

AOC Faugères red 2011

Mas Gabinèle

Inaccessible

1. Geographic location

The vineyard is located on the commune of Laurens, 20 km to the north of Béziers. There are two sections to the estate. One to the north of the commune between Laurens and Faugères, the other to the south between Laurens and Magalas. The first parcels of land were bought in 1997. The estate now covers some 18 hectares, 15 of which are planted with vines.

2. Grape varieties

Mourvèdre 60%, Syrah 20 %, Grenache 20 %,

3. Soil type

The soil is predominantly Laurens-Cabrières sandstone schist, a neighbouring type to the Faugères hills soils. This soil type is of fragile structure, slightly acidic and can be difficult for the vines and which, when associated to adapted cultivation methods provides excellent balance for the vines.

4. The climate in 2011

2011 was, and will remain, an atypical year. Over the calendar year (even though vine growing doesn't follow this schedule), rainfall was very present during springtime. There was also the miraculous downpours on the 14th of July and the 15th of August. This was perfect for the schist based soils which allow excellent drainage, ensuring perfect maturity. We could also mention the heavy rainfalls in November, but these concern the 2012 vintage.

5. Pruning and yield

Double Cordon de Royat trellising for Syrah and Mourvèdre, traditional goblet pruning for the Grenache. Yield was from 10 to 15 hl/ha depending on the parcel.

6. Vinification

Hand harvesting with sorting of the ripest grapes in the vineyard (12th to 30th September).

Long maceration periods at high temperature (25 to 30° C) even, and above all, after completion of the sugar cycle. Extraction by repeated and alternating classic techniques: pumping over, drawing off, cap punching. Early introduction into new casks and then matured for 16 months.

We have produced 2.850 bottles of this exceptional vintage.

7. Tasting notes

We haven't mentioned Thierry's grandfather for far too long. His proverbial wisdom often led him to remark "when it's good, it's good, and we drink it". Although the very limited production of Inaccessible means there is not that much of it to drink, it is quite an understatement to say 'it's good'. It really needs to be appreciated at the right level: how can a monster of a wine (over 16% alcohol and monumental tannins) preserve such a just and subtle balance? OK, the Faugères terroir is certainly partly responsible but there is also a perfectly maintained vineyard, optimally ripe (and some) fruit, wonderfully orchestrated vinification and a loving maturation... providing a wine deep in concentration and complexity while cloaked in unique elegance.

The colour is an intense red but one's attention is quickly drawn elsewhere by the nose which unveils its seductive powers slowly (*dar tiempo al tiempo!* to quote Cervantes: "let time take its course"). And indeed, a flowing procession of red fruit (very ripe cherries, candied raspberry), chocolate and cocoa, peppercorns, star aniseed, ginger, vanilla, Cohiba cloves unfold and develop.

The palate offers a troubling density and sensuality with tannins blended into and at the same time generating the power of the wine. The finish on this wine goes well into extra time, right down to the final drop.

8. Serving temperature and suggestions, gastronomic alliance

The more cautious-minded may consider waiting a few years before opening this wine. However, we would heartily recommend a quarterly or even monthly tasting for the true aficionados in order to follow the development of this little masterpiece of harmony between the work of nature and of man. In all cases, this wine will certainly age magnificently and that quarterly tasting could well be enjoyed with a group of carefully chosen friends accompanied by a few slices of Bellota ham, some light sushi, dried tomatoes, pine nuts, Lacaune dried sausage, Morteau smoked sausage or Speck, all of which marry beautifully and in different ways with this wine. The list is perhaps long but the wine maker would delight in hearing of any suggestions to make it longer!