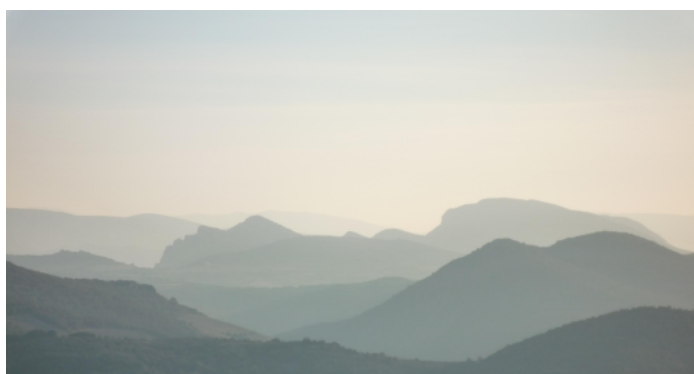




LE SOULA

Vin du Fenouillèdes - Terroir d'altitude



Revue de presse

2015

The World of Fine Wine

Andrew Jefford, Alex Hunt MW & Charles Metcalfe

2015 Issue 48

**Le Soula Vin de Pays des Côtes
Catalanes 2009** (14% ABV)**16**

AH | Deep gold/amber in color, this wine is showing its age. The nose has some agreeable salty tang to it, but the impression is dulled compared to the [Domaine Gauby Coume Gineste Vin de Pays des Côte Catalanes 2011]. The palate, however, is still brimming with life, with a bready/yeasty component that complements the dried-peach fruit. Dry, savory, balanced, and characterful, there is still much to recommend here. | **15.5**

AJ | Full yellow-gold, but it is a 2009. Rather “candy crush” on the aromas; evolved, but was it wise policy to keep? A touch oxidized, in truth. A little bit heavy and monotonous in flavor, though there is plenty of flavor and it has the Catalanian flavors of straw, wild flowers, powdery stone. Solid, well-crafted wine, but I would have preferred it with a little more youthful vitality. | **13.5**

CM | Full yellow-gold in color, this has obviously had longer in bottle than most wines here. The nose is savory and opulent, with the fruit aromas running from lemon to melon and even to pineapple. The acidity is excellent and well balances all this opulent fruit. Very rich, exotic white, which could easily fulfill the function of a red at table. Gloriously opulent, with complexity, stature, and presence. | **19**

Money Week

Matthew Jukes

28th August 2015

2009 Le Soula Blanc, Les Fenouillèdes, Vin de Pays des Côtes Catalanes, France

(£23.95, *Uncorked* tel. 020 7638 5998; £22.45, *Berry Bros. & Rudd* tel. 0800 280 2440).

You simply must taste this celestial creation. I met up with Mark Walford, gourmet aesthete and fine wine expert, the other day for lunch and he brought with him two bottles of his own wine, 2009 Le Soula white and 2010 Le Soula red (£24.95, Berry Bros. & Rudd tel. 0800 280 2440) – both were exquisite. I wrote the 2008 vintage of the red up on this very page four years ago. This time it is the turn of the wild, fascinating and thoroughly rewarding white. Made from an absurdly complex blend of Sauvignon Blanc, Macabeu, Grenache Blanc, Chardonnay, Malvoisie du Roussillon, Grenache Gris, Vermentino, Marsanne, Roussanne this is a wonderful amalgam of nuance and sleight of hand. Ultra-organic, lightly oaked and fairly rich this is a wine which is shaped like a white Burgundy, but whose flavours are nothing short of kaleidoscopic. You might expect a six year old white wine to be showing its age, but this wine looked fit, pale and shimmering with energy and youthful vigour. In short, it is bizarrely mesmerising. As a postscript the 2010 Le Soula Rouge (£24.95, BBR) is a Carignan, Syrah and Grenache Noir blend made from old bush vines and it is another fascinating flavour conundrum.

<http://www.matthewjukes.com/2015/08/2009-le-soula-blanc-les-fenouilledes-vin-de-pays-des-cotes-catalanes-france/>

What to drink this week

Le Soula



Le Soula wines are respected and admired—for good reason, says Harry Eyres

Creating a new *cru* from land either never planted with vines or long abandoned must be one of the most exciting challenges the wine world can offer. The wine merchant Mark Walford—originally, in tandem with Roy Richards and guided by the guru of Roussillon wines Gérard Gauby—did exactly this in the high Agly valley inland from Perpignan. The result is Le Soula, certainly one of the most original French wine projects of the past 20 years, now served as a pouring wine at Le Gavroche, The Waterside Inn and other prestigious establishments.

Why you should be drinking it

I tasted the first commercial vintage of Le Soula, 2001, in white and red and was immediately struck by the quality and complexity of the white. In expansive form at a recent tasting lunch, Mr Walford said none of the wines he has made has yet fallen apart (at lunch, the 2002 white was magnificently complex and alive). The quality of Le Soula wines he singled out was 'freshness'. Since 2008, the wines have been made according to biodynamic principles by the thoughtful and sometimes paradoxical Gérard Standley; he seeks, and seems to be achieving, ever greater freshness and purity, while also experimenting on the wild side.

What to drink

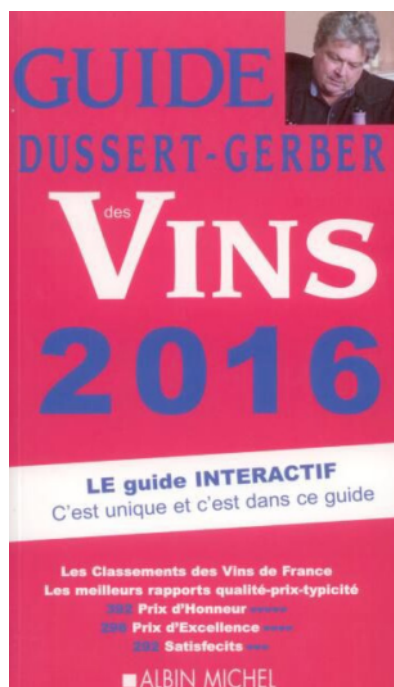
Le Soula Rouge 2010 (£24.95; www.bbr.com) is much more elegant and lifted than previous vintages, with lovely dark plum fruit and garrigue scents. Le Soula Blanc 2009 (right, £23.95; www.uncorked.co.uk) is still a baby, but, with its expressive herbal nose and satisfying rich texture, it promises great things.



Guide Dussert-Gerber des Vins 2016

Patrick Dussert-Gerber

2015



CLASSEMENT 2016 LANGUEDOC

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Corbières	Minervois Fitou Picpoul du Pinet Pic Saint-Loup	Languedoc Faugères Saint-Chinian	Côtes-du-Roussillon VDN IGP Divers
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1^{ers} GRANDS VINS CLASSÉS

ÉTANG DES COLOMBES (bl) GRAND CAUMONT GRAND MOULIN MARTINOLLE-GASPARETS	FABAS (bl) BARROUBIO BERTRAND-BERGÉ CLARMON COUPE-ROSES HERBE SAINTE PÉPUSQUE ROUDENE VIEILLE (PSL)	MIRE-L'ÉTANG (bl) MAS DU NOVI PEYREGRANDES (F) SAINT-MARTIN-CHAMPS CLOTTE FONTANE ESTABEL CABRIÈRES FAMILONGUE GUIZARD REYNARDIÈRE (F) CAVE ROQUEBRUN VALAMBELLE	DAUMAS-GASSAC (bl) BARTHE DOMAINE DE BELLEVUE CASA BLANCA MAS ROUS TERRES DE MALLYCE MODAT MOULINES GRESSAC Mas de MADAME
CASCADES (bl) MATTES-SABRAN SPENCER LA PUJADE	CAMBRIEL (bl) GRAND-ARC VIGN. CAMPLONG CANOS TRILLOL	CROIX CHAPTAL PECH DE LUNE ARGENTEILLE CLOS BELLEVUE BOUSQUETTE L'ESCATTES GRANDES COSTES MAS de CYNANQUE METEORE (F) SAUVAIRE	PLAINES-HAUTE PIÉTRI-GIRAUD SERRES (Malepère) LE SOULA

2^{es} GRANDS VINS CLASSÉS

FONTSAINT VIEUX-MOULIN AURIS (BORDE-ROUGE) (FONTFROIDE*) ROQUE-SESTIERE (SAINT-MICHEL Les CLAUSES)	LA GRAVE (bl)* PIQUE PERLOUP (bl) FAUZAN LAURIERS (PP) MAILLOLS	COSTEPLANE* FLAUGERGUES FONTAINE-MARCOUSSE GALTIER* KARANTES MADURA MARION PLA JORDY (LÉGENDES) (MAS NUY) MONTPLO	COUME DU ROY MAIRAN MILLE VIGNES MINGRAUT MAS DES QUIERNES RIVES-BLANQUES (CLOS SAINT-GEORGES) MONTANA LOUS GREZES
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3^{es} GRANDS VINS CLASSÉS

	(SAINT-JACQUES D'ALBAS)	(LA VERNÈDE)	(BOURDIC*) (Philippe NUSSWITZ*)
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Le Soula rouge 2010

au nez de griotte mûre, est un vin puissant et de bouche ferme, aux tanins présents, d'une belle harmonie et de très bonne garde

Le Soula blanc 2010

aux reflets verts avec des arômes de noix et d'agrumes, est ample et fin, persistant et aromatique, d'une belle finale fraîche mais puissante

Name game

FRANCE'S CHANGING APPELLATION SYSTEM
HAS DIVIDED OPINION IN THE LANGUEDOC.
CHRISTINE BOGGIS REPORTS



Rising prices have forced the Languedoc - the engine room of France's bulk wine production - to look at more premium offers and establish itself as a top-quality wine region, not a bargain basement.

Producers, agents and buyers have welcomed winemaking improvements and regions such as Terrasses du Larzac and La Clape are upgrading their appellations.

Many in the region are delighted by these developments, saying they are signals of improving quality and more structure helps to trade up consumers.

Advin UK export manager Cédric Deniset says: "Languedoc is building its own map of AOPs based on specific terroirs, and developing its identity as a quality region of production."

"We are seeing several multiple retailers begin to develop AOPs with their own-brand format. Some AOPs, such as Côtes du Roussillon, Pic St Loup and St Chinian have become attractive as they bring a point of difference from the standard Languedoc or Corbières AOP."

Badet Clement president and winemaker Laurent Delaunay agrees: "It is a really important development for enhancing the quality image of the Languedoc, as more terroirs are being given the recognition they deserve."

Les Grands Chais de France has switched its focus from IGP to AOP wines. Director Tim North says: "They make a nice point of difference. What is working best from the appellations is chateau and domaine wines, which offer a distinction for the wines more than just the AOP name."

Free Run Wines is putting all its focus on to AOPs from the region, and director Nicolas Bauer says varietal wines from southern France are no longer competitive compared with Spain, Italy and the New World.

"AOP wines from the Languedoc are finally starting to be recognised as a category of huge potential and breadth, while consumers and retailers are perhaps moving away from IGP," he says.

Isabelle Pangault, winemaker and brand ambassador for Les Vignobles Foncalieu, is seeing more UK consumers getting interested in Languedoc AOPs. She notes: "Picpoul de Pinet AOP was the first to follow that path in 2013. It became popular first on the French market and now in the UK and the US."

Coastal La Clape, a former island with limestone cliffs, is to become the Languedoc's first and only communal appellation.

Vianney Fabre, business manager of Château d'Anglès, which makes all its reds and whites under La Clape AOP, says: "It means that Languedoc

is finally getting structured, like Bordeaux, Burgundy or the Rhône, with some 'grands crus' - terroirs such as La Clape - and wider appellations.

"The main trend in the Languedoc is definitely to produce less and better. For the past 15 years amazing winemakers have come to showcase terroir that has outstanding potential, and today we see the first results of the new Languedoc age: true, serious wines with amazing value for money. I see fantastic potential for unoaked wines between £8-£12 and oaked ones for £15-£20. At these price points you can get unrivalled quality wines of terroir in the Languedoc."

For some, more subdivisions are not helping this diverse region to build up a coherent identity.

Katie Jones of Domaine Jones makes some of her wines under AOP Fitou, "because it is easy to pronounce and has a loyal following and well-established history in the UK". But she warns that breaking up the region into more "unpronounceable" AOPs will not help the Languedoc's overall image.

She says: "It's a case of running before you can walk. The big area of Sud de France has been created and the next logical level would be to try to raise awareness of the Languedoc. Other than the more familiar and longstanding Languedoc AOPs, such as Corbières, Minervois and Fitou, I don't think the majority of UK consumers are ready for further subdivisions of the Languedoc."

Jones adds: "Languedoc is the most rocking wine area in France, and there is great freedom in winemaking here. There is real opportunity, particularly with specialist and independent merchants, at the mid

to premium end. Innovative and creative winemakers are shaking themselves free from the restrictions of the classification system to be able to showcase interesting varieties and unusual and new styles under their own estate name rather than overcomplicate things with an AOP."

Thibault Lavergne, founder of agency Wine Story says: "There is a real aspiration for a simplified offer. The Languedoc is becoming a well-known name on foreign markets. It is now recognised as a southern French region, producing



Buyers place more confidence in the name of a trusted producer than in an appellation

high quality wines at very affordable prices. But I am not sure how many consumers would be familiar with Terrasses du Larzac, for instance.

"Terrasses du Larzac produces excellent wines and I am by no means trying to criticise it but, from a marketing point of view, is it necessarily a good idea to create a standalone appellation?"

"French officials should perhaps resist the temptation to give in to the lobbying of local politicians and keep the clarification of the offer in mind."

Stéphane Kandler, owner of Château Tourril, says: "The upside is the appellation system has helped to

raise the level and create new quality standards. The downside is that adding more appellations is going to confuse the consumer, which is not a good thing while the [retail] offer becomes richer with wines from all over the world. My bet is that it is more the individual names - of winemakers, châteaux or growers - which will make for commercial success."

Andrew Steel, owner of Connoisseur Estates, which distributes Château d'Anglès, says: "We recognise how important it is to differentiate the individual terroirs of the Languedoc - distances across the Languedoc are several hundred kilometres, so it is not all the same."

"However, the message must not become too complicated as it will only confuse consumers. We need clear and concise information for the public and the producers need to work together to promote the region."

"The Rhône is a great example of this. It has succeeded in having a very strong generic message for the whole region, while highlighting the different terroirs within that. The various regions of the Languedoc have a huge opportunity to fly the flag by working together as a family of wines, and vested interests should not stand in the way."

Mark Wallford, owner of Le Soula, says more growers are making wines under the overarching Vin de France appellation. "Buyers place more confidence in the name of a trusted producer than in an appellation."

And for Eric Monin, chief winemaker for Boutinot's Domaine de l'Olibet, IGP d'Oc still holds the most potential, "if we can have a good crop". He adds: "The current lack of grapes is still a problem in this regard."

LUCY CLEMENTS, PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT MANAGER FOR WINE, TESCO

BUYER'S VIEW



Have you listed new wines from the Languedoc recently?

Towards the end of 2014 we launched two Finest wines from the Languedoc into the range - Finest Fitou and Finest St Chinian. Even more recently we have added a new Minervois and a Côtes du Roussillon Villages into the range.

What trends are you seeing coming out of the Languedoc?

We have started to see much better use of oak, and more use of oak, which works well for our customers who already like New World and want to bridge the gap into French wines.

Les Terrasses du Larzac was made an official AOP last year, and La Clape is to be recognised as a communal appellation. What does this mean for the Languedoc as a region?

We love the wines from both of these regions and have been looking at them both for a while now. I am not sure that the AOP will make much difference to our customers - and obviously they are the focus when we are listing any new wines - but it is certainly an addition of credibility.

FRANCE UNDER ONE ROOF

THE ESSENTIALS

WHEN: Tuesday, March 24, 10am-5.30pm

WHERE: The Lindley Hall, Royal Horticultural Halls, Elverson Street, London SW1P 2QW

REGISTER: franceunderoneroof.co.uk

NAMES TO LOOK OUT FOR

WHAT'S NEW FROM THE LANGUEDOC?

■ **Copestick Murray** is planning to "shake up the whole French wine category" with a new range of wines from advertising mogul Sir John Hegarty's Minervois estate Hegarty Chamans

■ **Les Grands Chais de France** is releasing a dry rosé from newly acquired Château Fabregues in Costières de Nîmes

■ **Le Soula** is releasing a second vintage of its orange wine, Maceration de Soula

■ **Boutinot's Domaine de l'Olibet** is focusing on Grenache/Cinsault blends

■ **Château d'Anglès** in La Clape has bought 2ha of Vermentino to add to its Classique blend of Bourboulenc/Grenache Blanc/Roussanne/Marsanne

■ **Advin** is trying to boost distribution of brands from the better-known AOPs, such as Ormarine from Picpoul, Castelmaure from Corbières, La Gravette from Pic St Loup and Domaine de Fenouillet from Faugères



■ **Domaine Jones** has released Les Perles de Jones, a limited range of single-varietal wines made up of Macabeu, Carignan Gris, Carignan and Syrah, has bought two new vineyards in Fitou and is converting an old train shed in the village of Tuchan into a winery

■ **Château Tourril** is rationalising its range in a bid to grow export markets and is looking for a UK importer

■ **Wine Story** has launched Domaine de Nizas, from John Goelet, the winemaker behind Clos du Val in Napa and Taltarni and Clover Hill in Australia. It is based near Pézenas and has released four blends under various appellations

■ **Badet Clement** has added a new white wine to the Reserve range of its top-end Abbots & Delaunay Collection - a Vermentino/Marsanne/Roussanne blend. It is also releasing La Belle Angèle Sauvignon Blanc and Syrah in



bag-in-box for the summer, and has launched Clair de Rosé in the Les Jamelles range

■ **Free Run Wines** is moving away from varietal wines to focus on AOPs such as Cabardès, Faugères and Corbières, under the watch of Australian winemaker Richard Osborne

■ **Terra Hominis**, the first Languedoc wine company to raise cash through a crowdfunding initiative, is working on a project for young winemakers to plant the highest white vines in Faugères, and growing Domaine Montgros, a domaine funded solely by rugby players

■ **Les Vignobles Foncalieu** has given a new look to its super-premium L'Atelier Prestige range, and is working on Les Extraordinaire, an IGP Languedoc range of wines made with unusual grapes, blends or vinification techniques

Telegraph Magazine

Hamish Anderson

12nd September 2015



Hamish Anderson's tasting notes Languedoc-Roussillon whites

2014 Taste the Difference Languedoc Blanc £8, Sainsbury's Languedoc-Roussillon wines are dominated by red varieties. Look, though, and there are fascinating, rewarding whites. This is a blend of many of the most common varieties found across the region: grenache blanc, marsanne, vermentino and viognier. It is aromatic and full of character with fresh herbs and peach.

2014 Clos Bagatelle, Saint-Chinian £13.99, The Vineyard, Dorking (01306 876828) Saint-Chinian is to the west of Béziers. Though reds predominate, it makes wine of all three colours that are full of character and distinctly fresh. This is a blend of grenache blanc, roussanne and carignan blanc, perfumed with flowers and citrus, while savoury elements add complexity.

2009 Le Soula, Côtes Catalanes £23.95, uncorked.co.uk Le Soula's stupendous vineyards are in the foothills of the Pyrenees, west of Perpignan. Their altitude is key in delivering the amazing purity of this wine. Based on sauvignon blanc and augmented with local varieties, it is a powerful, full-bodied white with fresh fennel, apricot and exotic spice. Decant to revel in its full array of flavours.

The Code Bulletin n°123

www.code-london.co.uk

The eyes and ears of the Industry

22nd June 2015

Wine of the week

Le Soula Blanc 2010, Vin de Pays des Côtes Catalanes, France

Big impact white wine which knocked us sideways (in a good way) at a lunch at Medlar in Chelsea. Vines are grown organically and biodynamically at between 350-600 meters in Fenouillèdes, Roussillon, on granite soil near the Pyrénées. Fleshy, rich, gorgeously layered multi-varietal white made with Macabeu, Grenache Blanc, Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Malvoisie and Vermentino - a vinous smack around the chops.

Importer: fmvwines.com

@fmvwines

Available: medlarrestaurant.co.uk

@MedlarChelsea

Wine of the week presented by Bitten & Written