

LE MAS CHAMPART

THE WINEMAKERS

We were exploring the Languedoc during the holidays, Matthieu's family had bought a large house in an isolated hamlet in the north of Saint-Chinian in the 1960s/70s. Looking for a large area but firmly dissuaded by our bank manager from such a project (we were a little young to gain his trust), we bought our first land, with old vines and neglected terroirs.

With the financial resources of the time, the vineyard was restored and 12 ha were planted. The grapes were taken to the village's cave cooperative until 1987. First vintage: 1988. Using an eco-friendly approach, our work as winemakers, both with the vines and in the cellars, tends to focus on the complexity and finesse of our wines. Matthieu, with his team, supervises the work in the vineyards. Isabelle manages the cellars and the sales. The estate is situated on limestone hills, 2 km from Saint-Chinian in the direction of Villevassan.

THE VINEYARDS

WINE VARIETIES, TERROIRS AND A LITTLE GEOLOGY

Our region has a typical Mediterranean climate with its excesses, long periods of drought, storms and strong winds, with rainfall fluctuating between 500 and 750 mm per year. The Saint-Chinian appellation, created in 1982, incorporates 20 villages located around Saint-Chinian: there is no homogeneity in the terroirs of this appellation, which includes the ancient land on the Cevennes border and the more recent limestone and clay. In short, there is schist in the north, and clay, limestone and sandstone in the south... We are in the south.

At an altitude between 210 and 300 m, the vineyards are today made up of 16 ha interspersed with scrubland, pine forests and olive trees, clinging to the slopes of a valley, or exposed to the sun and winds of a limestone plateau. The very complex geology of the Saint-Chinian range is present on the estate, where there is a mosaic of different terroirs and exceptional landscapes shaped by previous generations and passionately maintained today. Our different cuvées reflect these distinctive terroirs with their Mediterranean influences.

OUR GRAPE VARIETIES

■ Red AOC Saint-Chinian

Syrah - Grenache : with different styles depending on the terroirs.

Mourvèdre : a late variety which matures slowly, and which occupies a large part of the estate where it is planted on south-easterly facing terraces, created on steep slopes. 13 to 30-year-old vines.

Cinsault : delicate and round, pleasing both in Reds and Rosés.

Carignan : fruity and very delicate when grown on limestone, more lively on clay. 60 to 110-year-old vines.

■ Red PGI* Pays d'oc

Cabernet Franc : planted in 1988 and in 2014 in the deeper and cooler Triassic soils, where almost every year it finds the humidity necessary for its balance.

■ White AOC Saint-Chinian

In 1993, curiosity led us to plant many grape varieties together on a limestone plateau : **White Grenache, Roussanne, Marsanne, Bourboulenc, Viognier**.

Clairette: since 2010 it has swelled the ranks of the late varieties.

■ White PGI Pays d'oc

In 2010, on a very beautiful limestone terroir, we bought a vine well over one hundred-years-old, which was about to be pulled out: evidence of the Languedoc's wine growing past at its best, co-planted with many other varieties including Terret. **Terret** : late maturing and very resistant to drought

Grey Grenache : lively and mineral.

Languedoc wine varieties planted in AOC terroir; very old goblet trained vines.

Planting density of the vineyard: 3500/5000 vine stocks

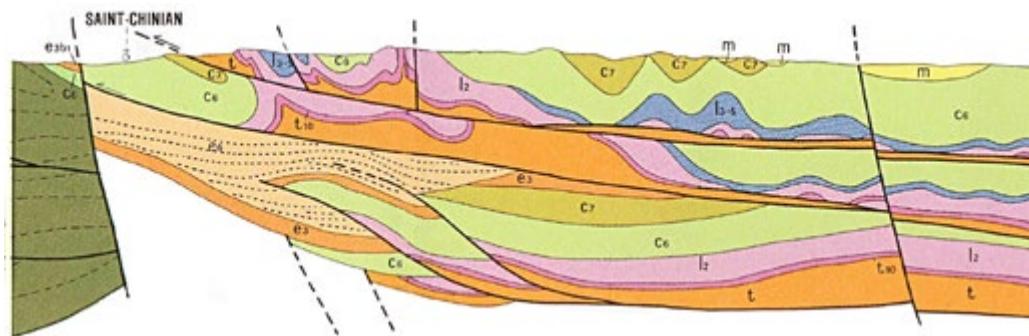
Pruning method: Goblet – Cordon de Royat.

TERROIRS

- At the foot of rocky cliffs, clay and limestone hillsides, red-ochre soil and steep slopes. Mourvèdre is planted in terraces here. Grenache, Carignan and Cinsault of the Côte d'Arbo cuvée cling to the hillsides.
- Limestone plateaux and stony soils, the favourite *terroirs* of Syrah, Grenache and Carignan, whose qualities are expressed here with great finesse. The vines are deeply rooted and withstand drought well. Our white grape varieties are also found here.
- In the valley, there are different types of soil, including the specific and later *terroir* of variegated marl which adds freshness to the wines. Syrah vines are planted on the lower slopes (Côte d'Arbo cuvée). Cabernet Franc is planted in the deeper soils with PGI classification.

A LITTLE GEOLOGY

For the enthusiasts, here is a little glimpse of the geological map with a cross-section of the "Saint-Chinian range" well-known to geologists and students for its complexity ! (C7e / C7c / T-trias / T10 / L2)



"The limestone cliffs and the marls of the Maastrichtian age of the Cretaceous period run alongside the dolomites of the early Jurassic period (Hettangian) and the variegated marl of the Triassic. The whole of the Triassic, and more particularly the very malleable late Triassic clay, acted as a point of décollement (area of slippage) during the tangential tectonics of the Saint-Chinian range, often coming into contact with unnatural bedfellows! "*

There, now you understand the diversity of Saint Chinian!

* Graphic art department of the B.R.G.M (Bureau for Geological and Mining Research)

OUR CHOICES

CONVERSION TO ORGANIC CULTURE

For more than 30 years, our work has reflected our desire to protect and preserve the environment. We do everything to ensure that the maximum number of vines are organically grown. Additions of compost or manure help to improve conditions in our Mediterranean soils undermined by drought and heat. The vineyards are ploughed or ploughed and grassed depending on the slope. The rows are French ploughed. In our old sloping vineyards, cross ploughing is carried out with a crawler tractor. All plant treatments are carried out with organic products.

We hesitated in the face of the technical problems as our vineyards are on very steep slopes and our vines are very old: little mechanization is possible, difficult working conditions means there are a lot of weeds competing with the vines in a climate where periods of drought can last several months. The decision was taken in 2019 to try to overcome these obstacles in order to have a coherent discourse for all our clients. 2020 is our 2nd year of conversion

The old goblet trained vines are treated at the beginning of the season with a "back-pack" pump. Disbudding, and aeration of the bunches if necessary, limits treatments and makes the grapes healthy, which is essential. It determines aromatic quality. Average yields are around 28/33hl/ha. Every year, after the harvests, Matthieu and our team devote time to restoring the walls, terraces and dry stone huts, and to maintaining the paths (without weed killer).

THE CELLAR

HARVESTING AND WINEMAKING

Grapes are harvested manually in *comportes* (wooden buckets) or *cagettes* (shallow trays), and are sorted if necessary. Harvesting usually lasts over one month due to the diversity of the grape varieties and the *terroirs*. The grapes are brought quickly to the cellar by our sturdy pickup truck.. The wine making process involves as little interference as possible, and is designed to respect the terroir and the grapes. Sulphur is used wisely and our wines contain less than 50mg/litre of SO₂ in total. In 1995, after being cramped in our little cellar right from the start, we had a semi-underground cellar built, making use of the very steep slope of the land. Temperature and hygrometry are controlled. In 2015/2016 the plan to enlarge the cellar finally became a reality, allowing us to offer tasters a worthy setting.

WORK IN THE CELLARS

■ The Whites

Due to the diversity of our white grape varieties, both early and late, we harvest the grapes at different levels of maturity. To keep aromatic freshness, the early varieties (Roussanne, Viognier) and oxidative varieties (Bourboulenc, Grey Grenache) are harvested in shallow trays and refrigerated before being pressed and allowed to settle. The musts are treated lightly with sulphite before fermentation which occurs in vats or barrels (500L–228L). Depending on the vintage, malolactic fermentation occurs naturally after fermentation. The wines are blended in spring and bottled in the summer.

■ Rosé

One plot of Mourvèdre with a cold aspect and the lower section of some Cinsault vines are reserved for Rosé. This is a 95 / 100% direct press Rosé. The grapes are picked when they are less ripe than the Reds, and direct pressed. After gentle settling, fermentation is carried out with a little SO₂ to encourage malolactic fermentation. The musts ferment at a temperature of around 18°, allowing the aromas and minerality of the grapes to express themselves. The Rosé is bottled in March after several months on lees.

■ The Reds

Our grapes, harvested when well ripened, are transported in 45 kg wooden buckets in our pickup truck and quickly arrive at the cellars, where they are destemmed and lightly crushed before being vatted by gravity. Vinification methods are determined by the terroir, and grape varieties are sometimes blended in the vat. Fermentation occurs with natural yeasts, in concrete and enamelled steel vats. We prefer soft extraction methods in order to preserve the fruit and aromatic freshness (pumping over and crushing). Vatting lasts between 3 to 5 weeks, depending on the cuvées and fermentation times.

Elevage continues in vats for the Côte d'Arbo cuvée and our PGI red for 10 to 15 months. Causse du Bousquet and Clos de la Simonette are mainly made in barrels (228L cask, demi-muids, 500 L barrels). Barrelling takes place at the beginning of November; the wines stay for 18 months in new barrels and 12 months in barrels which have been used for one or several wines. A very small proportion of barrels are renewed every year. The cellar provides the right temperature and hygrometry conditions for elevage. Blending is done gradually and ends in springtime, or after elevage in barrels. The wines are not clarified, they are lightly filtered during elevage in vats.

OUR WINES

CUVÉES AND VINTAGES

OUR SAINT-CHINIAN AOC's

■ Saint-Chinian Rosé

"Salmon pink in colour, airy, fresh, digestible and slightly effervescent. Delightful in summer!"

Direct pressed, mainly consisting of Mourvèdre, complemented by Cinsault and sometimes a little Syrah. A real gastronomic Rosé which harmonises very well with summery and Mediterranean cuisine.

■ Saint-Chinian White

"Powerful but with finesse, a wine which goes well with food."

The Saint-Chinian AOC White was created in 2004. On a limestone terroir: White Grenache, Roussanne, Marsanne and Bourboulenc complemented by a little Clairette and Viognier. Around 40% fermentation in barrels and 60% in vats. The diversity of our grape varieties provides a balance between maturity, aromatic freshness and minerality.

For the Reds, the cuvées are defined in relation to the two terroirs which the estate is composed of, clay and limestone. The relatively late clay and limestone terroir of the estate adds a good amount of freshness to the wines. It also contributes a density of substance which has to be refined during élevage.

■ Saint-Chinian Côte d'Arbo Red

"Fruity, peppery and quaffable, with a good length in the mouth."

A selection from clay soil plots, favouring fruitiness and vivacity, and steep hillsides with ochre and red soils. All the Saint-Chinian AOC's grape varieties, Syrah, Grenache, Carignan, Cinsault and Mourvèdre, in a blend aged in vats.

■ Saint-Chinian Causse du Bousquet Red

"Extremely delicious, well developed and concentrated without being heavy, whose qualities emerge at the table."

A selection from low yielding plots mainly on the limestone plateau. Syrah with its density is dominant in the blend and complemented by Grenache, Mourvèdre and Carignan. 2/3 are aged in Burgundian barrels of different ages and 1/3 in vats. Bottling takes place after 20 to 24 months. Good keeping potential.

■ Saint-Chinian Clos de la Simonette Red

"Powerful and ripe but with freshness contributed by Mourvèdre and Carignan."

A cuvée which brings together the two terroirs of the vineyard. Blending with 2/3 Mourvèdre, from a red and ochre clay terroir, complemented by Grenache and Carignan grown on a limestone terroir. Elevation in demi-muids for 12 to 18 months with a small number of new barrels, depending on the vintage. Bottled after 24 months. Good keeping potential.

The old vintages which we have kept and which we open regularly prove the good ageing qualities of our Causse du Bousquet and Clos de la Simonette cuvées, even in the lightest vintages.

OUR VINS DE PAYS

Two limited edition and original cuvées.

■ PGI Pays d'Oc White

"A Vin de Pays on a Saint-Chinian AOC terroir"

Terret and Grey Grenache. On a terroir classified as AOC, Languedoc grape varieties which are "historic" but which are not currently accepted as AOC. Terret, from vines more than 110 years old, thrives on the driest and stoniest limestone terrain. Picked when slightly overripe, it adds smoothness and aromatic richness, while Grey Grenache adds a refreshing minerality. Vinification is carried out in 500 L barrels, and it is bottled after 10 to 12 months of élevage.

■ PGI Pays d'Oc Red

"Full, fresh and forthright, a wine for drinking with friends"

Mainly Cabernet Franc complemented by a little Syrah and sometimes Carignan, with elevation in vats and bottling after 12 to 15 months of élevage. It's like a Mediterranean Cabernet with its maturity, but without heaviness and retaining a great vivacity.

THE VINTAGES 2016

A very dry winter in 2016 delayed budding. The sufficiently humid spring was followed by a dry summer without excessive heat, however the rain from the traditional "thunderstorm of August 15th" was lacking. During the summer we removed some of the grapes to reduce the strain on the vines and boost a balanced maturity. Light rainfall in early September was beneficial to the maturity of the grapes. The harvest for the Reds began on September 16th the grapes were very healthy but not very juicy. The vinification was gently done in order to preserve the fruit and to give a finesse to the structure. Yields were a little lower than in the two previous vintages.

2015

Fairly balanced weather conditions: good rainfall in autumn 2014, winter and spring a little dry but with gentle rains and a hot summer with moderate humidity in August. Healthy grapes, no higher yields in 2015, but meaty wines reminiscent of 2013 with greater fruitiness. A vintage which has a great future.

2014

A year with weather conditions which were sometimes extreme, with a winter and early spring so dry that vines struggled to grow. But the deep roots of our hillside vines enabled vegetation to develop sufficiently. Our area then escaped the most violent rains during harvest time. 2014 is a beautiful and well-balanced vintage, with lots of fruit and with depth, but lighter than 2013.

2013

The cool spring curbed the growth of the vines which did not recover completely despite a beautiful hot summer. We began harvesting the Syrah after the 25th of September, a phenomenon which has become rare in the Languedoc! Slower maturity, with a very evident acidity, and concentration, are the characteristics of this particularly interesting Languedoc vintage, one of the best of the last 10 years. A beautiful vintage for laying down.

CONTACT

WHERE TO FIND US WHERE TO FIND OUR WINES

THE ESTATE

Tastings and visits by appointment

MAS CHAMPART / Adresse : Bramefan - D-20 Road - 34360 Saint-Chinian

Tel : 04 67 38 05 59 / mail : mas-champart@wanadoo.fr / www.mas-champart.com

GPS coordinates: 43.410244, 2.942528.

The estate is 2 km away from Saint-Chinian on the D-20 road in the direction of Villevassan.

WHERE TO FIND OUR WINES

Non-exhaustive list of the main wine merchants who regularly sell our wines.

In the Languedoc

La Maison des Vins, 34360 Saint-Chinian / Espace Vins, 34360 Saint-Chinian / Au Chai du Languedoc, 34500 Béziers / V. Marchand de Vins, 34980 St Gely du Fesc / Mégavins Aux Grands Vins de France, 34130 Mauguio / La Cave St Jean, 30100 Alès / Les Grands Buffets, 11100 Narbonne

Elsewhere in France

La Vinothèque du Léman, 01210 Ferney Voltaire / Un Vin Dix Vins, 09230 Ste Croix Volvestre / La Feuille de Vigne, 14600 Honfleur / La Cave du Soleil, 18000 Bourges / Ô Les Vins, 31120 Portet s/ Garonne / Ets Gélas, 32190 Vic Fezensac / La Cave de La Tour, 32600 L'Isle Jourdain / Quvees, 33100 Bordeaux / La Cave Stéphane Foucher, 35000 Rennes / Le Chai St Vincent, 35520 La Mézières / La Cave Jules Vernes, 44300 Nantes / Excels-Vins, 54260 Epier s/Chiers / Le Cellier des Gourmets, 54270 Essey les Nancy / Les Caves Bacchuseum, 56100 Lorient / Vino'Cham, 63400 Chamalières / Le Chai de Patrick Laillet, 64140 Billière / Liquoreux 67, 67340 Weiterswiller / La Cave Valmy, 69009 Lyon / La Cave Valmy, 69004 Lyon / La Dernière Goutte, 75006 Paris / La Cave Balthazar, 75014 Paris / Le Garde Vins, 75016 Paris / Les Caves NYSA, 75004 Paris / Cave Pierre Noble, 76000 Rouen

Outside of France

Our main importers :

Wein & Glas, 10717 Berlin Allemagne / La Cave des Oblats, 4020 Liège Belgique / TG Vins, 4400 Flémalle Belgique / Maison Moestade Gobert, 6560 Solres/Sambre Belgique / Divo Club, 8490 Jabbeke Belgique / Dianna Braem, 2070 Zwijndrecht Belgique / Caves Bernard-Massard, 6701 Grevenmacher GD de Luxembourg / Berry Bros & Rudd, SW8 3NS Londres GB / Hübsch Weinhandel, 16859 Bromma Suède / Cavino Weinhandel, 8712 Stäffelf Suisse