

# Côtes de Thongue Wines

History      Domaines and wine  
Grape combinations  
How to use this guide  
Award winners      Useful Links  
About the author

Name: Les Robes Noires

The people: Sarah and Aymeric Discours

## The Story

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So Aymeric and Sarah have always had wine in their bones. Until July 2021, this couple were both lawyers in Paris, but the two of them couldn't shake the fact that they always had an inkling that wine would be their future. That summer, with two small children, they left Paris for this small domaine outside Alignan du Vent, and 2021 was their first vintage. The name, les Robes Noires, refers to the black gowns that lawyers in Paris wear – if you've watched "Spiral", you'll be familiar with them. Sarah and Aymeric don't wear them any more, but they are situated for posterity on the wall of their tasting room in Alignan.

When I visited, I was only able to taste four of their wines,

because they had only ever made five and the fifth was still in barrel.

And then, they arrived to find a viticultural tragedy. The April frosts had decimated their white wine crop, but Sarah had always loved white wines. So for their first vintage, they made a white wine from a red grape, cinsault.

Called 'Hammurabi – blanc de noirs', after the Babylonian king who is credited with creating history's first legal code, initially this smells peculiar because it's not what you expect, but then it wins you over. It's got a lovely mouth feel, a hint of acidity and is actually a delicious, low alcohol (11.5%) white wine. In fact, it makes you wonder why we don't make white wines from 'red' grapes more often. Victory snatched from the jaws of defeat.

Their 'actual' cinsault Rosé, called 1134, which is the number of a key article in the French legal code, is enhanced by a bit of grenache gris and grenache blanc, and is fresh but – oddly – doesn't work as well as its white equivalent.

Then there are two completely different reds. When I tasted them, they had only been in bottle for two months, so bear that in mind.

The first, 'in limine' (referring to the legal points that you make at the beginning of a case, and also the fact that this couple are at the beginning of their legal careers), is an easy going grenache-cinsault blend, with oodles of fruit and not a lot of structure. But as something to knock back that's not too heavy, it's enjoyable.

Conversely 'Pro Bono', a syrah-grenache- cabernet sauvignon-cinsault blend is much more bullish, with tougher, slightly bitter flavours. It may come around, but it was still a bit fierce when I tasted it.

There is a great future ahead for this domaine. They are planting grapes with an intention of preserving the grapes of the south; they have inherited vineyards in good shape, and they are looking after them attentively, and they have a combination of diligence and inquisitive minds that makes for

great vigneron.

**Grapes planted (11):**

**Red:** syrah, grenache, carignan, petit verdot, cabernet sauvignon, cinsault

**White:** viognier, grenache blanc, grenache gris, rousanne, marsanne, picpoul

**How many hectares:** 4-5

**Annual Production:** 6,300 bottles in 2021, but that was the year of the great frost. Hopefully, 15,000 in 2022

**Price range:** €tbc

**Places to purchase in UK:** no UK distribution as yet.

**Star buy:** Hammurabi - Blanc de Noirs €

**How to visit:**

They are a family outfit, so call ahead, or email ahead. Previously, this domaine was called Domaine du Bourdic, so some of the signs still have that name on it. If you are without internet, drive out from Alignan-du-Vent on the D13 towards Roujan and you'll see the signs. Alternatively, type 'Les Robes Noires' into Google Maps or your equivalent and you'll get there.

**Contact details:**

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< Domaine de la  
Reynardiere

Domaine Saint  
Georges d'Ibry >

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