cognac. The palate is even more expressive than the nose, with apple and other tree fruit and citrus peel flavours combined with subtle hints of honey, herb and spice notes. The texture is no more than medium-rich, perhaps even a touch tannic - courtesy of plenty of skin contact - though it remains really quite vibrant and fresh, courtesy of ample citrus and apple skin acidity. 13.0% abv.

### **Red:**

### **A Clara Rouge 2017 Vin de France**

**£13.75**

A blend of Pinot Noir (grown 600m above sea level, in the hills above Bédarieux) and Grenache Noir (grown on the Garance estate in Caux). Aromas of damp earth and wet stone, red and black cherry, raspberry, dried orange, new leather, fine eau de vie, a dash of white pepper and herbs of the garrigue. Earthy, ripe, sweet-edged red and black fruit flavours on the palate, laced with garrigue herbs and just a hint of peppery spice, countered by melting tannins and crunchy, cherry kernel acidity, with a cool, minty finish. 12.5% abv.

### **Les Arnières 2004 Vin de Pays de l'Hérault**

**£23.50**

90% Carignan and 10% Syrah, from 65 year old vines, with yields of just 18 hectolitres per hectare. A long maceration (3 months) is followed by 27 months ageing (90% in concrete vats and 10% in oak barrels). Complex red and black berry and cherry fruits, dried orange peel and polished old leather, with notes of cedar, curry spices, garrigue herbs and tea. Spiced black cherry, redcurrant and bramble fruit flavours. The tannins are dense and grippy, with notes of dark chocolate and licorice, which - together with the ample fruit and racy acidity - will ensure it ages and evolves further for another 5 to 10 years. A fabulously old-school Languedoc wine, which is yet to reach its peak. 14.0% abv.

### **Les Arnières 2006 Vin de Pays de l'Hérault**

**£23.50**

90% Carignan and 10% Syrah, from 65 year old vines, with yields of just 18 hectolitres per hectare. A long maceration (3 months) is followed by 27 months ageing (90% in concrete vats and 10% in oak barrels). The nose offers up myriad aromas of red and black fruits, woodsmoke, pepper, exotic spices, leather and garrigue herbs. There is also a strong hint of grilled meat and - at the other end of the spectrum - even some delicate floral notes. A huge hit of bramble and redcurrant fruit washes over the palate, accompanied by the most wonderful citrus-tinged acidity and all kinds of other flavours and textures, which coat the mouth and linger for an age. There is plenty of grip, but the sheer pleasure offered by the intense, concentrated, yet gloriously succulent sweet-and-sour fruit is such that you almost don't notice the tannin. A stunning wine. 14.0% abv.

### **Les Arnières 2007 Vin de Pays de l'Hérault**

**£23.50**

90% Carignan and 10% Syrah, from 65 year old vines, with yields of just 18 hectolitres per hectare. A long maceration (3 months) is followed by 27 months ageing (90% in concrete vats and 10% in oak barrels). As with the 2006, the nose is a riot of red and black fruits, smoke, white pepper, exotic spices, leather and herbs, with hints of sandalwood and forest floor. The palate has all of those things going for it, and more - concentrated but not overly rich, a complex array of red and black fruits, with healthy tannins and a core of juicy, citrus and cranberry-tinged acidity. The finish is satisfyingly dry and tangy, with lingering flavours of forest fruits, cedar and peppery spice. Although it may be a few years short of its absolute peak, it is nevertheless rather delicious already. Another wonderful, world-class Carignan. 14.0% abv.

### **Les Arnières 2009 Coteaux du Languedoc**

**£22.99**

90% Carignan and 10% Syrah, from 65 year old vines, with yields of just 18 hectolitres per hectare. A long maceration (3 months) is followed by 27 months ageing (90% in concrete vats and 10% in oak barrels). Of the several vintages of this wine that we currently offer, this is possibly the one that is most immediately approachable. Not because it is mature (far from it) but because it possesses such a generous core of sweetly fruity, almost creamy bramble and blackcurrant fruit, along with that typical combination of orange peel, polished leather, cedar and exotic spices. Again, we have bags of spiced black cherry, bramble and garrigue herb flavours, but the tannins, whilst grippy, are beautifully ripe and - combined with fabulously juicy acidity - holds everything together so well, in a wine that is at the same time both generously lush and tightly structured. It really is so lovely to drink now, but will (if you can resist) undoubtedly age and evolve for at least another 10 years. A classic, old-style Languedoc Carignan, worth every penny of the asking price - and more. 14.0% abv.

### **Les Arnières 2012 Coteaux du Languedoc**

**£22.99**

90% Carignan and 10% Syrah, from 65 year old vines, with yields of just 18 hectolitres per hectare. A long maceration (3 months) is followed by 27 months ageing (90% in concrete vats and 10% in oak barrels). A fantastic combination of fresh and soured bramble and black cherry, with a dash of white pepper, soft spice and a hint of polished old wardrobe - a supremely aromatic and alluring nose, all of which comes through on the palate, in a wine which combines real verve and genuine complexity. It greets you with a spritzy bite (courtesy of a touch of residual CO2) followed by waves of spice and garrigue herb-laden fresh red and black fruits, pickled beetroot, mixed herbs and allspice. With ripe, tea-like tannins, ample acidity and a long, gently spicy finish, this wine just about has it all. And whilst remarkably easy to drink now, it can only get better and better, over the next 10 years. An absolutely classic Languedoc Carignan! 14.0% abv.

### **Les Arnières 2015 Coteaux du Languedoc**

**£21.79**

90% Carignan and 10% Syrah, from 65 year old vines, with yields of just 18 hectolitres per hectare. A long maceration (3 months) is followed by 27 months ageing (90% in concrete vats and 10% in oak barrels). Leather, spice, forest floor and brioche aromas greet the nose, whilst ripe bramble, black cherry, spice and a distinct garrigue herbiness coat the palate. As, at the moment, do the robust but perfectly ripe tannins - a good sign for a wine that will continue to age and evolve. And there's more than enough fruit concentration (not to mention bucket-loads of juicy acidity) to outlast those tannins over the next 10 years or more, whilst this wine evolves into something much more than the sum of its parts - just like every vintage that preceded it. Utterly delicious! 13.5% abv.

## **DOMAINE GIROFLET – ABHEILHAN (BIODYNAMIC)**

We were introduced to the wines of Domaine Giroflet by way of a gift from our friend Bruno Henri, owner of the Taverne du Port in Marseillan. And what an eye-opener those couple of bottles provided. For Giroflet is very definitely one of the most exciting discoveries we have made in recent years.

Laurent Girault's day job is as winemaker at Domaine Bégude, a well-known, fairly large-scale winery near Limoux. He and his wife Murielle actually live in the village of Abeilhan, near Pézenas, where they make small quantities of high quality wines, in a small rented cellar on another estate. They have 3 different plots of vines, which total little more than 1.7 hectares - tiny, by any grower's standards. One plot is near Pézenas, 0.8 hectares of gnarly old (50 year-plus) Grenache and Cinsault on stony soil with red clay. The other plots are on clay-limestone soil, just outside Abeilhan. One (0.3 ha) consists of young Grenache, whilst the other (0.6 ha) is planted with just a few rows each of Chardonnay, Viognier, Roussanne, Petit Manseng, Petit Arvine and Chenin Blanc, all of which goes into a deliciously quirky white "field blend". The total annual production is just 5,000 bottles. The viticulture is largely biodynamic, working, harvesting and bottling according to the phases of the moon and Laurent makes all of the wines using only minute quantities of additional SO<sub>2</sub>. Most of the wine is aged only in vat, although a small proportion of the red spends time in old oak barrels, which have previously seen at least 7 vintages, so no oak flavours at all. The resulting wines are beautifully pure, clean and fresh - and in the case of the Rouge and Blanc, considerably complex and age-worthy.

### Red:

#### **Cinsault 2014 IGP Pays d'Hérault**

**£10.50**

From a tiny (0.07 of a hectare) which produces just 500 bottles. The nose is floral, heady, spicy, smoky and gently tarry, with a hint of new leather and absolutely crammed full of summer pudding and fresh bread aromas. The palate offers myriad raspberry, strawberry and red cherry flavours, with a sprinkle of white pepper, allspice and a touch of fine eau de vie. It is delightfully fresh and fruity, in the manner of a young cru Beaujolais, but slightly richer and full of Languedoc warmth and charm. 12.5% abv.

#### **Le Petit Giroflet 2014 IGP Pays d'Hérault**

**£10.50**

Made from a plot of young Grenache vines, covering just 0.3 of a hectare, with less than 2,000 bottles produced. A rather intoxicating mix of ripe black and red fruits, garrigue herbs, damp earth, freshly-baked bread and fine eau de vie. The flavours are robust and full of cherry and raspberry fruit flavours and youthful vigour, with gently rustic tannins and excellent acidity. It is already good to drink, but will certainly repay a year or two in the cellar, and should eventually show genuine elegance. 13.5% abv.

### **DOMAINE DE LA MARFÉE – MURVIEL-LES-MONTPPELLIER (BIODYNAMIC)**

With a background in accountancy, Thierry Hasard came relatively late to winemaking, making his first wines in 1997. He farms 9 hectares of vines, on a dozen or so different plots near the village of Murviel Les Montpellier, a few kilometres west of Montpellier itself. Murviel is located on a hill, with views of the Mediterranean about ten kilometres away. Here, prehistoric men lived and the Romans built a temple and an oppidum, from which the name of the village originates: "*mur viel*", meaning "old wall". Thierry currently makes five wines - a white and four different reds. I've had the opportunity to taste one or two older wines from La Marfée in recent years (the top cuvées, Les Vignes Qu'On Abat and Les Champs Murmurés, both from the late 1990's) so I know how good they can be and how age-worthy they are. But having never tasted them young, I didn't really have any idea what to expect. But these young wines are, without exception, brilliant. There's no other word to describe them, in my humble opinion. I am completely bowled over by them. The white is up there with the very best I have tasted from Languedoc. And the reds all have one particular thing in common, whatever the blends or varieties - and that is a depth of fruit which I find hard to describe. The nearest descriptor I can think of is fruit pastilles (especially the red and black ones) with a rich, deep flavour, like ultra-ripe raspberries and blackcurrants, but always with a lick of mouth-watering acidity.

Thierry Hasard believes terroir is more important than grape variety. Whatever it may be down to (I think it is probably a blend of great terroir, top-notch viticulture and damn fine winemaking) there appears to be a clear style to these wines, and one that I find very easy to fall in love with. Plus of course the estate is farmed biodynamically. Whatever you think of biodynamicism (extreme organics or just plain whacky) it is a philosophy that goes hand-in-hand with a healthy respect for the land and a fastidious approach to winemaking. And when the wines are this good, you can't help but believe in it.

### White:

#### **Frissons d'Ombelles 2015 IGP Pays de l'Hérault**

**£17.50**

60% Roussanne, 30% Chardonnay, 10% Petit Manseng. Herbaceous and fruity at the same time, with notes of nettles, mint and hay, mingled with fresh apple and peach, a hint of judicious oak and more stony minerality than you can shake a stick at! Ripe, juicy, garrigue herb-infused stone fruit and soft citrus flavours, with a mineral tang and mouth-watering acidity. With genuine complexity, it is soft and approachable, yet beautifully poised and structured at the same time, in a northern Rhône-meets-Burgundy sort of way, with a very long, cool, minty/spicy/tangy finish. 13.0% abv

### Red:

#### **Les Gamines 2015 Languedoc Saint Georges d'Orques**

**£15.50**

50% Syrah, 40% Mourvedre and 10% Grenache. Blackcurrant leaf and myriad summer fruit aromas, with notes of orange peel, garrigue herbs and tobacco. The palate is beautifully balanced, with sweet-sour red cherry and redcurrant fruit, herb and spice flavours, accompanied by juicy acidity and gentle, ripe, tea-like tannins. There's a tiny hint of savouriness (herby, rather than meaty), but it really is all about the fruit, in a wine that really is elegance personified. . Biodynamic. 12.5% abv.

**Della Francesca 2014 Languedoc Saint Georges d'Orques** **£20.50**  
80% Mourvedre and 20% Syrah. Red cherry, raspberry and coffee grounds on the nose, with notes of polished old wood, curry spices and sous bois. Really elegant and fine on the palate, almost feminine, offering bright red and black fruit flavours, with hints of soft citrus, garrigue herbs and spice, very fine, tea-like tannins and really tangy acidity. A supremely elegant and fine wine, which is approachable now, though there is absolutely no rush - as with all of La Marfée reds, it will cellar well for a decade or more. Biodynamic. 13.5% abv.

**Della Francesca 2015 Languedoc Saint Georges d'Orques** **£20.50**  
80% Mourvedre and 20% Syrah. A nose of blackcurrant leaf and fruit pastille, with hints of elderflower, polished wood, tobacco, spice, mint and a definite savoury/meaty element - not too much, mind, for the emphasis is definitely on the fruit. The palate again shows typical freshness, with citrusy acidity, grippy but fine tannins and tangy, sweet-and-sour flavours, courtesy of some intense plum, bramble and cherry fruit, again with a savoury/spicy/meaty/herby edge. The finish is very long, with those mouth-watering red/black fruits lingering for an age. Biodynamic. 13.5% abv.

**Les Vignes Qu'On Abat 2013 Vin de Pays de l'Herault** **£28.50**  
100% Carignan. Aromas of blackcurrant leaf, bramble, orange and red cherry, along with hints of polished leather, curry spices and forest floor. Medium-bodied at most, gently-extracted and full of finesse, allowing all of those wonderfully subtle fruit and herb/spice aromas and flavours to express themselves, with little savoury/meaty notes - on the nose more than the palate - adding yet more complexity. Gently grippy, lapsang tea-like tannins and simply wonderful, mouth-watering acidity complete the package, with a long, lingering, tangy-fruity-herby finish. This is a Languedoc Carignan of the very highest order. 14.0% abv.

**Les Champs Murmurés 2014 Languedoc Saint Georges d'Orques** **£28.50**  
50% Syrah and 50% Mourvedre from very old vines. The nose displays dense, multi-layered aromas of bramble and blackcurrant, spiced orange, damp earth, leather and a touch of charred oak. The palate is generous, ripe and really quite expansive - masses of pepper and spice-infused dark berry and cherry fruit flavours coat the mouth, with a touch of meaty/herby savoriness, a hint of licorice and balsam, and again a splash of oak, all of which is wrapped in a cloak of rich, ripe tannins, nicely offset by a balancing streak of cherry skin acidity. It has the unmistakable whiff of a fine wine about this - and it has the structure to age and evolve gracefully for at least another 10 years, and perhaps even beyond 2030. 13.5% abv.

## **DOMAINE DE MARUÉJOLS – ST. CÔMES RT MARUÉJOLS (BIODYNAMIC)**

From owner/winemaker Mark Ratcliffe (yes - he's a Brit!), in collaboration with Robert Creus of Terre Inconnue (see separate entry below) - a sure recipe for success! Biodynamic.

**Domaine de Maruéjols Rosemary 2011 Vin de France** **£22.99**  
A blend of 70% Merlot and 30% Grenache, from two tiny plots of 60 year-old vines, fermented in concrete vats and then aged for 18 months in 3 year-old demi-muids. The colour is a deep, youthful blood red, with a narrow rim. The nose offers quite the most intoxicating combination of black fruits, incense, leather, fine eau de vie, mint and garrigue herbs, all of which come through on the palate, with a perfect balance between fruit, a touch of savoriness, gently rustic tannins and mouth-watering cherry-skin acidity. All of which adds up to a wonderfully tangy, sweet-sour wine. 14.5% abv.

## **DOMAINE MONPLEZY – PÉZENAS (ORGANIC)**

This estate has been in existence since 1734, and has been in the ownership of the Sutra de Germa family since 1940. Jean Sutra de Germa, a Béziers negociant, began making wines there in 1956. His son Georges took over in 1966 and continued to make the wine until 1995, when the reins were handed over to his daughter Anne Sutra de Germa, who has been responsible for the winemaking ever since, ably assisted by her husband Christian Gil. The estate sits in an enviable position just to the north of Pézenas, with impressive views of the hills of the Haut Languedoc to the north and the Canigou to the south-west and comprises 20 hectares under vine. The soil is composed mainly of clay and limestone and the climate is distinctly Mediterranean. Traditional, sustainable and labour-intensive methods are practiced in the vineyards, coupled with modern, carefully-controlled processes in the winery. The result is a selection of award-winning white, red and rosé wines, from both Vin de Pays and AOC Pézenas denominations.

### **White:**

**Plaisirs Blanc 2014 Languedoc** **£11.30**  
A blend of Marsanne and Roussanne. Clear straw/gold colour, it is zesty, but beautifully rounded, even soft, with the fruit at the orangey rather than lemony end of the spectrum, combined with peachy, spiced apple pie and floral/honeysuckle aromas and flavours, with some nutty notes putting in an appearance after time in the glass. The texture is gently oily, but the overall effect is of a really sprightly, tasty, elegant and beautifully balanced wine, with a splash of limey acidity and even a modicum of grape tannin. 13.5% abv

### **Red:**

**Canon Huppé 2014 IGP Cotes de Thongue** **£10.50**  
100% Cinsault. Bright, limpid cherry red, and the aromas and flavours are equally bright, with fresh red currant and berry fruits, candied orange peel and a gentle earthiness, with soft tannins, stony minerality and juicy acidity. Cinsault is - unfairly in my opinion - generally consigned to being a constituent of blended rosé wines in the Languedoc, but this is a brilliant example of what can be done with it when left to take on some skin colour, tannin and more of that lovely red fruit. 13.0% abv

## Sweet Red:

### **Délice 2012 Vin de France (50cl)**

**£19.75**

100% old-vine Grenache Noir. With a miniscule yield of just 8 hl/ha, just 1,000 50cl bottles are produced annually (if at all - in some years the autumn conditions are not right). After the main harvest, 2 bunches are left on each vine, which dry naturally on the vine, before being picked at the end of October. Fermentation stops naturally at around 15% abv. The resulting wine is then placed in 5 year-old barrels for 2 years before bottling. A beautiful dark purple colour with brick red glints, with an intense nose of preserved red fruits, prunes, fresh bramble and spice, with subtle notes of arabica coffee, nuts, and woodsmoke and just a hint of toasty oak. The palate is wonderfully complex and rich, yet beautifully poised and fresh, with fine tannins, a hint of balsamic and a very long finish. A delicious and very unusual wine - and a little goes a long way. 15.5% abv

## **DOMAINE DE RAVANÈS – THÉZANS-LES-BÉZIERS**

Domaine de Ravanès is fairly unusual in Languedoc, insofar as the vineyards are planted predominantly (though by no means exclusively) with Bordeaux grape varieties. The estate was purchased by Felix Benin in 1955, but it wasn't until 1972 that Felix's son Guy planted Merlot, followed by other varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon and - of all things - Ugni Blanc (a.k.a Trebbiano). Ugni Blanc is actually the most widely-planted grape variety in France, although the majority of it is used for the production of Cognac and Armagnac. It is otherwise considered to be a rather undistinguished grape, but in the right hands, it can be the source of some really rather good wine. In 1989, Guy's son Marc obtained his Oenology-Ampelography PhD, following his studies at the Institute of Oenology in Bordeaux, and took over the estate in 1990. In 1994, Marc grafted Petit Verdot (another Bordeaux variety) onto the rootstock of a Cinsault vineyard that had existed for 25 years or more. The Petit Verdot vines are therefore effectively around 45 years old. Other varieties planted include Grenache Gris, Grenache Blanc and Macabeu. The total area under vine is 32 hectares.

The soil (which is mainly clay/limestone) contains varying amounts of stones and pebbles (from the "gravières" - gravel pits, of which there are many here, washed down from the hills by the adjacent River Orb), making for a terroir very similar to Chateauneuf-du-Pape, or even Graves in Bordeaux. The proximity of the river also means that the late-harvested sweet white wines (extraordinary wines, made entirely from Ugni Blanc) benefit from botrytis (noble rot). Merlot ripens very easily here, and is usually harvested at the end of August, whilst the Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot are often picked as late as October, depending on the characteristics of the vintage.

## White:

### **Le Renard Blanc 2013 IGP Coteaux de Murviel**

**£15.95**

75% Grenache Gris, 25% Maccabeu. The estate's top white, from 75 year-old vines. A lovely bright, medium gold colour, with a fabulous nose that covers just about every base, with fruity, zesty, herby, herbaceous, spicy and mineral notes all putting in an appearance. Lime oil, quince, crushed nettles, thyme, mint, coriander and wet stone are just a few of the aromas and flavours, in a wine of genuine subtlety and complexity. Tight and focused in the mouth, offering masses of flavour, with ample acidity and plenty of grip, courtesy of extended maceration on the grape skins, followed by a year's ageing in oak barrels. Restrained power and elegance, with a long, cool, minty/spicy finish. 14.5% abv

## Red:

### **Merlot-Cabernet Sauvignon 2012 IGP Coteaux de Murviel**

**£9.85**

50% Merlot, 50% Cabernet Sauvignon. The nose is crammed full of cassis and bramble fruit, tobacco, citrus and spice aromas, with hints of meat and new leather. Intensely fruity, lightly spicy and herby, with heightened tannins and lip-smacking acidity and more than enough warm southern spice and charm to make it very drinkable now (even lightly chilled) although it will undoubtedly age nicely for a few years. 13.5% abv.

### **Alicante Bouschet 2014 IGP Coteaux de Murviel**

**£10.85**

Winemaker Marc Benin experimented with making a red table wine from Alicante Bouschet for 3 years before hitting on the perfect recipe. It is macerated on the skins for just 4 days, before running the juice off, in order to tame the inherently fierce tannins and retain the fruit. The result is a relatively light-coloured red wine, full of red and black fruit flavours, a lick of spice and a sprinkling of garrigue herbs, with good concentration, just the right amount of tannin and ample acidity. All in all, a cracking good wine! 13.5% abv.

### **Petit Verdot 2013 IGP Coteaux de Murviel**

**£11.95**

100% Petit Verdot. A very classy nose - leather, meat, tobacco, citrus and a whole load of black cherry, blackcurrant, bramble, forest floor and kirsch. On the palate, it has real tannic grip, but is ever so fruity, with dark, herb-infused fruits and citrus combining beautifully in a wine of real freshness and verve. Hints of tobacco, dark chocolate and a long, peppery finish. Generous and beautifully balanced. 14.0% abv

### **Cuvée Diogène 2008 Vin de Pays de Coteaux de Murviel**

**£13.50**

60% Petit Verdot, 30% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon 18 months' ageing in 1, 2 and 3 year-old oak barrels. Aromas of cassis and bramble, black cherry and cedar, with an intriguing note of violet. Beautifully fresh in the mouth, with bright, intense fruit flavours, just the merest hint of savouriness, ripe, almost velvety tannins and bags of fresh acidity. It is so wonderfully balanced that it is eminently drinkable now, but also has enough stuffing and structure to age for at least another 10 years. A combination of ripe fruit, florality and restrained power - really elegant wine. 13.0% abv.

### **Les Gravières du Taurou 2007 Vin de Pays de Coteaux de Murviel**

**£21.95**

32% Petit Verdot, 38% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon, aged 48 months in oak barrels. Reeks of brambles, cassis, black cherry, polished leather, cedar and damp earth, with subtle hints of violets and iodine! It smells like a top classed growth from a great year, but with a little bit of Languedoc spice and garrigue herb thrown in for good measure - and no greenness! On the palate, the fruit is beautifully ripe and rounded, almost sweet and luscious,

but with plenty of tannic grip and fabulous acidity. Even at just 5 years of age, this has a warmth and a generosity that makes it hard to resist drinking now, whilst clearly also having the structure to age for another 10 years at least - and perhaps 20 or more. An utterly wonderful wine! 14.0% abv

## DOMAINE SAINT SYLVESTRE - PUÉCHABON

Vincent Guizard became involved in viticulture from an early age, working in the vines with his grandfather. In the late 1990's, he worked for a couple of vintages with Olivier Jullien at Mas Jullien in Montpeyrroux. From 2003 to 2010, he was part owner, in association with Frédéric Pourtalé, of the renowned Domaine de Montcalmès. But at the end of 2010, Vincent decided to break away from Montcalmès, taking his 7 hectares of vines and creating Domaine Saint Sylvestre, together with his wife Sophie. The estate comprises around 8 hectares, in four separate plots, set in the wooded hillsides above Puéchabon. Although not officially organic or biodynamic, Vincent and Sophie prefer a sympathetic approach to viticulture, and no synthetic fertilisers or herbicides are used in the vineyards. Yields are low (around 20 hl/ha) and fermentation is by indigenous wild yeasts. For the red wines, each grape variety, from each plot, is vinified separately, with long cuvaisons of between 30 and 40 days, then aged separately for 2 years in used barrels, before being blended 3 months prior to bottling. For the whites, each grape variety is pressed separately, with the resulting juice being blended and then fermented and aged in used barrels for one year. Bottling is carried out according to the phases of the moon.

### White:

#### **Blanc 2014 AOP Languedoc**

**£21.95**

45% Marsanne, 45% Roussanne, 10% Viognier, fermented and aged in barrel for 12 months. A gorgeously complex nose of apples and citrus, orange blossom, spring flowers and a lick of judicious oak. The palate offers juicy peach and apple flavours, with a touch of soft citrus, a hint of peppery spice and a lightly nutty/waxy texture, with a gentle richness offset by a touch of grape tannin and fabulous acidity. A really lovely wine, and for a top Languedoc white, worth every penny. 13.5% abv.

#### **Blanc 2015 AOP Languedoc**

**£21.95**

45% Marsanne, 45% Roussanne, 10% Viognier, fermented and aged in barrel for 12 months. Heavy with scents of herbs, spices and stony minerality, at the same time exhibiting myriad aromas of apple and peach, mint, honeysuckle and fennel, with subtle notes of spring blossom and lime oil peeping through. The palate has a rich, creamy, almost oily texture, which is perfectly offset by juicy peach and apple flavours, a rasp of cut lime, garrigue herb and spice. The heightened, limey acidity and intense core of minerality makes for an explosively refreshing, yet considerably complex wine. 13.5% abv.

#### **Blanc 2016 AOP Languedoc**

**£22.99**

45% Marsanne, 45% Roussanne, 10% Viognier, fermented and aged in barrel for 12 months. New vintage – tasting note to follow. 14.0% abv.

#### **Blanc 2017 AOP Languedoc**

**£23.99**

45% Marsanne, 45% Roussanne, 10% Viognier, fermented and aged in barrel for 12 months. New vintage – tasting note to follow. 13.5% abv.

### Red:

#### **Rouge 2011 AOP Languedoc Terrasses du Larzac**

**£20.50**

70% Syrah, 20% Grenache, 10% Mourvedre. A complex array of black fruits, fresh bread and exotic spice aromas, with notes of leather and woodsmoke, with just the merest hint of (older) oak. Deeply concentrated and crammed full of flavour, in a spiced, baked fruit kind of way - rich, warming and almost a meal in itself. It is certainly good now, but is really only just starting out on a long journey of evolution. 15.0% abv.

#### **Rouge 2013 AOP Languedoc Terrasses du Larzac**

**£20.50**

70% Syrah, 20% Grenache, 10% Mourvedre. The nose offers a lovely mix of raspberry, cherry and blackberry fruit aromas and flavours, with hints of forest floor, spice, eau de vie and a lick of oak. Gently grippy and peppery/spicy/earthy on the palate, it is certainly on the young side (this note written July 2016) but has real breed, and will age beautifully for a good few years yet. Mainly Syrah, with a splash of Grenache and a touch of Mourvedre, it is a classic, old-style, cool-climate Languedoc red, full of restrained power and southern charm, with a long finish. 14.5% abv.

#### **Rouge 2014 AOP Languedoc Terrasses du Larzac**

**£21.25**

70% Syrah, 20% Grenache, 10% Mourvedre. An initial whiff of freshly-baked bread, followed by aromas of black cherry, bramble, curry spices, coffee grounds, sous bois and fine eau de vie. The palate is all about restrained power - quite rich and ripe and laden with peppery-spicy red and black fruit flavours and grippy but ripe tannins. But all of this richness is balanced by an abundance of orange peel/cherry kernel acidity and tangy, saline minerality, with myriad secondary notes of forest floor, a certain herby/meaty savouriness and a long, lingering, spicy/minty finish. The finest vintage yet of Saint Sylvestre's red, which will age and evolve for a further 5-10 years. A fabulous wine. 14.5% abv.

#### **Rouge 2015 AOP Languedoc Terrasses du Larzac**

**£21.95**

70% Syrah, 20% Grenache, 10% Mourvedre. Masses of herb-tinged raspberry, redcurrant and soused cherry aromas, mingled with notes of damp earth, leather and burning incense. Vibrant and full of lively, sweet-sour red and black fruit flavours, it is so supremely balanced and elegant, with a backbone of fine tannins and mouth-watering acidity. There's a gentle earthiness and just a touch of herby/spicy savouriness, with a long, cool, minty, sour cherry finish that lasts for an age. In our opinion, is the best vintage so far. A very fine wine indeed. 14.5% abv.

#### **Rouge 2016 AOP Languedoc**

**£22.75**

70% Syrah, 20% Grenache, 10% Mourvedre. New vintage – tasting note to follow. 14.5% abv.

## MAS SIBERT – FOS (BIODYNAMIC)

We discovered Mas Sibert during our 2015 summer holiday in Languedoc, having been given a bottle of their wine by a friend who lives in the region. Simon Bertschinger and his wife Sara Frémine have built a small cellar under their house in the beautiful hilltop village of Fos, located in the hinterland of the Languedoc region, a few kilometers east of Faugères. The vineyards (consisting of just 2 hectares of vines) lie just to the north of Pézenas, with plots on three different types of soil; clay and limestone on river terraces, some sandy soil by the river bank and some clay with large stones. The planting consists of Merlot, Petit Verdot, Syrah and Sangiovese - an unusual mix of varieties, but Simon feels that these varieties (and the particular clones he has planted) are ideally suited to the region's climate and terroir. Wishing to respect nature, they practice biodynamic viticulture, working, harvesting and bottling according to the phases of the moon. Any treatments used in the vineyard are based on local herbs and plants, the grapes are hand-harvested in small crates and they vinify using only the indigenous yeasts which occur naturally on the grapes. Bottling is by gravity, with additional SO2 used only if necessary for the stabilization of wines, with no fining or filtration. .

### Red:

#### **Armélot 2015 Vin de France**

**£13.25**

40% Merlot, 40% Syrah and 20% Petit Verdot. Aromas of bramble and raspberry, with hints of red cherry, garrigue herbs, spice and a gentle savoury meatiness. The flavours are super-fresh and juicy, packed with red and black fruit flavours and again a gently savoury quality. The tannins are beautifully ripe and there is plenty of mineral/stone/cherry kernel acidity, with a long, gently warming, spicy finish. Another vibrant, juicy, tangy wine, and a worthy successor to the 2014 vintage. 13.0% abv.

#### **Fosénot 2014 Vin de France**

**£14.99**

70% Syrah, 10% Sangiovese, 10% Merlot, 10% Petit Verdot. this is a wonderfully aromatic wine, with masses of juicy raspberry and black cherry fruit on the palate, married to intensely juicy cherry kernel/citrus acidity and tea-like tannins, though this time with the savouriness more on the meaty than herby side. Once again a really mouth-watering and beautifully balanced wine. The flavours are rich and ripe and, with time in the glass, developing more in the way of dark, fruit pastille flavours, with a hint of black olive savouriness, leading to a long, tangy finish. 13.5% abv.

#### **Soléno 2013 Vin de France**

**£17.99**

40% Merlot, 30% Petit Verdot, 30% Syrah. Aromas of cassis and bramble and background notes of pepper and spice. The palate is ripe and fleshy, with tea-like tannins balanced by nice acidity and again a hint of peppery spice. It is undoubtedly youthful, but already showing some elegance, and certainly opens out after a night in the decanter. And it certainly went very nicely with a dish of Toulouse sausages, fatty pork and sautéed potatoes. Drinking now, but with a lot of development ahead of it. 14.5% abv.

#### **Soléno 2014 Vin de France**

**£17.99**

Merlot and Petit Verdot. The estate's top red wine, this year with a somewhat different blend (i.e. no Syrah), again using re-toasted oak barrels, for just a subtle oak influence. Another difference for this vintage is that Simon bottled some of the wine with added SO2 and some without - "sans sulphites". We opted for the un-sulphured version, which came across as fresher, slightly lighter, fruitier and more elegant. Once again, it is quite a deep colour with dense aromas of bramble and garrigue herbs, with background notes of pepper and spice and even less oak influence than the 2013. The palate is beautifully ripe and fleshy, with quite soft tannins balanced by nice acidity and again a hint of peppery spice. And whilst the 2013 is certainly softening and getting into its stride, this one is already there - soft, ripe and truly delicious! 13.5% abv.

## TERRE DES CHARDONS – BELLEGARDE (BIODYNAMIC)

The Chardon family moved from Touraine (in the Loire Valley) to Bellegarde in the early 1980's, where they bought some land and began farming fruits such as apricots and cherries and vegetables, converting to organic farming a few years later. When their son Jerome graduated from his studies in agronomy in 1993, he moved to the estate to assist his parents. At the same time, he planted vineyards with Syrah and Grenache, and also bought an established vineyard planted with Clairette (the local white variety). The estate has for many years now been certified as both organic and biodynamic - indeed, Jerome displays a clear passion not just for organic and biodynamic viticulture, but for the whole ethos of sustainable farming and respect for tradition. 9 hectares of vineyards (2 ha of Clairette, 4.3 ha of Syrah and 2.1 ha of Grenache) surround the property, along with fruit and olive trees. The soil consists of the same sort of siliceous rocks that are the hallmark of the Costières de Nimes region, and of course Chateauneuf du Pape, a few kilometres up-river, whilst the vines are trained on wire trellises, in order to facilitate good air circulation. No chemicals (apart from the occasional treatment with a very weak "Bordeaux mix") are used in the vineyards, the only regular treatments being completely natural herbal and biodynamic sprays and soil treatments, plus shallow tilling to keep weeds to a manageable level (with a flock of sheep doing their bit for the cause through the winter!). Similarly, no chemicals are used in the winery, save of course for a little SO2 at the fermentation and bottling stages. The grapes are de-stemmed and some parcels fermented traditionally, whilst others go through a sort of semi-carbonic maceration, depending on the style required from each parcel. Fermentation is entirely reliant on the naturally-occurring indigenous yeasts. Picking, racking and bottling are all carried out in accordance with the phases of the moon. Rather importantly (in fact crucially, in my opinion) the wines are all aged in vat - the only oak barrels in sight are old and purely ornamental. Which - biodynamic practices aside - is one of the main reasons why the wines all taste so alive and "un-mucked-about-with". Indeed, the reds are a real eye-opener, and re-define for me what is possible in this little corner of south-east Languedoc. In fact, not

only do they set a new benchmark for the Costières de Nimes appellation, they are simply some of the best Languedoc Syrah-based wines we have ever tasted. Trust me - they are that good!

### Red:

#### **Marginal 2014 Costières de Nimes**

**£14.75**

80% Syrah, 20% Grenache. Spicy! Bramble and raspberry nose, with notes of black olive, garrigue herbs, black pepper and a faint whiff of lily of the valley. Rich, spicy and chock full of red and black fruits, again with savoury black olive and garrigue herb notes. The tannins are firm and spicy, but at the same time supple, and there is a wonderful core of tangy orange and cherry kernel acidity. Gorgeous wine, to drink now, or keep for 2 to 3 years (or more). Certified organic and biodynamic. 13.0% abv

#### **Chardon-Marie 2012 Costières de Nimes**

**£24.95**

100% Syrah. All manner of red and black fruits greet the nose - raspberry, blackcurrant and dark cherry, with notes of black olive tapenade, cumin, fenugreek, peppermint and a hint of polished leather. As with the 2012, it is so fresh and full of life, with dark, concentrated black and red fruit and garrigue herb flavours, countered by stoney, citrusy minerality, along with ripe, tea-like tannins and cracking acidity. Another supremely balanced and deceptively elegant wine, with a long, cool, sweet and sour finish. Again, it is very much in the Northern Rhone style of winemaking (think of a young, ripe Cote-Rotie) and has the capacity to age and evolve beautifully, over the next 10 years or more. Fabulous wine! Certified organic and biodynamic. 14.5% abv

### White:

#### **Clairette d'Été 2016 Clairette de Bellegarde**

**£12.95**

100% Clairette. An expressive, leafy/minty nose, with notes of spring flowers, lemon zest, nectarine, garrigue herbs and a hint of stony minerality. The palate is soft and creamy, with flavours of stone fruit, water melon, baked apple, soft citrus zest and fennel, with a really quite unusual (for a white) saline, mineral tang, and a long, gently savoury finish. Close your eyes and you might even think you were drinking a Provence rose. If you like your wines with loads of overt acidity, this may not be for you, but if you fancy an aperitif to go with a bowl of olives, peppers and cured charcuterie, this is the perfect partner. Certified organic and biodynamic. 12.0% abv

## **TERRE INCONNUE – SAINT SÉRIÉS (BIODYNAMIC)**

Robert Creus (pronounced "Cruise"), works for the French Chamber of Commerce. He is actually an experienced scientist, having been heavily involved in the Ariane space rocket programme. Whilst continuing in his main career, he also began making some wine in 1997, having bought some old Carignan vines. He has since added Grenache, Syrah, Serine (a northern Rhone variant of Syrah) and a little Tempranillo, all in excess of 30 years old, in several small plots near the villages of Saint-Christol, Saint-Geniès-des-Mourgues and Restinclières. One plot of Carignan is in excess of 70 years old. The total area under vine is just 4 hectares - and with yields of between 10 and 25 hl/ha (depending on the vineyard), it doesn't take a mathematician to work out that there isn't much wine to go around. The work in the vineyards throughout the growing season is minimal, aside from a certain amount of green harvesting (resulting in just 4 or 5 bunches per vine) and no treatment (organic or otherwise) are used. The use of sulfites is minimal, with just 5 mg per litre added before fermentation, and none thereafter. The free-run wine is then mixed with the pressed wine and placed into old oak barrels and aged for 2 years. The finished wines are then transferred to tanks for at least 2 weeks to settle, protected by nitrogen, after which they are bottled without fining or filtration. Although Robert's farming and winemaking principles are essentially biodynamic, his day job dictates that he bottles when he has the time, irrespective of the prevailing atmospheric pressure or phase of the moon.

Since Terre Inconnue is essentially a "garagiste" operation, all of the wines are labelled as Vin de Table - mainly because Robert and Lucien cannot be bothered with the bureaucracy involved in applying for appellation contrôlée (or even vin de pays) status for their wines. Vin de Table is (at least, in theory) the "lowest" denomination possible for wine produced in France. Not that such a humble denomination is any indication of the quality of the wines, for although they are not cheap, these are some of the most expressive, concentrated and finely-crafted wines you will find anywhere in Languedoc.

### Red:

#### **Les Bruyeres 2012 Vin de France**

**£14.50**

50% Carignan, 50% Grenache. the tannins are chunky and robust and the acidity is relatively high, but it is absolutely chock full of fresh and pickled bramble and sour cherry fruit, damp earth aromas and flavours that it is hard to resist! Add to that some subtle hints of polished wood and spicy, herby notes, plus of course that utterly wonderful streak of volatile acidity that I love in Robert's wines, and it really is a wonderfully fresh, vibrant, expressive wine. After time in the glass, it also begins to develop some nice floral/violet aromas, which lend a touch of real elegance to the fruit, which is increasingly turns more red (rather than black) by the sip. An absolute bargain, whether you drink it now, or cellar for 10 years. Biodynamic. 13.5% abv

#### **Guilhem 2011 Vin de France**

**£18.79**

An eclectic blend of old-vine Grenache, Merlot, Carignan and Tempranillo, and a big, brooding wine, with tremendous depth and complexity. The nose offers notes of black fruits steeped in eau de vie, leather, tapenade, roasted meat and coffee, not to mention huge wafts of garrigue herbs and burning incense. The palate offers all of this and more, with a combination of fresh and baked fruits and tertiary elements, backed up by robust tannins and a

layer of fabulously juicy acidity that builds towards a long finish. Granted it is still very youthful, with a long (10 year - plus) future ahead of it, but it is already offering much pleasure. Brilliant wine! Biodynamic. 15.0% abv

### **Leonie 2012 Vin de France**

**£22.99**

100% Carignan. Aromas of fresh red fruits, spice, incense and forest floor, with subtle hints of pain au raisin and pot-pourri - complex and expressive, with just a gentle whiff of fine old oak. The palate is equally complex, with spiced red and black fruit flavours mingled with licorice, all-spice and bitter chocolate, plenty of tannic grip and a backbone of juicy, soft citrus acidity, all of which carries through to an exceptionally long, dry finish. This is an utterly brilliant, classic, old-school Languedoc Carignan – indeed, up there with the very best. 13.5% abv

### **Los Abuelos 2012 Vin de France**

**£31.99**

It's Grenache Jim (from 100 year-old vines), but not as we know it! It is crammed full of plum and raspberry fruit, but with perhaps even more elegance and fleetness of foot than its predecessor. This 2012 offers a gloriously complex and intoxicating mix of red and black fruit aromas, with notes of old, polished leather, exotic spices, damp earth and fine eau de vie. There's a rush of tangy, white pepper-infused sweet-sour red cherry and bramble fruit, but the feel is light and almost ethereal. Yes, there's a healthy lick of gently rustic, tea-like tannin, but there is also a wonderfully mouth-watering and refreshing core of acidity - something that may shock lovers of the slightly soupy, rich southern Rhône style of Grenache, but should appeal greatly to lovers of Burgundy or (dare I say it) Claret. As for the advertised 15% abv on the label, it feels for all the world more like 13% or less. 15.0% abv

### **Sylvie 2012 Vin de France**

**£35.50**

50% Syrah and 50% Sérine. Yields for this wine are miniscule, at an average of just 10 hl/ha, and it shows. The colour is a semi-opaque black cherry clour. The nose, whilst initially quite muted, opens-out quickly, to reveal complex aromas of blueberry and bramble, freshly-baked bread, meat/leather and fine eau de vie. It's wonderfully spicy and herby, too, with notes of allspice, fennel and cardamom. The palate is tightly-knit, with a cloak of firm but fine tannins wrapped around a core of ripe bramble, blackcurrant and black cherry fruit, with a touch of pepper and spice and a bite of cherry kernel acidity. The finish is long, spicy and tangy, with a cool mintiness at the very end. One for the connoisseur. Biodynamic. 14.0% abv

## **DOMAINE TURNER PAGEOT – GABIAN (BIODYNAMIC)**

Following the closure of the Gabian co-operative (the once brilliant but latterly under-performing Les Vignerons de La Carignano) in 2007, some excellent parcels of established (and in many cases old) vines came up for sale. Karen Turner and her husband Emmanuel Pageot were able to seize the opportunity to move in and inject new life - and to realise the potential of those vineyards and some great (and very varied) terroir. I first met Emmanuel at The Outsiders tasting in London in November 2012 and really loved the wines that he and Karen were making. So it was great to meet up again with Emmanuel in 2013, this time in his cellar in Gabian. Karen was out working her day job, which just happens to be head winemaker at one of Languedoc's most iconic estates, Prieuré de Saint Jean de Bébian. As Manu said, it helps to pay the bills!

The vineyards are mostly in small parcels, dotted around the hillsides surrounding the village. They have several different parcels of Grenache and Syrah, plus Mourvedre, Sauvignon Blanc, Roussanne, plus a small amount of Marsanne. Altitudes range between 200 and 300 metres above sea level, and the aspects and soil types are many and varied, including schiste, clay-limestone, volcanic basalt/limestone and bauxite. The cellar and house are situated in the middle of the village - it is quite small, but well-equipped, and they are in the process of buying the house next door, which will effectively give them twice the living space and a much larger cellar. Unlike many growers (especially in the south) Karen and Manu like to encourage warm fermentations for their grapes (anything up to 30C) and, aside from the very occasional stuck fermentation, prefer not to add yeast, relying on the naturally-occurring yeasts to do their job. And apart from occasional spraying of sulphur and copper in the vineyards, they use no sulphites until the point of bottling, and even then, no more than 4 to 6 grams per litre. The aim is to have less than 20g/l of free sulphites in the finished wine. The reds are unfiltered. Oh, and I almost forgot to mention (though you may have already guessed!) that they are fully certified as both organic and biodynamic.

### **Red:**

#### **Le Rouge 2015 Languedoc Pézenas**

**£14.50**

80% Grenache, 20% Syrah. Pungent with ripe bramble and plum aromas, notes of bitter chocolate, curry spices and polished old wood. The palate shows plenty of extract, with rich, ripe, tea-like tannins and orange/lemon acidity. It is robust, but so ripe and full of fresh red and black fruit flavours, a pot-pourri of herbs and spices and not a little minerality, followed by a long, spicy, grippy finish. 14.0% abv.

#### **Carmina Major 2015 Languedoc Pézenas**

**£16.75**

70% Syrah, 25% Mourvedre, 5% Grenache, aged for 1 year in wood. Dense, tarry and smoky on the nose, with rich bramble and plum flavours, opening out with notes of spices and herbs and bright, orangey acidity. Rich, ripe and extracted, but surprisingly elegant, with redcurrant, cherry and bramble fruit flavours combining beautifully with spices, herbs and salty, stony minerality, in a deliciously tangy, sweet-sour whole. A serious wine. 14.0% abv.

#### **B815 2014 Languedoc Pézenas**

**£22.99**

95% Grenache, 5% Mourvedre, aged for 1 year in wood. From a single, north-facing vineyard, on limestone soil. Myriad aromas of red berry and cherry, garrigue herbs, flowers, damp earth and subtle leather and spice notes. The palate is crammed full of fresh and crystallised bramble and raspberry flavours, with a hint of orange, subtle herb and spice nuances and an equally subtle streak of saline minerality. With fine, ripe, tea-like tannins and mouth-watering acidity, this is another very fine wine, which can either be enjoyed young (though preferably decanted 24 hours in advance) or aged for a good few years. Certified organic and biodynamic. 14.0% abv.

### **G230 2015 Vin de France**

**£22.99**

100% Grenache, aged for 1 year in wood. It's Grenache, Jim, but not as we know it. Unlike B815, this is grown on schiste - the same terroir as nearby Faugères. And the difference between the two cuvées is remarkable - this is lighter in colour, even more elegant and really rather Burgundian in both structure and flavour profile. Red cherry, redcurrant and wild strawberry aromas and flavours are augmented by notes of soft spices, tobacco, polished old wood and a hint of orange peel. With subtle gamey, earthy and high notes, it really is very complex and elegant - medium/full rather than big-bodied, with fine, lapsang tea-like tannins, plenty of mouth-watering orange/lime/cherry acidity and a very long, spicy/minty finish. All-in-all, this is an utterly lovely wine, which serves to underline winemaker Emmanuel Pageot's assertion that Grenache is - or is at least capable of being - the "Pinot of the Languedoc". An utterly gorgeous wine. Certified organic and biodynamic. 14.0% abv.

### **Rosé:**

### **48H 2016 Vin de France**

**£12.25**

60% Grenache, 40% Syrah. Not so much a rosé as a Clairet - a term the Bordelais use for a light red wine, or a very dark rosé. An extended 48 hour maceration (hence the name 48H) makes for more of a bright ruby red than rosé, and the nose is distinctly fruity, with notes of raspberry and redcurrant, subtle hints of peach and apricot and a delightful smokiness. There is a welcome hint of rusticity to the palate – and even a touch of grape skin tannin - but it is essentially soft and gloriously fruity, rich and mouth-filling. A really delicious, even quite serious wine . 14.0% abv.

### **White:**

### **Le Blanc 2017 Languedoc**

**£14.50**

65% Roussanne, 20% Marsanne, 15% Piquepoul. The Marsanne sits on the skins for 3 months, resulting in what is known as an "orange wine". The nose offers notes of apples, raisins and brioche, whilst the palate is really zingy, with excellent acidity to match the rich, ripe tree fruit, orange zest, basil and rosemary flavours. There is also real minerality, with an almost savoury, even saline tang. and a long, spicy/herby finish. 14.0% abv.

### **La Rupture 2015 Vin de France**

**£16.75**

100% Sauvignon Blanc. Fermented and aged in 1 year-old oak barrels. The nose is rich and expressive, with notes of lime oil, basil and subtle floral notes and - unlike the 2012 - a more typical elderflower-like Sauvignon character. There's also whiff of the sea about it, reminiscent of fresh oysters. It possesses a considerably complex and structured palate, with zesty lime/citrus flavours countered by a peachy/apricotty richness and a gently oily texture, with excellent acidity, a touch of grape skin tannin and a very long, spicy finish. Certified organic and biodynamic. 14.0% abv.

### **Les Choix 2015 Vin de France**

**£25.50**

100% Marsanne. Fermented and aged in 1 year-old oak barrels. The nose is rich and expressive, with notes of lime oil, basil and subtle floral notes and - unlike the 2012 - a more typical elderflower-like Sauvignon character. There's also whiff of the sea about it, reminiscent of fresh oysters. It possesses a considerably complex and structured palate, with zesty lime/citrus flavours countered by a peachy/apricotty richness and a gently oily texture, with excellent acidity, a touch of grape skin tannin and a very long, spicy finish. Certified organic and biodynamic. 14.0% abv.

## **LES VIGNES DE L'ARQUE – UZÈS (ORGANIC)**

Les Vignes de l'Arque is situated in the relatively undiscovered Gard region, close to the historical town of Uzès and the amazing Roman aqueduct, the Pont du Gard. The estate is named after the 9th century chateau, l'Arque de Baron, the ruins of which can still be seen atop the nearby hill. The foothills of the Cévennes are a few miles to the west, and the vineyards of the Côtes du Rhône lie to the east. Depending on which wine information resource or map one refers to, Duché d'Uzès falls within either (or both) Languedoc-Roussillon or Rhône. Historically and geographically, it is Languedoc-Roussillon, but for administrative purposes (due to the close proximity of the ruling body) it is now designated as Rhône. Indeed, the wines - especially the reds - are perhaps more Rhône in style than Languedoc, although they possess a freshness more typical of the latter. Until recently, the region had no AOP, so all of the wines were designated as IGP (formerly Vins de Pays). Thankfully, that has now changed, with the richly-deserved introduction of the Duché d'Uzès AOP.

The wines of Les Vignes de l'Arque punch well above their weight and are characterised by lovely concentration and purity of fruit. Furthermore, coming from what can best be described as a vinous backwater, they provide brilliant value for money. The estate has over 70 hectares under vine and was created by the Fabre and Rouveyrolles families in 1994, before which the grapes had been sent to the local co-operative. In recent years, the wines have been made by Mr. Fabre's sons, Patrick and Arnaud, under whose control they have just got better and better. Furthermore, the estate is organic, with full certification in the pipeline. If you are looking for alternatives to the better-known - and hence more expensive - wines of the nearby southern Rhône valley, the quality/price ratio that these wines offer will not disappoint. And year after year, Les Vignes de l'Arque seem to have the knack of fashioning some truly outstanding wines. They certainly deserve more recognition, but meanwhile, they remain our little secret!

### **White:**

### **Viognier 2017 IGP Cévennes**

**£9.79**

100% Viognier. Hugely aromatic, offering classic honeysuckle, grape, melon and peach aromas, with hints of citrus and herbs de Provence. The palate is delightfully refreshing and focused - soft, fruity, zingy, though not at all pithy, with myriad white fruit flavours and a gentle herbiness. Essentially dry, but generous and ever-so-slightly creamy, this really is a delightful wine, perfect for summer drinking. Great with watermelon, too! 13.5% abv

**Cuvée Alexia 2017 IGP Pays d'Oc****£9.79**

Muscat and Sauvignon Blanc. Grapey, orangey, floral notes from the Muscat combine perfectly with the grassy, herbaceous notes of the Sauvignon, in a delightfully refreshing wine. Zingy, rather than zesty, with juicy soft citrus, white peach and herb flavours, it is clean, fresh, elegant and beautifully focused, with bracing acidity and a long, cool, gently peppery finish. A lovely wine, which adds up to more than the sum of its parts - and perfect for sipping on the patio, or to pair with all manner of foods, such as white meats, fish, shellfish or even cheese. 13.5% abv

**Cuvée Amélie 2016 IGP Pays d'Oc****£11.50**

80% Chardonnay, 15% Roussanne, 5% Sauvignon Blanc. The Chardonnay and Roussanne grapes are fermented and aged for a few months in oak barrels, with the Sauvignon added at the end, to give heightened freshness. Bright mid-gold colour with green glints, the nose offers tropical fruit, fresh grape and orange aromas, with notes of honeysuckle and carefully judged oak. The palate is similarly loaded with fresh, juicy fruit flavours, with a gently oily texture, a touch of saline minerality and a hint of peppery spice. Again, the effect of the oak-ageing is subtle, enhancing rather than overpowering the fruit, whilst adding a hint of tannic structure. An unusual, yet effective blend, which is a delight to drink now, but with the potential to age and evolve for another 2 or 3 years. 13.5% abv.

**Chant des Baumes Blanc 2017 Duché d'Uzès****£14.89**

Viognier, Grenache Blanc and Roussanne, aged in oak barrels for 8 months. Clear, pale gold colour. Peach, apple and honeysuckle on the nose, with hints of white pepper and spices. Quite rich and unctious on the palate, with a slightly oily/creamy texture, flavours of white tree fruits and fennel and further notes of garrigue herbs. With excellent acidity, perhaps a touch of grape tannin - which offers some grip - and a long, creamy, spicy/minty finish, this is a fine white wine. 14.0% abv.

**Rosé:****Petit Gris Rosé 2017 IGP Cévennes****£9.50**

100% Cinsault. Very pale onion skin colour, with a nose of little red and white fruits and soft citrus - a veritable summer fruit cocktail! The palate is equally summery and positively refreshing, with masses of juicy wild strawberry, tangy redcurrant and sweet nectarine flavours, again a hint of orange, some nice herby/spicy background notes and wonderful acidity. For a mere vine de pays, this really does punch well above its weight and is another match for many a Provençal rosé at twice the price - as evidenced by it receiving a gold medal at the 2018 Paris wine show. 12.5% abv.

**Chant des Baumes Rosé 2017 Duché d'Uzès****£11.99**

80% Grenache, 20% Syrah. Deeper in colour and fuller in body and texture than the Gris (above), this has a nose of raspberry, strawberry and cream, with subtle floral notes and even hints of apple and peach. The palate is quite full and almost rich, with redcurrant and berry flavours, a hint of peppery spice and a quite creamy texture, with a modicum of grape skin tannin. It finishes long and spicy. Top class rosé and a very good food wine. Serve well chilled. 13.5% abv.

**Red:****Rouge 2016 Duché d'Uzès****£10.50**

80% Grenache and 20% Syrah. Very much in the style of a (very good) Côtes du Rhône Villages - deep, dark purple/red, with intoxicating aromas of garrigue herb-infused bramble and blackcurrant, leather, tobacco and spice. It is beautifully ripe and almost rich, yet (and this is where it shows its true Languedoc colours) it is also supremely balanced and shows real elegance, with soft, velvety tannins countered by utterly mouth-watering soft citrus and cherry kernel acidity. Indeed, it really is rather refreshing! A really lovely red wine, and offering great value for money. 14.5% abv.

**Chant des Baumes Rouge 2013 Duché d'Uzès****£15.95**

75% Syrah, 25% Grenache, aged in oak barrels for 18 months. The nose is packed with dark bramble and cassis aromas, curry spices, garrigue herbs, toasty oak and damp earth. The palate is similarly concentrated and full of dense, ripe black fruit flavours, laced with all manner of licorice, peppery spice, coffee and savoury/herby nuances, wrapped around a core of chocolatey tannins and just the right level of balancing acidity and a long, cool, gently minty finish. Although approachable now, with food, it will reward cellaring over the next 5 to 8 years. Brilliant value for money. 14.0% abv.

**Terroir de l'Arque 2017 IGP Pays d'Oc****£10.25**

100% Grenache. A limpid, bright red colour with small red fruits, pepper and spice aromas and flavours, with fine, soft tannins and juicy acidity. There is a refreshing bitter cherry note on the finish, together with a hint of dark chocolate. This cuvée used to be made in a big, bold, super-concentrated style, but this latest vintage is lighter and fresher and shows much more elegance. Drinking well already, but will age nicely for 2 or 3 years. 14.5% abv

**Cuvée des Boissières 2016 IGP Pays d'Oc****£11.50**

100% Merlot, aged in oak barrels for 9 months. A dark purple core, fading to deep ruby red, with bags of vivacious cherry and plum fruit, with subtle oaky aromas and flavours, with notes of black pepper, herbs and curry spices, not to mention a truly mouth-watering core of cherry skin acidity. It really is a remarkably refreshing red wine, but with a genuine depth and complexity. A cracking wine! 14.5% abv

**Sweet white:****Saveur d'Automne 2009 IGP Pays d'Oc (50cl)****£13.99**

100% late-harvested and barrel-aged Viognier. A delightfully intense, perfumed nose, with complex fruit and floral aromas including apricot, orange, fresh grapes, honey, root ginger, turkish delight and a subtle note of oak vanillin. The flavours are somewhere between moelleux and full-on doux, but the inherent richness of the super-ripe, late-harvested fruit (as the name of the wine suggests) is countered by cracking acidity and perhaps even a touch of grape tannin. There is a core of rich, ripe, densely concentrated peach and apricot fruit, with notes of lime oil, preserved root ginger and just a touch of spicy warmth, whilst the very long finish offers a final flourish of tropical fruit and candied citrus. The oak is beautifully judged and integrates seamlessly with the fruit, making for a wine of considerable complexity. Although it is dangerously more-ish, a little actually goes a long way. Whatever, this wine is perfectly capable of sitting in the fridge for a good many days after opening, during which it just gets better and better. A simply exceptional, exquisite, naturally sweet (i.e. not fortified) Viognier.. 16.0% abv

# ROUSSILLON

As in the Languedoc region, Grenache, Syrah and Carignan are the mainstays of Roussillon red wines, with Mourvedre also becoming more prevalent. Yet the wines are quite different. The region has the warmest climate in France, with the fertile plain around Perpignan producing large amounts of tree fruits (peaches, apricots etc). The Côtes du Roussillon wines from the surrounding hills are full-bodied and complex, with spicy, concentrated fruit flavours. Several areas within the Roussillon region qualify for the Côtes du Roussillon Villages appellation, situated in the north of the region, at higher altitudes. The vines grow in sandy granite and schist soils, surrounded by a beautiful and rugged landscape, with the high hills of the Corbières and their spectacular Cathar fortresses lying just to the north.

## **DOMAINE PIETRI-GERAUD - COLLIOURE**

Laetitia Piétri makes great Collioure and Banyuls wines in her incredibly small and cramped cellar in the middle of the delightful and bustling town of Collioure. Harvest time must be a bit of a nightmare for this town-centre winery, with the narrow, hilly streets still thronged with tourists – and the vineyards high up in the hills above the town. This is the southern-most wine region in Roussillon (with the Spanish border just a few kilometres away) and the vineyards are set in stunning scenery, at the point where the Pyrenées tumble into the Mediterranean. The terroir is a mix of the soil and the sea, with the maritime influence very definitely making its mark on the wines. Laetitia Pietri is the fifth generation of her family to tend their 30 hectares of Collioure and Banyuls, alongside her still active mother Maguy. Their vineyards are on steep terraces, dotted around the hills of Collioure, Banyuls and Port Vendres where slate soils support very old Grenache and Carignan, with more recent plantings of Syrah and Mourvèdre. A selection of dry red and white wines are made, along with several different cuvees of sweet Banyuls.

### **Red fortified:**

#### **Cuvée Méditerranée 2009 Banyuls**

**£19.99**

90% Grenache, 10% Carignan. An ethereal perfume of bonfire toffee and molasses, spiced orange peel, cherry, redcurrant, fig, mocha, incense, polished old mahogany. Rich, sweet, laden with preserved fruit intensity and soured Christmas cake flavours, rounded and completely hedonistic, yet so balanced and fleet of foot, with melting tannins and tangy, almost zesty acidity. At just 16% abv, this is a wonderful fortified wine which majors on fruit, not alcohol. 16.0% abv.

## **DOMAINE SOL-PAYRÉ - ELNE**

Created by Gustave Payré in 1913, the wines of Domaine Sol-Payré are now made by his grandson, Jean-Claud Sol, from vineyards close to Elne, south-east of Perpignan. This part of Roussillon is capable of producing some really distinctive and full-bodied wines – especially the reds. Many of the vines at Sol-Payré date back to when the estate was created, and yields range from 40 hl/ha down to as little as 32 hl/ha (just over 1 bottle of wine per vine). The wines are deservedly very highly rated in the Guide Hachette, the French wine-buyer's "bible".

### **Red:**

#### **Vertigo 2009 Côtes du Roussillon**

**£13.99**

70% Grenache, 30% Syrah. Bready, with oodles of raspberry, red cherry and stewed plums, gently spicy, with a subtle herby notes. Enticing polished mahogany and orange peel notes. An abundance of sweet and sour summer fruit flavours, fine tannins and a delicious backbone of acidity. Fills out even more over 2 or 3 days, taking on a rich, baked fruit quality, with hints of savoury and warm spices. Drink now or age for 5-8 years. 14.5% abv

#### **Trilogia 2011 Côtes du Roussillon**

**£18.50**

Grenache, Syrah, Carignan. Blueberries, plums and black cherries steeped in eau de vie, with subtle hints of violets and herbs, polished leather and brioche. Rich, ripe and packed full of juicy red and black fruits - a vibrant, chunky, mouth-filling wine. A serious wine, with genuine structure, the sweet-sour fruit flavours are shot through with all manner of herb and spice nuances, with a rich, bread/pastry quality countered by beautifully ripe tannins and orange-tinged acidity. Even after a couple of days, it continues to change and just get better. 14.5% abv

### **Fortified Red:**

#### **Rivesaltes Grenat 2013**

**£14.95**

100% old vine Grenache, harvested at the peak of maturity, with yields of just 20hl/ha. The grapes are given a long maceration, followed by "mutage sur grains" (the addition of a small amount of grape brandy to the must) which stops the fermentation, thus retaining both intense fruit flavours and a certain amount of residual grape sugar. The nose simply brims with rich, ripe bramble and cassis fruit, with all manner of herb and spice notes, balsam, damp earth and fine eau de vie. The palate is even more fruit-filled and rich, with the fresh red/black fruits augmented by hints of fig, prune and soured black cherry, with fine, relatively soft tannins and ample acidity. The result is a tangy, sweet-sour style of wine which is dangerously drinkable. Perfect with foie gras or assorted cheeses, as well as rich fruitcakes and - yes - chocolate. 15.5% abv

## DOMAINE TRELOAR - TROUILLAS

Yorkshireman Jonathan Hesford and his New Zealander wife Rachel Treloar created Domaine Treloar in 2006. All life-change stories need a catalyst, and theirs happened on September 11 2001. At the time, Jon and Rachel were living 500 metres from the World Trade Centre in New York. They watched both planes hit the twin towers and lost several friends and colleagues in the disaster. They lived like refugees for the following 3 months and Jon lost his job. Nevertheless, he thanked his lucky stars that he didn't attend the meeting on the 110th floor that day. When the dust had settled (both literally and figuratively) Jon and Rachel decided to re-focus their lives to do something that inspired them. Both were very interested in wine – so they decided to become vigneronns. Rachel is from New Zealand and, as Jon had always had a high regard for its wines, they moved there to get a good grounding. Jon took a postgraduate diploma at Lincoln University, where hard work and commitment helped him to top the class. He was then offered a job as a winemaker at Neudorf Vineyards, one of the finest estates in the country, and in two years there he learned hands-on what it takes to make world-class wines.

Jon and Rachel chose eventually to come to the Roussillon region of France to run their own estate, since they found New Zealand too remote and land prices too costly to start a vineyard that would not produce any grapes for three years. They currently farm 10ha of old vines, planted in the Aspres hills of the Roussillon, on the edge of Mount Canigou. The Aspres are characterised by poor, stony soils lying over a clay and limestone subsoil. This gives the wines a particular elegance and freshness for the region. The vines are densely planted and range in age from 8 to 40+ years. They follow a sustainable vineyard management program, predicting disease pressure before spraying, and are in the process of moving to more organic practices. No chemical fertilizers are used and they mow and cultivate to limit weed growth, erosion and vine vigour and are developing a natural wildlife habitat in the centre of the vineyards.

### White:

#### **La Terre Promise 2016 IGP Côtes Catalanes**

**£16.95**

50% Grenache Gris, 30% Macabeu, 20% Carignan Blanc. Beautifully understated, with a complex array of fruit and non-fruit aromas and flavours. On the nose, we have a subtle mix of apple, clove, garrigue herbs and wet stone, leading to a nicely taut palate, with spiced apple and tangy citrus flavours, nicely judged oak and a stony/mineral edge which, with dried herb and nutty elements, makes for a really quite racy, yet elegant wine. 13.5% abv.

### Red:

#### **Le Ciel Vide 2015 Côtes du Roussillon**

**£11.75**

70% Syrah, 30% Grenache. A nose of uber-ripe bramble and cassis, with notes of damp earth, polished leather, tobacco and freshly-baked bread. The palate offers a rasp of rich, ripe but gently rustic tannins cannot conceal a core of luscious black and red fruit flavours, with ample acidity providing a refreshing counterpoint, making for a youthful, vibrant mouthful of loveliness. Part of me says that this needs a year or two to soften (this note written June 2016) but the other part says - if you like a touch of tannic bite - why wait? It isn't for wimps, but you get a lot of bang for your buck, and it also has the potential to age nicely for a few years. 13.5% abv.

#### **One Block Grenache 2015 IGP Côtes Catalanes**

**£12.50**

60% Grenache, 30% Lledoner Pelut, 10% Carignan. An expressive nose of fresh red and black fruits steeped in eau de vie, new leather and garam masala. Beautifully balanced in the mouth, with black cherry and bramble fruit flavours, tes-like tannins and juicy, citrus-tinged acidity, all of which combine in a wonderfully sweet-sour wine ,full of southern warmth and charm. Another wine that is great to drink now (written June 2016) but will evolve for another 3 to 5 years at least. A real "sweet spot" in the Treloar range, and brilliant value for money. 14.0% abv.

#### **3 Peaks 2015 Côtes du Roussillon**

**£13.50**

50% Syrah, 30% Mourvedre, 20% Grenache. bright bramble and black cherry aromas, with subtle notes of roasted meat, damp earth, curry spices and wood smoke. The colour might suggest a rather deep, tannic wine, but it really is deliciously drinkable and approachable. The tannins are nicely robust and chewy (for now) but the combination of ripe, juicy fruit and mouth-watering acidity provide an excellent foil. 14.0% abv.

#### **Le Secret 2013 Côtes du Roussillon**

**£16.50**

Mostly Syrah, with a little Grenache. This is a wine to please lovers of Claret, with its deep, dark, earthy, tobacco-scented bramble and cassis fruit and classy oak ageing, with background notes of garrigue herbs, allspice and leather. And what lovely balance on the palate - rich red and black fruit flavours combine with mouth-watering acidity and velvety tannins in a wine that is already gorgeously smooth and very drinkable. That said, there are undoubtedly hidden depths, with a complexity and tight structure which suggests a great future. 14.5% abv.

#### **Motus 2015 Côtes du Roussillon**

**£16.80**

80% Mourvedre, 10% Syrah and 10% Grenache. Intense aromas of bramble and cassis, leather, roast meat and polished wood. Subtle hints of garam masala and cardamom and a whiff of decaying leaves. Very complex stuff, with flavours of ripe bramble and raspberry, allied to fine, grippy tannins and tangy acidity, making for a deliciously sweet and sour wine with a touch of savoury meatiness and a rich texture. 14.0% abv.

#### **Le Rescapé Carignan 2016 IGP Côtes Catalanes**

**£16.99**

100% Carignan. Total yields are a miniscule 15 hl/ha, with just 2,000 bottles produced. Medium-dark, clear/limpid red in colour. A wonderfully expressive mix of soured red and black fruits on the nose, with background notes of incense, polished old wood and tobacco, not to mention a definite hint of blackcurrant leaf. It is so aromatic and lovely, one could simply sit and smell it for ages! With time in the glass, further notes of brioche and curry spices (notably cumin, coriander and fenugreek) emerge, along with hints of roasted nuts and even flowers. The palate is at the same time soft and velvety, yet fresh, vibrant and full of restrained power, offering bags of spice and herb-infused raspberry and blackcurrant fruit, with plenty of grip and juicy, spiky, gently volatile acidity. It could just be the most obviously complex and most instantly loveable wine from Treloar thus far - and, of course, it is Carignan! All-in-all, a truly lovely wine, and a worthy new addition to the Treloar range.14.0% abv.

**Tahi 2011 Côtes du Roussillon****£23.95**

60% Syrah, 25% Mourvedre and 15% Grenache. New vintage – tasting note to follow. 14.0% abv.

**Le Maudit 2012 Côtes du Roussillon****£34.50**

Carignan from 60-year-old vines and Syrah from 40-year-old vines (with yields of just 10 hl/ha), co-fermented in whole bunches, then aged for 26 months in large-format oak barrels, 50% of which are new. The colour is an opaque deep purple, whilst the nose offers a truly intoxicating and immensely complex mix of bramble and black cherry, leather, eau de vie, cumin, coriander, coffee, damp earth and charred oak. It is no shrinking violet, but it isn't brash or showy - it is multi-dimensional, crammed full of sweet and sour black cherry and spice flavours. The oak is still prominent, and there's a healthy dose of tea-like tannins, balanced by a rasp of truly mouth-watering acidity. Fully deserves its place at the very top of the Treloar hierarchy - a true "vin de garde". 14.0% abv.

**White fortified:****MO2 2009 Vin de France****£13.99**

100% Muscat a Petit Grains. Not\*quite\* bone dry (just a few grams of residual sugar). Masses of interest and quirkiness - not to mention genuine complexity - with aromas and flavours of dried oranges and herbs, nuts, polished wood, eau de vie and all manner of vinous (i.e. non-fruit) nuances and earthiness - and a long, long finish that manages to be warming and cool/minty at the same time. An enigmatic wine, which everyone should taste at least once - if not more. A fabulous bargain! 15.0% abv.

**Muscat de Rivesaltes 2013 (50cl bottle)****£10.99**

100% Muscat a Petit Grains. intense nose of jasmine, mandarin and apricot with hints of fennel, star anise and white chocolate. The flavours are rich and complex, but the inherent freshness on the palate is a joy. Rich but grapey, with subtle notes of cinnamon, clove, mandarin and lemon oil. A delightfully refreshing, intensely fruity, sweet, but relatively light fortified wine, with mouth-watering acidity. 16.0% abv,

# PROVENCE

## **VILLA MINNA VINEYARD – ROQUE-PESSADE (ORGANIC)**

Villa Minna Vineyard is a 15 hectare family estate situated in the heart of Provence, between Aix and Salon. The estate was established in 1929 by the grandfather of current owner, former rally driver Jean-Paul Luc. Until the mid-1990's, the grapes were sold to the local co-operative, but Jean-Paul and his wife Minna (after whom the estate is now named) were more ambitious. They grafted new varieties onto existing vines that previously yielded grapes of poor quality and also planted their first parcel of Syrah. 1999 was the inaugural commercial vintage of Minna Vineyard, with just 2,900 bottles of red wine produced. But this wine gained instant recognition with 2 stars awarded in the Guide Hachette, as well as being listed by some of the best restaurants in Provence. In 2005 the first vintage of Minna Vineyard white wine was made. Since then, the estate has gone from strength to strength, garnering some excellent reviews in France's top wine publications. The estate is now in its third year of conversion towards official organic status, a philosophy which Minna and Jean-Paul have adopted all along. The white wines are quirky, elegant and full of life, whilst the reds are ripe, beautifully balanced and show excellent ageing potential. And in comparison to many of their Provençal counterparts, they are very competitively priced, considering their undoubted quality. The labels for each wine in each vintage are all different, being extracts from various childhood paintings by Jean-Paul and Minna's daughters, Tytti (pronounced Tutti) and Meryl.

### **White:**

#### **Minna Vineyard Blanc 2011 IGP Bouches du Rhône**

**£21.95**

48% Vermentino, 25% Roussanne, 27% Marsanne, fermented/aged in oak barrels and steel vats. Lemon, apple, honey, hay, slightly nutty and even a whiff of petrol - unusual, complex and alluring. Fine and elegant on the palate, with spiced citrus and apple flavours, notes of garrigue herbs, orange peel, just a hint of grape tannin and a wonderfully refreshing backbone of acidity. It really is gloriously fresh, fruity, herby and - yes - "winey". The finish is tangy and mouth-watering and keeps you coming back for more. 14.0% abv.

#### **Minna Vineyard Blanc 2012 IGP Bouches du Rhône**

**£21.95**

42% Vermentino, 33% Roussanne, 25% Marsanne, fermented/aged in oak barrels and steel vats. A complex nose of cantaloupe melon, asparagus, apple, lime, freshly-cut grass and garrigue herbs - and like its predecessor vintage, with some nutty, honeyed notes. The palate again offers spiced citrus and apple flavours, with notes of garrigue herbs and spice, with just a hint of grape tannin. There's also a touch of saline/savoury minerality, which is offset by ample acidity. 13.0% abv.

#### **Minna Vineyard Blanc 2013 IGP Bouches du Rhône**

**£21.95**

47% Vermentino, 24% Roussanne, 29% Marsanne, fermented/aged in oak barrels and steel vats. A delicate but expressive array of spring flowers, citrus, apple, oregano and thyme greets the nose, with subtle hints of lime oil and clove in the background. The palate is equally delicate and complex, offering a really focused, cool, herby, almost minty mouth-feel. It is beautifully rounded, with plenty of fresh apple and citrus-tinged fruit, the merest hint of pepper/spice, perfectly judged acidity and a long, tangy finish. It is unusual for a white from a relatively hot climate to feel so fresh and vivacious as this. 12.0% abv.

### **Red:**

#### **Minna Vineyard Rouge 2012 Vin de Pays des Bouches du Rhône**

**£21.95**

50% Syrah, 32% Cabernet Sauvignon, 18% Mourvedre. The nose is complex, expressive and wonderfully herby/spicy, displaying raspberry and red cherry fruit aromas, intermingled with notes of thyme and oregano, cumin and clove, not to mention little hints of freshly-baked bread, orange peel, vanilla, damp earth and polished old wood. The palate is on the medium side of full-bodied and beautifully focused, offering bright, fresh, spiced red fruit flavours, again laced with garrigue herbs and just the merest hint of oak, with wonderfully ripe, lapsang tea-like tannins and cracking acidity. The result is a gorgeously tangy, sweet-sour wine, so elegant to be almost soft and easy to drink already, but with enough grip and structure to ensure it will evolve nicely for a good 5 to 10 more years. 13.5% abv.

#### **Minna Vineyard Rouge 2013 Vin de Pays des Bouches du Rhône**

**£21.95**

39% Syrah, 39% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Mourvedre. Again, the nose is complex, expressive and herby/spicy, with raspberry and red cherry fruit aromas and a hint of cassis, notes of garrigue herbs, mint, soft curry spices, sous bois and polished wood. And once again, the palate is medium-to-full-bodied, offering bright, fresh, spicy, herb-infused red fruit flavours, little bready/brioche notes, a hint of licorice, the deffest lick of oak, ripe, tea-like tannins and excellent acidity. And as with the 2012, it certainly possesses the structure to age and evolve for 5 to 10 more years. Another beautifully crafted and classy wine. 13.0% abv.

# SOUTH-WEST FRANCE

In terms of viticulture, the region known broadly as South-West France covers a range of relatively small appellations, dotted around the area between Bordeaux, the Pyrenées, Languedoc and the Dordogne. Although we have yet to cover many of these appellations on our list (Cahors, Bergerac and Gaillac spring to mind) we do have the two “jewels in the crown” of the South-West – Madiran and Jurançon. The former is known for its big, rich, tannic red wines, made principally from the Tannat variety, whilst the latter is famed for both its steely-dry white table wines and its luscious, tangy dessert wines, both made from the Gros and Petit Manseng varieties.

## **DOMAINE DE MONTESQUIOU – MONEIN (BIODYNAMIC)**

We discovered Domaine de Montesquiou on our 2006 trip to the Jurançon region, on the fringes of the Pyrenées, just south of Pau. It is a very small estate, with just 5 hectares under vine, and all of the wines are made from grapes grown using biodynamic viticulture (depending on your viewpoint, either an enhanced or an extreme version of organic farming). The estate has been handed down through successive generations, from father to son, for over 200 years. The current winemaker is Fabrice Bordenave-Montesquieu, a talented young man with a great future in winemaking. The wines are made from the local grape varieties of Gros Manseng and Petit Manseng, and they really are seriously good. The dry wines are fresh, young, dry and zingy, yet with a hint of richness and great mineral depth. The sweet wines are brilliant – indeed, the Grappe d’Or is nothing short of sensational. These really are quite stunning wines, and may just offer the best value for money on our entire list. We urge you to try them.

### Dry white:

#### **L’Estela 2017 Jurançon Sec**

**£10.99**

50% Gros Manseng, 10% Petit Manseng and 40% Courbu. A complex array of cut lime, orange peel, nettle and hay aromas - at the same time prickly, gently smoky, herby and with an almost palpable wet stone minerality. It is delightfully intense on the palate, yet wonderfully fresh and mouth-watering, with abundant herby, zesty, soft citrus and apple flavours, whilst a hint of peach adds a little depth and richness to a wine that is otherwise bone-dry. With bracing acidity, massive length and considerable complexity and elegance, it simply crackles with vitality. 13.5% abv.

#### **Cuvade Précieuse 2016 Jurançon Sec**

**£13.25**

60% Gros Manseng, 30% Petit Manseng and 10% Camaralet, aged in oak barrels for 11 months. An evocative nose, full of prickly lime, lemon and herby aromas, an abundance of wet stone minerality and just the merest hint of oak, which is actually less prominent than in some vintages of this cuvée, which allows the fruit to express itself even more. And the palate certainly lives up to the billing, with everything melding together in perfect harmony. It bites, yet at the same time caresses, with bucket loads of white fruit and citrus flavours, wrapped around an immense core of steely, stony minerality and mouth-watering acidity. It all falls together so beautifully and keeps you coming back for more. 14.0% abv.

#### **Terre de France 2014 Vin de France**

**£12.95**

65% Gros Manseng, 35% Petit Manseng and 5% Camaralet, aged in oak barrels for 11 months. The nose offers masses of honeyed, sweet-smelling quince and apricot aromas, laced with aromatic herbs and spices, orange blossom, honeysuckle and a judicious lick of oak. And yet it still has that lifted lime oil and mineral quality so typical of Jurançon Sec - you can literally smell the acidity and immense freshness, even before you take a sip. Indeed, for a wine with such immense concentration it really is quite staggeringly juicy and refreshing, with barely a hint of alcohol, and the most complex array of flavours you are ever likely to encounter in a young, dry white wine. It manages to combine the same zesty lime/orange fruit, herb and spice qualities as Cuvade Précieuse, not to mention similar levels of acidity and minerality, whilst achieving perhaps even more depth and elegance. It really is utterly wonderful and more-ish. And at the price, a really quite remarkable bargain! 14.5% abv.

### Sweet white:

#### **Amistat 2015 Jurançon**

**£12.95**

100% Gros Manseng. The nose is surprisingly complex, with aromas of quince, papaya, fresh root ginger and brioche. The texture is at the same time luscious and utterly mouth-watering. An attack of bitter-sweet citrus and crystallised white fruits gives way to a wonderfully tangy, semi-dry mid-palate, followed by a long, lingering, tangy, spiced orange marmalade finish. In the hierarchy of Montesquiou's sweet wines, this is strictly speaking the "entry level", and whilst the Gros Manseng is perhaps a touch more rustic than the noble Petit Manseng of Grappe d’Or, it is somewhat of a mini-masterpiece. 13.0% abv.

#### **Grappe d’Or 2016 Jurançon**

**£16.99**

100% Petit Manseng. The nose has everything, from tangy lemon and lime oil, baked apples and apricots, through to mango, ginger and exotic spices and herbs. The palate hits you with a mouthful of rich, semi-sweet apricot and peach flavours, and all manner of fresh and preserved citrus and tree fruit flavours, with an incredible wave of nervy acidity and steely minerality, followed by a warm, spice and ginger hit at the end. The sweetness and purity of fruit, perfectly married to that amazing acidity and length makes for something quite memorable, and more than the sum of its parts. 13.0% abv

#### **Vendange Tardives 2011 Jurançon**

**£27.50**

100% Petit Manseng. Several more notches up the ripeness scale, this really is a wonderfully concentrated wine, pure 24 carat gold in colour, with a nose that possesses everything that Grappe d’Or has, along with candied fruits of all descriptions and colours and notes of toasted almonds, diesel and woodsmoke, basil and oregano. A hint of honey even suggests a touch of botrytis (on both the nose and palate) whilst the acidity is definitely more tangerine and seville orange than the lemon/lime of its sibling - still wonderfully bracing and tangy, but richer and fuller, and with all sorts of apple crumble, honeycomb, raisin and mixed spice things going on. 13.0% abv.

## **DOMAINE DU GARINET – LE BOULVÉ, CAHORS**

Owners Mike and Sue Spring are British - which just goes to show that there are yet more "outsiders" making wine in the south of France than even we were aware of! All of the red wines are made from 100% Malbec, and whilst they are made in a fairly traditional style, there are clearly sympathetic hands at work here, for these wines have plenty of fruit and considerable charm.

### **Classique Malbec 2008 Cahors**

**£13.30**

100% Malbec, aged in vat. Whilst at the same time gently herby and really rather floral, it is also abundantly fruity, with delightful redcurrant and bramble aromas, along with secondary notes of spiced orange, blackcurrant leaf, cedar and tobacco. The medium-bodied palate shows real elegance, with a mix of tangy wild strawberry and cherry fruit flavours, a subtle herbiness, supple tannins and juicy acidity. Nothing sticks out, and one could easily drink a glass or two for its own sake, though it is equally good as a food wine. 13.5% abv.

## **BURGUNDY**

The undisputed home of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. We all know how expensive the wines of the Côte d'Or have become – therefore, look to the Mâconnais, in the south of the region, for increasingly high quality white and red wines. Gamay makews dome pretty fine stuff, too , which can be more than a match for the top Crus of nearby Beaujolais.

### **DOMAINE GUILLOT-BROUX – CRUZILLE (ORGANIC/BIODYNAMIC)**

Although the Guillot family have been making wines in Cruzille since 1954, it wasn't until 1978 that Jean-Gérard Guillot established Domaine Guillot-Broux with his wife Jacqueline, starting out with little more than a hectare of vines. By 1991 the estate was expanded to include further vineyards, together with the granting of official organic certification. At the same time, Jean-Gérard's sons Ludovic and Patrice began working for the estate. Another son, Emmanuel returned to the estate in 2000. Following the death of Jean-Gérard in 2008, Emmanuel took over the reins as head winemaker. The estate now comprises around 15 hectares, with a number of small vineyards in the Mâconnais villages of Cruzille, Grevilly, Pierreclos and Chardonnay (which some say is the origin of the Chardonnay grape variety).

Most of the vineyards are situated on east-facing slopes on clay-limestone soil, except for the 60-90 year-old Gamay vines in Pierreclos, which are grown on granite soil with a south-facing aspect. The Guillots only use natural methods of fighting parasites and disease, using a combination of ploughing, organic fertilisers (to feed the soil and not the vines), and organically-acceptable mineral sprays (copper and sulphites). They believe that respecting the soil in this way allows the vines to absorb all the elements they need to be healthy and balanced, thus producing healthy, balanced wines. In other words, to maintain the right balance rather than treat the consequences. Indeed, as well as being the oldest organic grower in Burgundy, the estate is essentially farmed (though not certified) according to numerous biodynamic principles. All of the grapes are hand-picked, and then sorted in the vines before going to the winery. The different varieties are vinified differently, depending on the type of terroir, the vintage and the age of the vines. Fermentation is completed without the addition of cultured yeasts, whilst the use of SO2 and chaptalisation are kept to a strict minimum.

### **Red:**

#### **La Myotte 2012 Bourgogne**

**£23.95**

100% Pinot Noir. A complex, perfumed nose, combining red summer fruits, white pepper and spice, with subtle woody and earthy notes, with hints of redcurrant, old leather and woodsmoke. Waves of tangy cherry and redcurrant fruit nuances, violets and fruit blossom, with a hint of fine white pepper for good measure. It simply exudes elegance, in an almost feminine way, embracing rather than squeezing, as do the tannins, which are fine and gently grippy, whilst the most gloriously juicy acidity carries the flavours all the way through to a long, lingering finish. At the risk of labouring the point, this really is \*proper\* red Burgundy. 12.5% abv.

# LE LOIR

The Jasnières white wines of Le Loir are - like Touraine to the south - based on Chenin Blanc (sometimes known locally as Pineau Blanc de La Loire). The Coteaux du Loir reds are based on a fairly obscure variety called Pineau d'Aunis - which is rather confusingly also known locally as Chenin Noir! Gamay also gets a look in, either as part of the blend of Coteaux du Loir or as simple Vin de France. I'm not sure of its origins (and I have yet to look it up) but Pineau d'Aunis actually has more in common with Pinot Noir than anything else, both aromatically and in flavour/structure - lighter in body, and invariably with a peppery bite, but still with a profile that every Burgundy aficionado would recognise. It certainly won't appeal to everyone, but it certainly puts a smile on our faces these days.

## **DOMAINE DES GAULETTERIES – RUILLE-SUR-LOIR**

Domaine de Gauletteries is located on the banks of the River Loir, between Le Mans and Tours, and covers the villages Ruillé-sur-Loir and Lhomme, in the Sarthe region. Reynald and Francine Lelais have been making wine in the village of Ruillé since 1984, and are the fifth generation of winegrowers in the family. They currently farm 16.8 hectares of vineyards, with 14.5 ha of Jasnières and 2.3 ha of Coteaux du Loir.

### White:

#### **Tradition 2014 Jasnières**

**£12.95**

100% Chenin Blanc. Limpid pale gold, with orange glints. What a lovely nose - cut limes and pink grapefruit, with hints of spiced apple, fresh root ginger, orange blossom and classic Loir(e) Chenin wet stone minerality. Along with the citrus notes, there's an enticing whiff of something sweeter, more honeyed, which carries through on the palate and lends a touch of richness to what is otherwise an essentially dry wine - "tendre sec", if you like, with perhaps just a gram or two of residual sugar. It really is an attractive and very more-ish style of wine, chock full of soft citrus and dessert apple flavours, and a tantalising hint of herby/saline savouriness, but with that hint of richness being more than offset by laser-like acidity and earthy minerality. It really is a quite beautifully-crafted wine, and utterly delicious to drink now, though I suspect it will age and evolve for another 5 to 10 years or more. 12.5% abv.

## **DOMAINE GIGOU – LA CHARTRE-SUR-LE-LOIR**

The Gigou family have been making wine in the region for over 40 years - Joel and his wife Sylvie created the estate in 1974, with son Ludovic becoming part of the team in 1998 and daughter Dorothy joining a few years ago. Domaine Gigou is without doubt one of the most respected and traditional growers in Le Loir, producing a range of dry and semi-sweet Chenin Blanc white wines and some deliciously quirky, fruity, spicy, sappy wines from both Pinot d'Aunis and Gamay. They farm a dozen or so hectares of vines, from various vineyards dotted around the region, on a variety of soils/terroirs. They farm organically (indeed, they also employ various biodynamic principles) and use only the natural yeasts on the grapes for fermentation. The wines are aged in vaulted troglodyte caves (typical of the Loire valley) in a mix of stainless steel vats and very old oak and chestnut barrels, and are bottled and released only when they are ready to drink - or at least approachable, for they will age for a good few years, especially the whites.

According to Richard Kelley MW (undoubtedly one of the most respected authorities on the wines of Le Loir and La Loire) *"The Gigou's wines are the epitome of the old, traditional style of Jasnières, and they are justifiably proud of the fact. They are the reference point for this style of wine in the region and ..... are great ambassadors for these two appellations."* Enough said!

### Red:

#### **Cuvée Gigou'T Gamay 2009 Vin de France**

**£11.95**

100% Gamay. Although this is 100% Gamay, the resemblance to a minor Burgundy Pinot Noir is uncanny. I guess that has something to do with the traditional maceration (rather than carbonic) and the more northerly climate in which this is grown. Quite a deep colour, with a nose of raspberry and soured black cherry and hints of black pepper and undergrowth. The palate is superficially light and airy, with abundant red and black fruit flavours, plenty of tangy, cherry kernel acidity, just the right level of rustic tannic grip and a gentle peppery, stoney/mineral bite. It isn't a particularly serious wine, but it hit all the right notes when tasted on a pleasant late summer's evening - and was a great match for a barbecued steak and new potatoes with a tomato and green salad. A deliciously light, airy, food-friendly wine. 13.0% abv.

### White:

#### **Jus de Terre 2013 Jasnières**

**£12.50**

100% Chenin Blanc. Medium yellow/gold colour with a slight orange hue. A nose of apple and citrus, with hints of honey and nuts, intense slatey minerality, wet straw and perhaps even the merest suggestion of botrytis - a classic Chenin Blanc nose, full of complexity. There is real ripeness here, but the palate is pretty much bone dry, with citrus and apple fruit flavours countered again by intense minerality and deliciously searing acidity. And that slight hint of botrytis adds a touch of contrariness to the proceedings, whilst the finish is long and tangy. A lovely, classic, old-style Chenin. 12.2% abv.

### **Clos Saint Jacques 2013 Jasnières**

**£14.30**

100% Chenin Blanc. Bright, medium-deep orange/gold colour. The nose offers complex white fruit, citrus, honey and floral aromas, with a pronounced herbaceousness and hints of lanolin and emulsion paint. The palate is beautifully clean, tight and focused, almost bone dry, with intense, juicy, lemon, lime and gooseberry fruit and equally intense, steely minerality. It really is a most wonderfully mouth(and eye!)-watering wine, certainly not lacking in ripeness, but made in a traditional, bone-dry style. The faint-hearted may find it somewhat austere, but I find it dangerously drinkable (with or without food), although it certainly has the structure to age for years, if not decades. The more I sip it, the more I love it! Long too. Another brilliant, old-style Chenin. 12.0% abv.

### **Sweet White:**

### **Sélection Raisins Nobles 2010 Jasnières**

**£19.99**

100% Chenin Blanc. classic late-harvest Chenin Blanc aromas of lime oil, bruised apple, raisin and orange peel, accompanied by pronounced wet stone and wet wool notes and subtle hints of preserved root ginger and beeswax. I'm not sure how much botrytis the 2010 vintage enjoyed, but I suspect this is more in the way of passerillé (grapes dried on the vine) because, whilst the texture is rich and gently honeyed, it is tremendously focused and tightly-structured. With a fair amount of residual sugar, the palate falls somewhere between demi-sec and moelleux. Layer upon layer of preserved white fruits, honey, lime oil and mandarin orange coat the tongue, with the oily/honeyed texture offset by a massive layer of stoney minerality and fantastically eye-watering apple/citrus-tinged acidity. The combination of - or perhaps the contrast between - lush, sweet, raisined fruit, mineral tang and elevated acidity really is something to behold, and makes for a wonderfully contrary wine, with a long, lingering, spicy, bitter-sweet finish. An outstandingly brilliant wine, which will probably be even greater in another 10-20 years - and certainly a match for the very best sweet wines of La Loire. . 12.5% abv.

## **About us**

Leon Stolarski Fine Wines is dedicated to seeking out wines of quality and individuality that will give great drinking pleasure to lovers of fine wine, at sensible prices. We value our customers and want them to return again, so we only sell wines that we ourselves are happy to drink – and we do indeed drink them regularly, which enables us to keep track of how they are developing. We do not stock “agency” wines – that is to say, we import most of our wines directly from the growers. Furthermore, most of our wines are difficult to find (and in some cases unavailable) elsewhere in the U.K. Therefore, please tell your friends about us, and help our company to grow. That way, we can continue to expand our list, and bring you more great wines from many other regions of France and the rest of Europe.

### **Making a purchase**

The bulk of our orders are taken via our website at [www.lsfnewines.co.uk](http://www.lsfnewines.co.uk) where our customers can use our full online ordering and payment facilities. However, we are happy to process orders over the telephone, if you prefer. Since we are a small, family run company, it is not possible to have our telephone manned at all times. However, if nobody is available when you call, you can leave a message and we will return your call, as quickly as possible. A further option is to e-mail us, should you want advice, or just to discuss an order. Whichever way you wish to contact us, feel free – we’re always happy to talk!

### **Terms and Conditions / Delivery**

All prices displayed are U.K excise duty-paid, and include VAT at 20%. There is no minimum requirement for the number of bottles, but purchases for mail order must exceed £75 plus the delivery charge (£7.50\*). We endeavour to despatch all orders within two working days (but often just one day) of receipt of the order. Delivery in the Nottingham area is free. Full [terms and conditions](#) are displayed on our website. A printed version is available on request. Delivery is to mainland U.K addresses\* only, and we charge £7.50 per delivery, for orders up to £200. Orders over £200 are delivered free of charge\*. All local orders (i.e. within a 12 mile radius of Nottingham) are delivered free.

**\*Delivery to Highlands and Islands is considerably more expensive, and will be charged at cost – please call us for a quote.**

### **Orders and payment**

We accept most major credit and debit cards (Visa, Mastercard, Switch, Solo etc) or cheque with guarantee card. We can accept payment in cash, but only for orders within the Nottingham area. Please do not send cash through the post.

### **Trade and bulk order enquiries**

We cater for wedding and party wines and also supply to restaurants, pubs, shops and other areas of the trade, and are always happy to discuss your requirements. Please contact us for further details. We offer free delivery in mainland U.K (subject to orders being over £200). We do not publish a trade price list as such, but will be happy to discuss discounts for trade orders of any significant quantity – call us anytime, for a quote. Payment on trade orders is “with order” in the first instance, and 30 days after delivery, for any subsequent orders. If you are likely to want to make a reasonably-sized order of any of our wines, we will consider sending samples. For trade enquiries in the Nottingham area, we will be happy to bring samples personally to your establishment for tasting.

### **Tasting events for groups**

Our tasting events have become very popular – so much so that we are often invited back for repeat visits. These events can be booked for any size of group, from a dozen to 100 or more. We are happy to advise on what wines to put into your line-up, based on the size of your group, the number and style of wines and, of course, your required budget. We charge retail prices for the wines, plus (if the event is more than 20 miles from Nottingham) reasonable fuel costs (not a per mile figure) for the return journey. Our time and enthusiasm comes absolutely free! We can also provide ISO tasting glasses, if required. Call 0115 9529387 or email [leonstolarski@lsfinewines.co.uk](mailto:leonstolarski@lsfinewines.co.uk) for further details.

### **Further information**

If you require any further information on any of our wines, please visit our web site at [www.lsfnewines.co.uk](http://www.lsfnewines.co.uk) or e-mail us at [sales@lsfinewines.co.uk](mailto:sales@lsfinewines.co.uk) or, if you do not have access to the Internet, call us on 0115 952 9387. Full terms and conditions are displayed on our website. A printed version is available on request.

### **Finally**

If you like our wines, then please tell all your wine-loving friends, colleagues and family about us, and help us become better known!