



ERIC SOLOMON
SELECTIONS

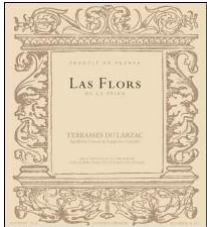
PLACE OVER PROCESS



Wine Advocate

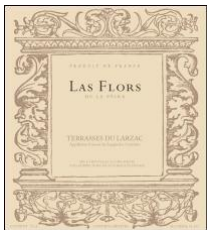
Languedoc Profile & Reviews

August 2011



2009 La Pèira Coteaux du Languedoc Terrasses du Larzac Las Flors 93 - 94

"The 2009 Coteaux du Languedoc Terrasses du Larzac Las Flors de La Peira – somewhat more than a third each Syrah and Grenache, with minority components of both Mourvedre and Cinsault – features lightly-cooked, sweetly ripe black and red raspberries aromatically shadowed by their distilled counterparts and wreathed in headily- and seductively-perfumed buddleia, peony, and heliotrope. Richly-textured and full, yet preserving a core of vibrant primary juiciness, this cuvee's Mourvedre component offers subtle underlying beef blood and chocolate while a long finish preserves a remarkable sense of transparency to both the wines floral as well as its stone, peat, iodine and mouth-wateringly saline mineral elements.



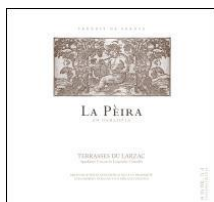
2008 La Pèira Coteaux du Languedoc Terrasses du Larzac Las Flors 92

"Around one half Grenache, one third Syrah, and the rest Mourvedre, the 2008 Coteaux du Languedoc Terrasses du Larzac Las Flors de la Peira displays less charm let alone the seductive florality of its 2009 counterpart, but offers a compelling combination of palpable density, tension, and grip. Black pepper, licorice, iodine, salt, and iron filings mingle with ripe yet tart blackberry and cassis. The finish here seems to brood, but what a huge, dark cloud it spreads across the palate! I have remarked before on the Pomerol-like aspects of this cuvee – an observation that regisseur Jeremie Depierre seconded – but if one is to stick with that simile in this vintage, it could only be Lafleur rather than a Merlot-dominated Chateaux that one had in mind. I suspect this will need 2-3 years to significantly make good on its potential and ought to be worth following for 6-8.



2009 La Pèira Coteaux du Languedoc Terrasses du Larzac La Pèira 95 – 96

"I tasted on this occasion the 2009 Coteaux du Languedoc Terrasses du Larzac La Pèira – roughly two-thirds Syrah, one-third Grenache – in both its (pre-) assemblage and as individual components. Bursting with heady, lilac-like sweet floral perfume that could be traced to its Grenache, along with liqueur-like cassis and black raspberry, this expands thrillingly on a viscous, subtly creamy yet persistently vibrant, juicy, and buoyant palate, with fresh ginger, nutmeg, and licorice adding complex spice and a Syrah-induced savor akin to salted roasted meat pan drippings serving for an umami rating approaching three digits on a hundred-point scale. An attractively rich undertone of chocolate is apt to recede slightly once this acquires its modest pre-bottling dosage of sulfur. This dynamic show should be worth following for the better part of a decade. (The raw materials for the 2010 La Peira were similarly – well, to clarify, actually quite distinctly – sensational.)"

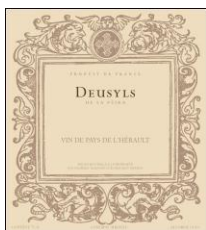


2008 La Pèira Coteaux du Languedoc Terrasses du Larzac La Pèira 94

"From a blend close to that of its 2009 counterpart, the 2008 Coteaux du Languedoc Terrasses du Larzac La Pèira bears some resemblance to a top-notch Medoc in its ripe though restrained expression of black fruits allied to sealing wax and iodine, crushed stone and carob. Somewhat somber overall for a wine from this estate and with a more palpable sense of structure and sheer density than most Languedoc reds of its vintage, this nevertheless proceeds to finish with a surprising degree of sheer juiciness and energy as well as a nearly indelible impression of berry skin and mineral matter."

2010 La Pèira Deusyls

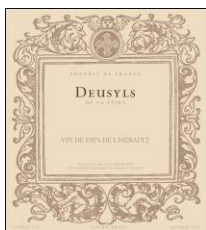
91 - 92



"While the 2010 Deusyls de La Pèira – a blend, as usual, of Viognier with minority Roussanne – was still set to spend a year in barrel when I tasted it, there was no question about its personality or its high quality. "Explosive" is the only word that can do justice to the effusion of honeysuckle, acacia, quince, pineapple, and mandarin on the nose and lush yet vibrant and buoyant palate of this beauty. It positively shimmers in finishing interaction of these fruits and flowers with salt, stone, and otherwise mineral matter. As this cuvee begins to acquire some track record, it becomes evident that we don't yet know the full extent of its aging potential, but this instantiation ought to be worth following for at least 4-5 years."

2009 La Pèira Deusyls

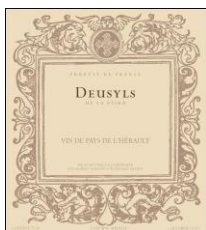
90 – 91



"Honeysuckle, narcissus, heliotrope, pineapple, and overripe pear and Persian melon scent the Viognier-Roussanne 2009 Deusyls de La Pèira, which comes to the palate creamy; nutmeg- and vanilla-tinged; expansive but not heavy; with hints of salted nuts and chalk serving for some finishing counterpoint. This outstanding effort in the context of vintage (white wine) limitations (which I tasted immediately prior to bottling) will prove seductive in its youth, and I suspect will be best enjoyed over the next couple of years – however greater the stamina that other initial vintages of this cuvee may be revealing."

2008 La Pèira Deusyls

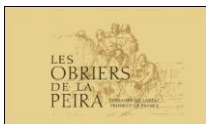
91



"Talcum, honeysuckle, and heliotrope headily scent the 2008 Deusyls de La Pèira, with hints of caramel and lanolin still clinging to ripe, melony fruit from its oak exposure. Lush and persistently floral in the mouth, this beauty offers mouthwatering salinity, lingering perfume, and intriguing, elusive mineral traces. I suspect it will continue to seduce for at least another couple of years."

2009 La Pèira Les Obriers

90 – 91



"Tasted as a pre-assembly (although I also tasted the individual components), La Pèira's Cinsault-Carignan 2009 Les Obriers de la Peira is initially smoky and nutty in a slightly reduced way, needing aeration to reveal more diverse and alluring scents of hibiscus, mulberry, and kirsch. Dark berries and beet root mingle with black tea and brown spices on a richly-textured yet infectiously juicy palate. Alkaline and wet stone suggestions underline a lingering finish. Some of the fine inner-mouth florality exhibited by this wine's 2008 rendition was approached in the largest lot of the 2009 – which remained in upright wooden fermentor – but submerged in the blend, hopefully to eventually reappear. Expect this to reward for at least 3-4 years."

2010 Domaine de l'Hortus Bergerie Classique Blanc

91



"The Hortus 2010 Coteaux du Languedoc Bergerie Classique Blanc comes principally from Sauvignon (Blanc and Gris variants) and Viognier, with Roussanne and Chardonnay as minority partners. (Given how terrifically Chardonnay turned out in this vintage, it is understandable that more even than usual would have been set-aside with the intention of informing the Grand Cuvee.) An enticing nose of ripe Persian melon, white peach, acacia off-set by a faint prickle of gooseberry and pungency of resinous herbs sets the stage for a silken-textured yet ultra-refreshing palate on which saliva-inducing salinity and a crystalline sense of mineral impingement help render the finish dynamic and irresistibly next-sip-compelling. A wealth of floral, herbal, and mineral subtlety emerges as you savor this."



2008 Domaine de l'Hortus Bergerie Classique Blanc 91

"Bergerie white to be drunk within a year of bottling, but since it had been too early to taste the 2008 Coteaux du Languedoc Bergerie Classique Blanc in its final form when I visited in December, 2008 for my issue 183 report and they – correctly! – deemed this an especially worthwhile vintage to revisit, I am able to testify to its being utterly ravishing. Maritime saline and alkaline notes vie with acacia, thyme, ripe melons, pear, and nut oils in a seductive and intriguing nose; then follow on a seamlessly silken yet still vivaciously juicy palate. The umami-rich, saline savor with which this complex "little" wine finishes leaves me salivating uncontrollably. This is – or at least was – a terrific value."



2008 Domaine de l'Hortus Bergerie Classique Rouge 89

"Orliacs' red 2008 Coteaux du Languedoc Pic Saint-Loup Bergerie Classique is roughly 65% Syrah, 25% Grenache and 10% Mourvedre, and – with the exception of small amounts of wine declassified from the Grand Cuvee base material – was raised in tank. Scents of ripe fresh cherry, red raspberry, peat, and pungent herbs have their counterparts on a caressingly-polished yet lively palate. Salvia-inducing salinity and savory roasted red meat undertones render the finish here quite complex not to mention compelling of the next sip. Here is a fine example of the finesse and deeply satisfying if understated charms that can characterize Hortus wines, particularly a relatively long, cool season. (The lightly-cooked cherry, toasted nuts and roasted red meat of the 2009 rendition were attractive but their overall effect a bit muddled and only modestly long, a considerable disappointment alongside the 2008.)"



2009 Domaine de l'Hortus Clos du Prieur 90+

"The 2009 Coteaux du Languedoc Clos du Prieur – from the property in the extreme north of the Terrasses du Larzac run by Jean Orliac's daughter Marie – is approximately 70% Syrah and 30% Grenache. Smoky black tea and fresh cherry and red raspberry pick up fruit pit and hickory nut piquancy as well as a mouthwatering undertone of salted roasted meat pan drippings on a firm but infectiously juicy palate. This finishes with remarkable finesse and refreshment for its vintage, demonstrating the wisdom – particularly if the weather keeps getting warmer – of cultivating this site. Of course, the flip side of this was a struggle to achieve ripeness in 2008 that resulted in a decision not to bottle a Clos du Prieur from that vintage."



2007 Domaine de l'Hortus Clos du Prieur 88

"The promising raw materials for Orliacs' 2007 Coteaux du Languedoc Clos du Prieur had not yet been assembled when I last visited this property for my issue 183 report, so it was only this April that I had a chance to taste the finished wine, which is being marketed in the U.S. concurrently with the 2009. Scents of smoke and leather emerge from the glass, along with aromas suggesting dried red and black fruits. Firm and a bit grainy in feel, this evinces a modest sense of primary juiciness, but leathery, animal, and dried fruit elements dominate. A glycerin slick, helps ameliorate the tannin; which a subtle sense of salinity helps stimulate the salivary glands and render the finish satisfying."



2009 Domaine de l'Hortus (Jean Orliac) Grande Cuvee 89+

"In bottle under two weeks when I tasted it, the red l'Hortus 2009 Coteaux du Languedoc Pic Saint-Loup Grande Cuvee smells of peat, wood smoke, quarry dust, and leather mingled with cherry and red raspberry. Ample and glycerin-rich yet persistently brightly-fruited and fine-grained in tannin, its palate performance belies the more evolved or animal traits that I was led to anticipate by the nose. There is a balanced and intriguing mingling of carnal, mineral, and fruit nuances in the rather restrained finish, which I hope and suspect will have become more expressive once the wine put some time between itself and its bottling date. This ought to be one worth following for at least half a dozen years."

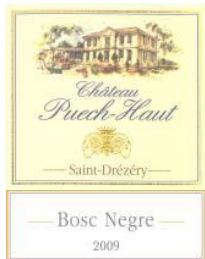
2008 Domaine de l'Hortus (Jean Orliac) Grande Cuvee 92

"The l'Hortus 2008 Coteaux du Languedoc Pic Saint-Loup Grande Cuvee constitutes virtually the identical blend – 60% Syrah; 30% Mourvedre; 5% Grenache – as its 2009 counterpart, but the effect is dramatically different. A tart fresh berry edge and mouthwatering salinity guarantee an invigorating experience, and there is a striking sense of cut and clarity to the fruit, transparent to stone, iodine, pungent herbs, and savory, marrow-rich meaty elements, all the way through to a sustained finish. Hints of toasted wood, smoky black tea, and leather serve merely for seasoning while not detracting from a purity and freshness of fruit that is absent from the corresponding 2009. And for all of the energy and refreshingly tart impingements of fruit and mineral on display here, there is already a patina of fine tannins. This should be worth following for at least half a dozen years."



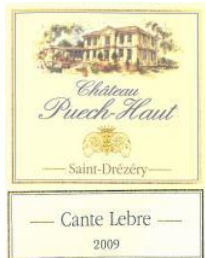
2009 Château Puech-Haut Saint Drézéry Bosc Negre 93

"Puech-Haut's new, all-Mourvedre bottling 2009 Coteaux du Languedoc Saint-Drezery Bosc Negre strikes me as supporting the reasonable hypothesis that this grape is especially well-suited to an expressive performance if one's going to let one's fruit ascend to 15% alcohol. Plum preserves and chocolate laced with bay and brown spices make for a head-turning nose, and are joined by roasted red meat character on a sumptuous, fine-grained, yet persistently juicy palate."



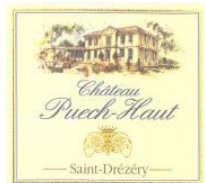
2009 Château Puech-Haut Saint Drézéry Cante Lebre 90

"Among several wines new to their line-up, Puech-Haut's 2009 Coteaux du Languedoc Saint-Drezery Cante Lebre – a Syrah, Grenache and Mourvedre blend – reflects an especially warm as well as galets rous- iron- and clay-rich section of the estate's holdings by revealing a personality that I am sure would strike many tasters as Chateaneuf-like even if Chateaneuf guru Philippe Cambie had not begun calling the shots here with this vintage and somebody else had instead. Sandalwood; black raspberry, cherry and plum confiture; along with a whiff of leather, combine in a heady aromatic and sumptuously rich palate display. Resin and vanilla notes as well as a catch of tannin can be attributed to the extent of new wood in which the Syrah and Mourvedre portions of this resided. Cocoa powder and marzipan add to the confectionary aspect of this cuvee in a faintly warm finish (from 15% alcohol) whose confitured berries are sweetly persistent yet whose tannins left me chewing air rather than salivating. It will be interesting to see how this evolves, but in lieu of a specific track record I would simply urge owners to monitor it within 3-4 years."



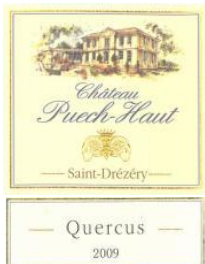
2010 Château Puech-Haut Saint Drézéry Prestige Rose 88

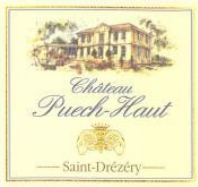
"Composed of Grenache and Cinsault, the Puech-Haut 2010 Coteaux du Languedoc Saint-Drézéry Prestige Rose offers a luscious, surprisingly full yet refreshing meld of red berries, honeydew, and watermelon tinged with mint and oregano. It will continue to be hard to resist for at least the next several months. (Their low-yielding Syrah – in Bru and Cambie's opinions – doesn't give fruit that tastes ripe- or interesting-enough at low enough alcohol levels to be useful for rose.)"



2009 Château Puech-Haut Saint Drézéry Quercus 91

"Puech-Haut's 2009 Coteaux du Languedoc Saint-Drezery Quercus – named for a prominent oak tree at this spot in their vineyards, not for oak employed in elevage – represents their exploration of pure Grenache, vinified without de-stemming. Violet and rose petal mingle with scents of strawberry and black raspberry preserves, whose sweet juices richly and caressingly coat the palate, tinged with tamarind and licorice and underlain by a saliva-inducing impression of salted roast meat pan drippings such as I would more have expected from a Syrah- or Mourvedre-dominated cuvee. What's more, there is a faintly but insistently tart edge to the berries here that offers a sense of excitement."





2009 Château Puech-Haut Saint Drézéry Recantou

89+

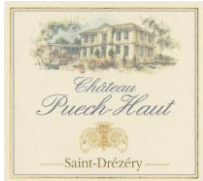
"A new designate, Puech-Haut's 2009 Coteaux du Languedoc Saint-Drezery Recantou is pure Syrah raised in new barriques. Cherry preserves accented with vanilla and cinnamon make for a somewhat superficially sweet, slightly warm, yet at the same time tartly-edged and a bit awkwardly herbal and resinous palate impression. There is a torrefied sense of toasted wood, caramel, and maple syrup in the finish that amplifies the wine's sweet side, yet at the same time a slightly drying sensation in the finish. Conceivably this is still showing some bottle shock. I would plan to revisit it within 2-3 years if weighing the advisability of holding some longer-term."



2010 Château Puech-Haut Saint Drézéry Tête de Bélier Rose

89

"Rendered from direct-pressing of Mourvedre, Puech-Haut's 2010 Coteaux du Languedoc Saint-Drezery Tete de Belier Rose – which like its Prestige counterpart comes in a uniquely ostentatious bottle (each emphatically different from the other) – smells intriguingly of roasted red pepper, bay leaf, fennel, and beach plum. Silken-textured and brimming with juicy, herb-tinged plum on the palate, it finishes with Mourvedre-typical allusions to rare red meat; while a lick of salt and tickle of tannin enhance the sense of invigoration derived from an impressively persistent finish. This distinctive rose might well be interesting even next spring, and I'd like (but haven't had the chance) to taste it alongside of some pink Bandols."



2007 L'Esprit de la Fontaine Terrasses du Larzac

90

"Dill and fennel, cassis and blackberry scent and flavor L'Esprit de la Fontaine's 2007 Coteaux du Languedoc Terrasses du Larzac along with a red roasted meat richness and a stony undertone that segues into reasonably fine-grained yet formidable finishing tannins. A lick of salt lends saliva-inducement, but for all of its savory persistence, don't look to this wine for charm. Expect it to benefit from at least another year in bottle, though the track record is not yet established for this cuvees long-term potential. (And given the firm, reduced character exhibited by its components when I tasted them in December, 2008, I wonder whether this wine has as yet really ever relaxed or revealed a gentler side."



2008 L'Esprit de la Fontaine Terrasses du Larzac

92

"The L'Esprit de la Fontaine 2008 Coteaux du Languedoc Terrasses du Larzac delivers a satisfying stream of ripe black fruit as well as rare red meat juiciness that just won't quit. Inflections of stone, iodine, fruit pit, and salt along with marjoram and rosemary make for an invigoratingly pungent and saliva-inducing savor extending to a long, strong finish in which - in contrast with that of the corresponding 2009 - the wine's fine tannins are almost entirely sublimated. Both the low-toned and simultaneously animated character of this wine, Salasc suggests, reflect in significant part the particular virtues of Carignan."



2009 L'Esprit de la Fontaine Terrasses du Larzac

90 – 91

"Tasted from its wooden tronconique housing, the L'Esprit de la Fontaine 2009 Coteaux du Languedoc Terrasses du Larzac conveys an herb- and meat-broth character suggesting beef marrow, marjoram, rosemary, and fennel, mingled with salt and bone meal and overlain with smoky evocations of peat. Not that fruit is missing, but it is darkly performing below the bar line as it were. Like its 2007 counterpart, this displays a brooding personality with dense, formidable tannins that preclude youthful polish or charm, but it finishes with gripping persistence."



2010 L'Esprit de la Fontaine Terrasses du Larzac

91 – 92+

"While it is early days for the L'Esprit de la Fontaine 2010 Coteaux du Languedoc Terrasses du Larzac, this wine is assembled in its two wooden fermenting vats, so it is perfectly appropriate to comment already on an installment that Salasc compares with 2009, but that I find more complex as well as vivacious. Salted, pungently herb-tinged fresh blackberry and mulberry as well as roasted red meat juices coat the palate, with toasted hickory and walnut oil adding to the persistent, piquant and invigorating finish. This vibrant, athletically lean cuvee should prove increasingly impressive and probably be worth following for the better part of a decade."

