A high-angle photograph of a stone archway built into a cliffside. The arch frames a view of a river with a rocky island in the center. To the left of the arch, a stone tower with a pyramidal roof stands on a rocky outcrop. The water is clear and blue, reflecting the surrounding landscape. The overall scene is a mix of natural rock formations and ancient stone architecture.

WINES OF THE  
LANGUEDOC-ROUSSILLON

CHEVALIER

MARCH 2020



## 2019 CORBIÈRES ROSÉ “GRIS DE GRIS”

◆ DOMAINE DE FONTSAINTE \$18

DEEP IN THE CORBIÈRES APPELLATION, in the heart of the esteemed sub-zone of Boutenac, the Laboucarié family of Domaine de Fontsaïnte has earned a following for their light, crisp rosé of direct-press Grenache Gris. The 2019 edition provides all the euphoria we have come to expect from the wine’s flawless track record of thirty-plus years of thirst-quenching delight. Bright and crisp, with an appetizing color that glimmers seductively in the glass, the 2019 delivers a fragrant burst of juicy citrus, *fraises des bois*, and orange blossom before a delicate, finely etched mineral finish cleanses and stimulates the palate.



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## 2018 LANGUEDOC BLANC “SAINTE AGNÈS”

◆ ERMITAGE DU PIC SAINT LOUP \$26

HERE IS ONE of southern France’s most amazing values in white wine. A Roussanne-dominated blend grown at high altitude in limestone atop the Pic Saint Loup and aged in *foudres*, this country white shows so much class and is so lively you will be blown away. In addition to the relatively cool *terroir*, the Ravaille brothers’ passion for biodynamic farming undoubtedly contributes to this wine’s surprising nerve and verve. It has enough stony freshness to keep your palate sharp and will even improve for several years in the cellar. This dry white is truly a hidden treasure of southern France.



## 2018 LANGUEDOC *BLANC* “LES COCALIÈRES”

◆ DOMAINE D'AUPILHAC \$38

THE LANGUEDOC is certainly not known for its white wines, but planting the right grapes in the right site can yield great results. Retaining freshness is the crucial determinant here, as the hot meridional climate favors low acidity, and grapes like Marsanne and Grenache Blanc are lacking in natural acidity to begin with. At 350 meters above sea level, Les Cocalières experiences diurnal temperature shifts crucial to preserving this acid, while the northwestern sun exposure prevents excessive ripeness and correspondingly flabby wines. The vineyard also boasts a curious and unusual soil: the land was once a lake that formed after the eruption of an ancient volcano, resulting in a mixture of limestone and basalt—a rare geological phenomenon.

Sylvain Fadat, founder of Domaine d'Aupilhac, ferments the juice wild and ages the wine for more than a year in neutral casks, where it completes its malolactic fermentation before an unfiltered bottling. The Cocalières *blanc* perfectly reflects its *terroir*: taut, mineral—almost salty—and suggestive of the wild thyme and fennel that grow abundantly around the vines. It also has tremendous aging potential; a 2002 opened recently showed astonishing complexity, reminiscent of honey, almonds, wildflowers, and liquid rocks.

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## 2018 COLLIOURE *ROUGE* “PUIG AMBEILLE”

◆ DOMAINE LA TOUR VIEILLE \$30

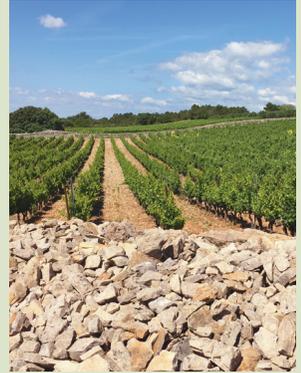
COLLIOURE is one of the most difficult areas in the world to cultivate grapes. Its impossibly steep, inhospitable schist slopes, which plunge into the Mediterranean near Spain's border, cannot be mechanized. Gnarled vines twist from the harsh, windswept landscape of pure bedrock. Known primarily for its fortified sweet wines and traditional oxidative *rancio* bottlings, this coastal haven is also home to unique reds. Mourvèdre, Grenache, and Carignan thrive with patient care, cleansed by the salty sea air. Vincent Cantié of La Tour Vieille is an artist from another era, eking out masterpieces from these foreboding, beautiful hills. A classic southern French red, this cuvée has the attitude and spiciness you'd expect from a full-blooded Catalan.



## 2017 SAINT-CHINIAN ROUGE “CLOS DE LA SIMONETTE”

◆ MAS CHAMPART \$40

IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE that Isabelle and Mathieu Champart set up shop back in 1976. They still seem as young and enthusiastic as ever, and they must have a good laugh when they think of all the banks that refused to follow their endeavor, telling them there was no future in their little corner of the Languedoc. Not only did they make quite a future out of it, they became the hands-down benchmark of Saint-Chinian by which all others are judged. A single swirl and sniff of this Mourvèdre-majority beauty is all it takes to see what forty-four years



of experience can bring to the table. From a striking parcel surrounded by dry-stone walls made from the calcareous debris that litters the vineyard floor, this cuvée puts Saint-Chinian on the map next to Bandol, Faugères, and the other great southern appellations. You'll find lots of pleasure and even more soul.

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## 2015 PAYS D'HÉRAULT ROUGE

◆ DOMAINE DE LA GRANGE DES PÈRES \$125

JUST SOUTH OF ANIANE, near Montpellier, there is a vigneron so focused on his pursuit of perfection that he consistently produces some of the greatest wines in all of France. In the age of social media and self-marketing, Laurent Vaillé of Domaine de la Grange des Pères is a rare breed: practically a hermit, who doesn't use email, mostly ignores the phone, and rarely answers questions in more than one sentence, this farmer almost only works in his vines, uninterrupted on his quest to perfect the translation of his grapes and their *terroir*. Early in his career, Vaillé trained at some of France's best wine addresses: Coche-Dury, Chave, and Trévallon. Now, a few decades later, he has earned his place alongside them in the pantheon of France's most talented vignerons.

Laurent planted his vineyard from scratch after dynamiting and bulldozing the land clear of boulders and limestone—an onerous task that proves his strong belief in the potential of Aniane's *terroir*. Since harvesting his first vintage in 1992, he has proven his critics wrong and amassed an impressive cult-like following for his stunningly complex and long-lived wines. Thrilling to taste now, this majestic red will deliver even more down the road, leaving you with a singular, unforgettable experience when you ultimately decide to pop the cork.



2019 Corbières Rosé "Gris de Gris" <i>Domaine de Font Sainte</i>	90% Grenache Gris, 5% Carignan, 5% Mourvèdre	50-year-old vines, on average  Silica, clay, limestone	Serve <i>cold</i> 48–52° F  Do not decant	Nectarine, wild strawberry, melon  Succulent, zingy, mouthwatering, delicate	Drink now
2018 Languedoc Blanc "Sainte Agnès" <i>Ermitage du Pic Saint Loup</i>	50% Roussanne, 30% Grenache Blanc and Gris, 15% Marsanne, 5% Clairette	15- to 18-year-old vines  Clay, limestone, dolomite	Serve <i>cold</i> 50–54° F  Decant optional	Anise, lychee, yellow peach  Creamy, mouth-filling, nervy	Drink now through 2025
2018 Languedoc Blanc "Les Cocalières" <i>Domaine d'Aupilhac</i>	30% Roussanne, 30% Vermentino, 20% Grenache Blanc, 20% Marsanne	Vines planted 1999–2002  Limestone, basalt	Serve <i>cold</i> 50–54° F  Decant optional	Wildflowers, fennel, stone fruit  Saline, waxy, taut, persistent	Drink now through 2030
2018 Collioure Rouge "Puig Ambeille" <i>Domaine La Tour Vieille</i>	80% Mourvèdre, 10% Grenache, 10% Carignan	25- to 45-year-old vines  Schist	Serve <i>slightly cool</i> 60–64° F  Decant optional	Spices, violets, dried herbs, dusty earth  Supple, medium-bodied, accessible	Drink now through 2025
2017 Saint-Chinian Rouge "Clos de la Simonette" <i>Mas Champart</i>	65% Mourvèdre, 20% Grenache, 15% Carignan	Grenache and Mourvèdre: 15–25 years, Carignan: 60–110 years  Marl, clay, limestone	Serve <i>slightly cool</i> 60–64° F  Decant 1–2 hours	Blackberry, black cherry, game  Inky, chewy, palate-staining, stony	Drink now through 2035
2015 Pays d'Hérault Rouge <i>Domaine de la Grange des Pères</i>	40% Syrah, 40% Mourvèdre, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Counoise	15- to 20-year-old vines  Glacial scree, limestone	Serve <i>slightly cool</i> 60–64° F  Decant 1–2 hours	Tobacco, lavender, plum, red and black fruit  Rich, deep, voluptuous, majestic	Drink now through 2040

*front cover:* The Pont du Diable, a Languedoc landmark, just north of Aniane. © GAIL SKOFF

*back cover:* Sylvain Fadat in his Cocalières vineyard.

© GAIL SKOFF

*far left, top:* The harvest team at Font Sainte.

© DOMAINE DE FONT SAINTE

*far left, bottom:* Barrel aging at Ermitage du Pic Saint Loup.

© ERMITAGE DU PIC SAINT LOUP

*middle:* Collioure. © ANTHONY LYNCH

*near left:* Clos de la Simonette and its limestone.

© ANTHONY LYNCH

*map:* EVAN WINSLOW SMITH

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# The Making of A GREAT LANGUEDOC CUVÉE

Domaine d'Aupilhac's Cocalières Blanc

**LES CÉPAGES** Choosing grape varieties well adapted to the local conditions—in this case, Roussanne, Vermentino, Grenache Blanc, and Marsanne—ensures balance, complexity, and an authentic expression of place in the final blend.

## ELEVATION/EXPOSURE

High altitude and northwestern exposure temper the Languedoc sun. In a hot climate, freshness is key.

## LE VIGNERON

A great *vigneron* brings out the best in his *terroir*—for Sylvain, this means organic viticulture and low-intervention cellar practices.

**SOIL** Poor, rocky soils ensure good drainage and low yields. Here, limestone and basalt bring complexity and minerality.

## ENVIRONMENT

Abundant sunshine, timely rains, and cleansing winds play a crucial role, while herbs of the *garrigue* infuse the grapes with their inimitable spicy fragrance.

