

North Sydney Cellars

Just in: explore 2 super tasty reds from the Languedoc

posted by Julian Gutierrez

The Languedoc-Roussillon wine region in the south of France is the largest in the world. Here are two fantastic new Languedoc wines for you to explore that further showcase the variety on offer. Again, the prices are very affordable given the quality and character in the wines. Laurent Calmel and Jerome Joseph make a point of using sensitive techniques in the winery so that the liquid in the bottle speaks of grape and place, not winemaking. They've done a brilliant job on these two wines from their "Les Terroirs" range. [Click here for to link to an excellent map of the region](#) from the Calmel & Joseph website.

Calmel & Joseph St Chinian 2011

St Chinian is the [AOC](#), or place, this wine was grown in. It gained AOC status in 1982 for its red and rose wines and in 2004 for its whites. The winters here are mild, the summers are hot and dry. Calmel & Joseph St Chinian is made from hand picked grapes: 60% shiraz, 30% grenache and 10% carignan, grown on [schist](#) soil. The wines grown on this schist soil tend to have deep colour, lots of fruit expression and racy acidity. More southern parts of St Chinian have clayey limestone soil that produces less full bodied wines. In the winery, the grapes are destemmed but not crushed, then undergoing a fermentation known as semi-carbonic maceration, where the fermentation takes place inside each berry. Aging takes place in concrete tanks.

My tasting note: This is a really charming wine. It's all hazelnuts, sweet red raspberries and pretty red flowers - really pure. In the mouth? Elegant, medium bodied, red fruits (like redskins), soft and silky to finish, gentle fine tannin with slight nutty, dried herb bitterness, quite sexy in texture.

A second opinion: "Smells of ripe red fruit. Bright acidity crackling over a mouthful of red berries and raspberry. Youthful tannins, sleek with a gentle grip. Super fresh. Lightest brush of herbs. Beautifully balanced, a real purity of fruit and line, and very elegant. 17/20 points." Tamlyn Currin, Jancisrobinson.com

Calmel & Joseph Faugeres 2011

Like St Chinian, Faugeres received AOC status in 1982 for its red and rose wines. The Faugeres AOC adjoins St Chinian to the north east, sharing similarities in its warm, dry climate and mainly schist soils. Calmel & Joseph Faugeres 2011 is made from hand-picked shiraz (50%), grenache (30%) and carignan (20%). The grenache and carignan components come from vines planted in 1909 and 1965 respectively - some serious vine age.

Winemaking here is "traditional", with fermentation and aging taking place in concrete vats.

My tasting note: Earthy, inky, savoury smells, meaty. Wild, garrigue, dried flowers and herbs. Carignan? Dark caramel. Crushed rocks. Fantastic to smell. Flavours in the mouth follow similarly, with more presence and attack than the St Chinian. Menthol. Lots and lots of savoury, ballsy, chewy, grippy tannin follows those savoury, wild flavours. Solid finish. Authority here. Character plus.*

A second opinion: "Sweet ripe fruit on the nose, violets and a hint of menthol. Really ripe and juicy and succulent fruit. Cherry cough sweets. Then absolutely pounding massive tannins. Delicious, but those tannins...! Wonderful character. It just needs some seriously chewy food to go with it." Tamlyn Currin, Jancisrobinson.com