

Clos de la Roilette

Visits

This visit at Clos de la Roilette took place in June, 2012.



Words and photos by Jules Dressner.

Did you know that there is no clos to be found at Clos de la Roilette and that the horse on the the label is actually a drawing of the past owner's prized race horse? That's some false advertising right there!

At the end of a long, winding road, Alain and Audile Coudert live in the house Alain's late father Fernand bought when he founded the estate. Things are tidily together: the house and cellar are one, and the vines are the first thing you see when you step outside.



We stepped into the tasting room which, as an extension of the cellar, also holds the foudre barrels the wines age in.



2012 will be a small harvest, mostly due to mildew and hail. The 2011's were bottled in May, so this was our first chance to taste them in bottle. The Roilette wines are known for needing a little time, and these were no exception. I really look forward to retasting them in a few months, and can confidently tell you to get ready for some more exceptional 2011 Beaujolais.

During the tasting, we started talking about Beaujolais and its horrible reputation. As an avid Beaujolais lover, I still find this impossible to believe (I touched on this briefly in the [Demoor post](#)), but it seems the French have deemed it an unworthy region. It's gotten so bad that producers only name their wines by cru (Fleurie, Morgon, etc..) because the heavy stigma of the word Beaujolais is so strong that it scares consumers away. The result: a lot of vines are being abandoned, and Alain is sure that with this tough 2012, it looks like this might be the last vintage before many vigneronns call it quits.

In my opinion, this bad reputation serves as a striking example of a broken AOC system that has betrayed itself. By oversimplifying (or confusing) "typicity" with "uniformity", we see mixed results at best: a "good" A.O.C like Chateauneuf permits producers to sell their stock and jack up their prices regardless of how good the wine actually is, because the consumer readily believes quality exists. On the other hand, a "bad" one like Beaujolais is in majority shunned for the very same -often false, or at the very least misguided- pre-conceptions. Any wine lover knows that some Chateauneuf's are much better than others, and the same goes for Beaujolais. And while yes, there is a lot of TERRIBLE, ABSOLUTELY UNDRINKABLE Beaujolais out there, the more I taste, the more I realize this is the case in almost every viticultural region in the world. This is why we must continue supporting the independants, the little guys who actually care enough to make something shine. They never stopped believing in their terroirs, and neither should we.

Anyway, Alain is in the process of building a new cellar, mostly for stocking and bottling purposes. It used to be a chicken and rabbit coop, and they had to dig out a whole bunch of the wall, but now they will have ample space. We also got to taste *Griffe du Marquis* 2011, which is the barrel aged cuvée Alain started making a few years ago. Only 12 barrels -or 3000 bottles- of this are produced; the wine will be bottled in December. Tasted from 4 barrels, and it was fun to taste the subtleties of Fleurie's different micro-parcels.

We didn't have to go far to check out the vines.







Isn't it weird to think Gamay can ever be that green?