

Causse Marines

Profile

To many, Causse Marines is an enigma. Why do they have clown noses on their labels? Why have you literally heard of NONE of the grapes they work with? Why do they hate badgers?

The estate was founded by Patrice Lescarret in 1993, but has been run alongside his wife Virginie Maignien since 2005. As is often the case in Gaillac, the prior owner was a polycultural farmer who sold his grapes to the local cave coopérative. Patrice, who had studied oenology in Bordeaux and wanted an estate in the South-West, was immediately drawn to the 8 hectares of vines: everything planted in selection massale and almost all from old vines of near instinct local varieties. Speaking of grape varieties, there are a bunch: Syrah, Duras, Braucol, Prunelard, Jurançon and Alicante for red; Mauzac, Muscadelle, Loin de l'oeil, Ondenc, Sémillon, Petit Manseng and Chenin for white.

Many cuvées are produced. *Les Greilles* and *Peyrouzelles* are the estate's entry level white and red, and currently the only two cuvées sporting the Gaillac AOC. As to not stifle creativity, all other wines are intentionally de-classified to Vin de France. Some, like the natural sparkler *Préambules*, are produced every year, while others, like the single varietal *Zacmau* or *Dencon* (from Mauzac and Ondenc respectively, and both illegal to vinify individually under the Gaillac AOC) are only produced in optimal vintages. Still, many experimental one-offs, like a Jura style sous-voile called *Mystere*, are made on a whim to keep things interesting. Most recently? A skin macerated Mauzac...

Though the cuvées all sport funny names and/or labels that perfectly embody the couple's off-beat, quirky sense of humor, the work in the vines and cellar is of the utmost respect to the land and the wine. Patrice is a trail-blazer for biodynamics in the South-West and was also more radically involved in sulfur-free winemaking in the late 90's and early 2000's. Today, a small amount of sulfur is added only at bottling to *Greilles* and *Peyrouzelles*, with each other bottling on a case by case basis.

Oh, and if you're still wondering why they hate badgers, it's because it's french slang for asshole. And nobody likes assholes.