

L'ENCLAVE

La Jassine

2018

CÔTES-DU-RHÔNE VILLAGES

THE VINTAGE

2018 is an excellent vintage but continues this streak of drought summers. Not a drop of rain fell during the growing season, which with our dry farmed vineyards puts a fair amount of stress on the vines reducing yields, concentrating fruit and pushing sugars. Thanks to a cooler fall, we were able to push out the pick to early October, allowing for good flavor development and lignified stems.

THE APPELLATION

All the fruit comes from Valréas, which is distinctive for two reasons. It's hilly location on the east side of the Rhône, which means much cooler nights and gentler ripening relative to the valley floor. It's also the traditional breaking point in the Rhône where you see a shift to more Syrah than Grenache. Grenache is more heat loving than Syrah, and Valréas generally marks where it was potentially too cool to ripen Grenache properly, which was very much the case. Over the last decade, particularly the relatively warm vintages have been a godsend to Valréas, as the principal grape, Grenache, is ripening beautifully and slowly, meaning loads of flavor and developed structure. This balance of power and freshness is what drew us into Valréas, as so much of the southern Rhône, particularly on the valley floors, has become incredibly hot. Most of our vineyards are North and West facing on a mix of limestone and galets (river stones).

THE WINE

The fermentations were done with native yeast entirely in raw concrete tanks. One third of the fruit was fermented whole cluster (with stems) which we think was particularly important to balance the more powerful flavors from the hot vintage and low yields with spice and savory notes of stems. The fermentations were ultra-slow, taking on average 30 days on the skins. A small percentage of the wine, about 4%, was aged in new French oak with the rest staying in concrete. The resulting wine is beautiful on the nose with dark berry fruit and spice, along with classic Provence garrigue notes (rosemary, thyme, sage) and a broad, rich palate. Tannins are soft, round and inviting.

The blend is: 60% Grenache, 40% Syrah. 100% of the fruit is from vineyards owned and farmed by the Lavau family in the Village of Valréas in the Southern Rhône Valley. As such, the wine can be called Côtes du Rhône Villages, as opposed to simply Côtes du Rhône.

Alc. by VOL 15.3%

THE HISTORY

For years we had hoped to make compelling red wine from the same vineyards in Aix-en-Provence where we make our Rosé and ultimately felt the resulting red wines were underwhelming. All our planting decisions and farming was being made to make great Rosé, not full throttle red wine. The results showed with super compelling Rosé and ok red wine, so for years I abandoned the pursuit of a red wine. This was until the Lavau brothers introduced me to Valréas, 100 km north of Aix. I instantly loved the balanced wines that had power and richness, but also acidity and energy. As they say, the rest is history.



BIELER PÈRE & FILS