



Languedoc: A Compilation

by Team JR

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How many times do we have to make the point that the Languedoc offers some of the finest value in the wine world before this exciting region gets the credit it deserves?

As signalled when we published last week's compilation of Roussillon tasting notes, below is a substantial compilation of reviews of wines of the Languedoc, more than 180 tasting notes. Most of these wines are produced by relatively small domaines, because although the Languedoc is able to produce reasonably large quantities of wine for the bigger companies, the real treasure is in more artisanally-produced wines.

As someone who has been spending every summer there since 1989, I particularly treasure the variety of different styles of wine produced in the Languedoc, a region that can supply wines right through from surprisingly delicate fizz from Limoux to some thoroughly satisfying sweet Muscats.

The hills of the Languedoc (we see the Montagne Noire above Minervois vineyards above right) have long been a treasure house of characterful red wines expressive of their very varied origins – typically but not necessarily based on Syrah, Grenache, Mourvèdre, Carignan and Cinsault. It has taken longer for the region to be a serious source of refreshing dry white wines. It has been through

the usual experimental phases with too much oak, too much alcohol and too much Chardonnay, but today it is not too difficult to find relatively refined blends of southern French pale-skinned grape varieties, even if Roussillon may have some more compelling terroirs for them.

We will continue to taste and report on this underrated region. Things were going well for the 2015 harvest with good quality and quantity but those who were hanging on for a late harvest had their hopes dashed by poor weather last week and a short sharp hailstorm seriously affected some vineyards in Minervois-La Livinière last weekend.

Ch Ollieux Romanis, Cuvée Prestige 2014 Corbières

50% Marsanne, 50% Roussanne, from vines 50-30 years old on clay limestone. Yields 35 hl/ha. Vinification and élevage on the lees in new oak barrels for 12 months.

Fat and buttery and rich, dollops of pineapple tarte Tatin straight out the glass. Bodaciously plump on the palate, caramel creamy, sweet rich fruit infused with oak spice. A trace of smoke. It is unquestionably marked by its sojourn in new oak, and those with an oak phobia should stay well away, but for anyone who enjoys an opulently broad, generous, spicy, forward white - the sassy cousin to Châteauneuf - then this is a great choice. (TC) 14.5%

