

VinoSolex

Lincoln Siliakus, an Australian now living in Provence, visits France's vineyards on a 1968-model Solex motor bike. Discovering the magic of France with mischief and at the right pace, with a focus on the Rhone valley.



Calmel & Joseph: weird name, hunky boys, chill labels and good wine

By [Lincoln](#) on April 23, 2014

Mr VinoSolex was at the double-starred **Restaurant le Parc** in Carcassonne last week, and a chic evening it was, too. Although some others thought that the food was somewhat pretentious and that there were too many courses, I was happy to gobble it up and chat with my friends about booze.

This story may come as a surprise, as VinoSolex is essentially about small independent producers. **Laurent Calmel and Jerome Joseph** were at our table and although they aren't quite in the George Clooney league, they were doing quite a charm offensive with **cutely labelled bottles** of their merchant (négociant) wines. So what are négociants? Wiki puts it well:

Négociants buy everything from grapes to grape must to wines in various states of completion. In the case of grapes or must, the négociant performs virtually all the winemaking. If it buys already fermented wine in barrels or 'en-vrac' —basically in bulk containers, it may age the wine further, blend in other wines or simply bottle and sell it as is. The result is sold under the name of the négociant, not the name of the original grape or wine producer. [Addendum 25/04: The delightful [Louis Hurren](#) left a comment - see below - to point out that "Calmel & Joseph work with the grower to produce fruit that is then vinified on site by Laurent Calmel, prior to raising, blending and then bottling at the property in question." I guess that this is as close to independent wine making as you can get as a negociant.] According to their slick [web site](#), the boys work naturally and are environmentally friendly. They source the grapes from cooler areas, often on the very edge of wine growing areas. They keep extraction gentle and put a lot of effort into blending. Some of the wines are terroir-based. Others are varietal. Bottles were flying around and by that stage of the evening my notes were sketchy. These are some I remember.

				
Corbières are big wines, and this is no exception. Big, fat and smoky, but elegant.	Faugères is a schisty terroir, and the depth comes through well. The tannins are a bit dry at this stage, but it will come good.	Le Pic (AOC Pic St Loup) is a blend of Syrah (40%), Grenache (30%), Mourvèdre (20%) and Carignan (10%). Biodynamic. Powerful nose, very expressive. A bit over the top.	Minervois. Lovely smokiness. This one is easy drinking – it would be too easy to get pissed on.	This Picpoul has the tight and clean feel that is characteristic of that appellation, but is particularly expressive. Lovely!

Thanks to the Conseil Interprofessionel des Vins AOC du Languedoc and IGP Sud de France for getting me along to Millesime Languedoc again this year. It's a brilliant way to discover the terroirs, people and wine of the region. And thanks, yet again, to Marie Gaudel and her angels at [Clair de Lune](#).
Photos from the Calmel Joseph web site