

SAINT JEAN DU BARROUX

La Pierre Noire



ORIGIN

France

APPELLATION

Ventoux

SOIL

Clay limestone, black gravel

AGE OF VINES

40

ELEVATION

300-400

VARIETIES

Grenache, Syrah

FARMING

Certified organic (ECOCERT)

FERMENTATION

Hand harvested, destemmed, natural yeast fermentation in concrete

AGING

36 months in concrete, additional aging in bottle until Philippe decides to release it

The first time we tasted with Philippe we knew we were tasting some of the most thrilling wines being made in the Ventoux if not the entire Rhone valley but what is truly remarkable is that over the last decade they've only gotten better. An impressive resume including stints at Chateau Beaucastel, Pierre-Bise, Domaine la Janasse and Chateau Deves only hinted at Philippe's energy, drive and potential, all of which came to fruition when he founded St Jean du Barroux in 2003.

Located near the ancient fortified town of Barroux, Philippe started with a few hectares and no cellar. When he saved enough to build a small cellar it also served as his home - every personal comfort was sacrificed for his vineyards and wines. Philippe's estate now cover just over sixteen hectares, four of which are scrub forest and orchard. Situated in the valley between the lower slopes of Mont Ventoux and the Dentelles de Montmirail, the vines Philippe farms are grown on three unique terroirs, all eroded from the ancient bedrock of the region. His lowest elevation sites, at about 300m are on a fine sandy clay soil where he grows Grenache Blanc, Bourboulenc and Clairette. As you proceed up the slope to around 400m above sea level the soils become coarser and stonier. Here there is a distinct fault line where the gravels change from various earth tones to black. On the lighter colored soils, Philippe grows Grenache, Syrah, Carignan and Cinsault while on the darker soils he grows only Syrah and Grenache. Philippe's yields are very low in part due to the age of the vines, averaging over 40 years old, but also due to the fact that he's segregated those parts of his vineyards where the yields are naturally higher and these parcels are used for La Source and an occasional rosé. Both L'Argile and La Pierre Noire come from parcels where the yields are about 20hl/ha.

La Pierre Noire, or "the black stone," is a cuvée made from Grenache and Syrah grown on clay limestone soils marked by abrupt appearance of black gravel. So sudden and noticeable is this change in the vineyard that Philippe has always known that this site was its own cuvée. At once more stern but contradictorily more elegant, La Pierre Noire is fermented and aged in concrete for at least 36 months before bottling and released only when Philippe feels it's ready.

ACCOLADES

97 – 2016 La Pierre Noire – Jeb Dunnuck

96 – 2014 La Pierre Noire – Decanter

93+ – 2011 La Pierre Noire – Wine Advocate

