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ROSEMARY GEORGE MW, WINE WRITER IN LONDON AND THE SOUTH OF FRANCE.

Rosemary George MW wine writer based in London and the South of France. Discover the new wines of the Languedoc and Roussillon with me.

November 02, 2022

DOMAINE DES ROBES NOIRES



Aymeric and Sarah Discours bought the old estate of Bourdic on the road between Roujan and Pézenas in the Côtes de Thongue in July 2021, just in time for their first vintage. They were barely settled in when the first grapes arrived in the cellar, And their first vintage comprises five wines.

They were both barristers in Bordeaux for fifteen years, but the idea of making wine had been simmering for a while, and then it was a question of now or never. Aymeric did a correspondence course, which gave him a BTS in viticulture and oenology, as well as a couple of *stages* in Bordeaux and Burgundy.

And why the Languedoc? They like the fact that the region is not well known and love the wines, and the flexibility that an IGP gives you, as opposed to a more rigid appellation. The vineyards at Bourdic were already farmed organically, aged between 50 and 5 years years and are planted mainly with Grenache and Cinsault, as well as a little Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah. They are buying another plot of Syrah and also some Viognier. There are eight rows of Grenache Blanc and Grenache Gris which were frosted, and they have planted 75 ares of Roussanne, Marsanne and Piquepoul, for a

field blend. They would also like to try Carignan Gris, as they are looking for vines that will adapt to climate change.

The names of their wines all have legal connotations, as does the name of the estate, with the lawyers' robes in question hanging elegantly in their tasting room.

2021 Hammurabi- 15.00€

A pure Cinsault vinified as a white wine with no skin contact at all. Light colour with quite a stony nose, and a certain weight, on the palate with some satisfying mouthfeel and good balancing acidity. And Aymeric explained that Hammurabi was the Babylonian king who laid down the first legal code in about 4000BC.

2021 1134 Rosé - 9.60€

Mainly Cinsault with 2 hectolitres of white Grenache Blanc and Gris from the frosted vines, as well as tiny amount of Syrah and Grenache. All *pressurage direct*, but with a little maceration in the press. A delicate pink colour, with elegant raspberry fruit. Good weight, balanced with acidity, with a very refreshing juicy finish. It is vinous without being alcoholic and indeed is a refreshing 11.5°. The Cinsault was picked six weeks later than for the white wine. 1134 is another legal reference, the article in the Code Civile that is the basis of the law of contract.

2021 In Limine - 16.20€

In Limine is the legal term for *at the very beginning* and refers to various things that need to be done at the beginning of a trial, and not later on, and is of course a reference to their beginnings. A blend of half and half Cinsault and Grenache Noir fermented together. All free run juice. Quite a light colour, with some appealing freshness on the nose and palate. A modest 13.5°. Easy drinking with ripe spiciness, after an *élevage* in vat. Their small cellar is equipped with a number of small fibre glass vats and a very large concrete vat has been turned into a storage space for cartons.

2021 Pro Bono - 19.80€

Meaning *pour le bon*, and referring to dossiers for which no legal fee is charged. A blend of Grenache, Cinsault, a little Syrah and even less Cabernet Sauvignon. Again an *élevage* in vat. Deep colour. with rounded spice on the nose and more weight and ripe fruit on the palate. They add some *jus de presse* to the blend. A nicely rounded finish with some length. and a balancing streak of tannin.

We talked about their prices, which are quite high for an IGP and unknown estate, but they explained that their yields are low. In 2021 they made just 6000 bottles - and they do need to be profitable enough to make a decent living. Certainly the quality justifies the prices - I was very impressed that Aymeric could produce such elegant and

beautifully made wines with his first vintage. There is no doubt that he and Sarah will be an asset to the Côtes de Thongue. And we touched on projects for the future. They would like to try amphora and maybe a carbonic maceration of Grenache and Cinsault.

And there is a third red wine being aged in barrel, which was not yet ready for tasting. Their future looks rosy!

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