

Jancis Robinson
JancisRobinson.com



Great value from Languedoc-Roussillon

17 Oct 2012 by Tamlyn Currin, Jancis Robinson & Richard Hemming

The vast Languedoc-Roussillon wine region is home to probably hundreds of artisan winemakers who make lovely wines chock full of terroir and interest but who have very little idea of how to sell their wines. I am always being asked for help in finding importers. It seems as though here, even more than in the rest of the wine world, newcomers arrive, attracted by the relatively low land costs, make their first two or three vintages and then start to think about how they might sell what they have made. As you can see, a wide range of vintages are still on sale.

It doesn't help, I suppose, that there are so many different appellations and Vins de Pays, now transmogrifying into the [new system of PDOs and IGP's](#), and that there have been [several changes to the various systems of crus](#) and suchlike over the past decade or so.

There was a time when wine buyers simply wanted a keenly priced international varietal and Vin de Pays d'Oc Chardonnays, Cabernets, etc were relatively easy to sell. But today's wine drinker is more likely to be after something with a bit more distinction, even if that wine drinker may be unwilling to take a course in Languedoc-Roussillon geography. (Just such a course, by the way, is offered by my fellow Master of Wine and Languedoc resident Matthew Stubbs; see www.vinecole.com).

So all I can suggest is that you use this collection of about 180 reviews to identify some of the best wines. We've presented them by colour and then by declining score to make this easier. I would normally suggest that those wines sold with an appellation rather than something as general as the new Pays d'Oc would identify the more hand-crafted, terroir-influenced wines. But one promising new producer to have been brought to my attention, Vieux Continent, has labelled his first, 2010 vintage as Pays d'Oc even though Belgian David St-Rémy's five hectares around high-altitude Félines-Minervoises of Syrah, Grenache and Carignan vines should well qualify the wine for the Minervoises appellation.

Below is a picture of his new vineyard from the www.vieuxcontinent.net site. One of the great mysteries about viticulture in this part of the world is that, according to EU policies, new plantings are discouraged. And yet the regions are sprouting new vineyards everywhere.

If only this glorious part of the world were less complicated. One good thing is that huge swathes of the less exalted vineyard have been pulled up and nowadays probably the majority of Languedoc-Roussillon vineyard is on better, higher, less fertile soil.

See also [La Pèira's varietal Mourvèdre](#), also in Tasting articles, and [Three additions to the Languedoc](#) in Travel tips.

“Villa Blanche - 6th position on 69 wines evaluated”

Calmel + JJoseph, Villa Blanche Chardonnay 2011 IGP Pays d'Oc 16.5+ Drink 2012-2015

Fresh and pure and focused. Orchard fruit and a silk scarf of spice exhibiting restraint and grace not often seen in Languedoc Chardonnays. I found myself wishing I could spend more time with this wine - I might even have given it a higher score. VGV (TC) 13%
£7.99 Daniel Lambert, Mumbles Fine Wines