

Winemaker: Leo Guillaumou
Generation: 3rd

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Seul l'Avenir m'Interesse Terrasses du Larzac AOP

Synonymous in France with the back to earth movement of the 1970's and a spirit of youthful resistance, the high, warm, and remote hills of Larzac have more recently earned the spotlight because of their wines. Benefitting from both the generosity of Languedoc fruit and, importantly, cool evenings and sub-alpine winds, this cru delivers a large, unctuous palate backed by a remarkable spine of acidity. Brambly cassis, black olive, and Mediterranean herbs round out this impressive, powerful experience!

WINEMAKER BIOGRAPHY

Their full name "CastelBarry Coopérative Artisinale" says it all: a collective of small, artisinal growers utterly devoted to the environment, this inspired group of winemakers hails from one of the rugged, far-flung corners of the Languedoc, where copious amounts of sunshine and cool alpine breezes combine for wines of true poise and sophistication.

ENOLOGIST

Leo Guillaumou



TASTING NOTES

Color	Dark ruby
Nose	Dark, brambly cassis, black olive, and faraway minty herbs
Palate	Great acidic backbone combined with a smooth, sweet architecture
Finish	Long-lasting fruit and tannins



VINEYARD & VINIFICATION

Vineyard Location	Terrasses du Larzac, Languedoc
Vineyard Size	25 ha
Varietals List	60% Syrah 30% Grenache 10% Mourvedre
Farming Practices	Sustainably farmed (certified by Terra Vitis); dry-farmed; grapes picked by hand
Elevation	120-140 m
Soils	Calcareous clay, limestone. and chalk
Maturation Summary	In neutral barrels for 12 months and bottled for 2 months
Alcohol	13.5 %
Residual Sugar	2.0 g/liter

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CASTELBARRY

Founded in 1950 by 75 small growers, the CastelBarry Artisanal Coop is nestled in the remote and rugged hills of the Languedoc's Hérault Valley. These days, with 110 local farmers on board (with an average of 2-3 hectares each) it represents 30% of all viticulture in the town of Montpeyroux. "We are," says Bernard Pallise, their proud and down-to-earth directeur général of 16 years, "vraiment le coeur du village" ("truly the heart of the village"). As part and parcel, CastelBarry remains fiercely devoted to protecting the environment, and are certified sustainable by Terra Vitis - whose protocol, they maintain, is stricter than certified organic. This spirit of environmental stewardship has long been woven into the local DNA: a half-century ago, this wild and beautiful area became the home of France's "back to earth" movement. In response to a proposed military installation in the 1970s, hippies, activists, and revolutionaries all flocked here to join the locals in a loud and sustained protest. Today, many of these same folks and their descendants are still making wine, and that sense of youthful rebellion still forms the backbone of the local identity.

Located 40 kilometers northwest of Montpellier, this zone forms the northernmost border of the Languedoc and is the first geographic step before the iconic Massif Central. Hot, hilly, and fairly high up, it's commonly home to diurnal swings of 15-20 degrees Celsius, which combined with cool evening breezes and heavy annual rainfall help to create wines with more freshness and acidic backbone than many have come to expect from the Languedoc. 3 tiers of wine are produced here and, generally speaking, the quality level rises along with the altitude: Languedoc AOCs comprise the baseline and are typically made using fruit grown under 150 meters; the Terrasses du Larzac AOC (recently elevated to the rank of "cru du Languedoc-Roussillon") is crafted from vineyards between 150-200 meters and provides a more than respectable second tier; capping off the trio (literally), are wines labeled Montpeyroux AOC, which are created from vines lying between 200-400 meters (none grow higher here). With good reason, the last two in particular are becoming well-known for combining the generous fruit of southern France with the sophistication of the subalps, and Montpeyroux is emerging as one of the Languedoc's "new frontiers".

REGION

LANGUEDOC

Often associated with the smaller, adjacent Roussillon, the Languedoc comprises 90% of l'Occitanie, which for decades has been the largest wine growing region in the world. Representing roughly a third of French production and over 10% of global output, its historic reputation for quantity over quality has been well-earned, although recent trends are starting to balance the scales, and today the Languedoc is in the midst of slow but steady renaissance. While village-driven cooperatives continue to dominate the landscape, a decrease in demand for Vin de France (aka Vin de Table) has led many of these same to begin producing smaller volumes of higher quality AOC wine. Toward that same end, Grenache, Syrah, and Mourvèdre are now widely planted and used to even out the more tannic and angular Carignan variety. Lower overall land prices have also served to attract talented winemakers, and the number of smaller independents is steadily growing. Today, ten sub-regions benefit from AOC status, including Corbières, Limoux, Minervois, Picpoul de Pinet and Terasses du Larzac, It's also noteworthy that the Languedoc is the world's largest producer of certified organic wines and, while much of the region is focused on red blends, it still yields more rosé annually than Provence!

In terms of both climate and landscape, the Languedoc is deeply Mediterranean: like parts of Catalunya or Tuscany's Maremma, much of this region consists of gorgeous, wild and rugged landscape, in this case covered by an endless tapestry of vines - what Jancis Robinson aptly describes as " Provence without the tourists". While parts of the west and north extend inland and have a more continental climate, by and large the Languedoc is heavily influenced by the sea with its hot summers, dry, mild winters, minimal rainfall, and constant, year-round breezes. Geographically modest in size, the region curves around the gulf of Lyon, from the edge of Roussillon (which in turn clings to the Pyrenees mountains and the Spanish border), stretching past Montpellier to Provence in the east.

TERRASSES DU LARZAC

Formerly a designation within the Côteaux du Languedoc, this appellation was promoted to AOC in 2014 and, more recently, became its own cru. Larzac encompasses 32 foothill communes, all lying north of the Hérault River and beneath the 800-meter Causse du Larzac, a long plateau that serves as gateway to the mountains of the southern Massif Central. While the climate is largely Mediterranean, proximity to the mountains ensures cooler evenings than elsewhere in the Languedoc, and helps to set the wines of this sub-zone apart. Even on summer nights, cool breezes sweep down from the plateau, helping to slow ripening and enhancing the aromatics, freshness, and acidic backbone of the wines. Soil types can be quite varied, ranging from marly limestone dating back to the Jurassic to iron-driven red ruffes to sandy, alluvial clay packed with stones when closer to the river. The altitude is 150 meters on average , but can go as high as 400 meters.

No whites or rosés are produced in this appellation, and all reds are made from a finite list of 5 grapes: Grenache, Syrah, and Mourvèdre, along with Cinsualt and Carignan. The first three are widespread but are relative newcomers to the Languedoc, having been imported to round out the tannic, sometimes antisocial Carignan. By law, reds must be blends of at least two grapes and must also adhere to the following rules: 1) They must be at least 60% combined of Grenache, Syrah, and Mourvèdre, but not more than 75% of any single variety. 2) Blends must contain at least 20% Syrah or Mourvèdre. And 3) Wines may include a maximum of 30% Cinsault and Carignan.