



DOMAINE DE MARCOUX

CHÂTEAUNEUF-du-PAPE

At almost any visit to a cellar, in stentorian tones, it is announced that the wine is made in the vineyard. True enough, grapes are a product of the land from which they come, but the very act of viticulture is a uniquely a human pursuit. Birds and wild boars also love grapes but you do not see them terracing vineyards or tending vines. An understanding of terroir cannot be complete without including the people who uncover it and nurture it. As important as the various soils of Châteauneuf are to the wines it produces so are the people who make the wines and farm the vineyards. Perhaps no better representatives of this fact are the Armenier sisters, Catherine and Sophie.

Upon meeting Sophie and Catherine one cannot help but notice their ease and quiet confidence in a setting that is neither modern nor traditional. Their tasting room is simple and modest much like their cellar so that the overall impression you get is one of timelessness. Being located in a rural part of an already remarkably rural appellation only reinforces the impression that they operate in an oasis of calm, balance and poise. So it only makes sense that their wines also share these qualities. While their family's roots in the region can be traced back to the 13th century the Domaine is surprisingly new having been founded in 1989 but from vineyards that have been in their family for generations.

Domaine de Marcoux was a pioneer in organic and biodynamic farming long before it was fashionable which is now overseen by Catherine with assistance from Sophie's son Vincent. They farm about 18 ha in Chateauneuf-du-Pape, 8 ha in Lirac and a little over 2 ha just north of Châteauneuf where they make a lovely and nuanced Côtes-du-Rhône. There is a wide range of soil types from sandy soils in Charbonnières, to red clay and galets in L'Arnesque and Les Bouquets, to



FACTS & FIGURES

FOUNDED

1989

PROPRIETOR

Famille Armenier & Estevenin

WINEMAKER

Sophie Estevenin

SIZE

28 ha

ELEVATION

50-130 meters above sea level

SOILS

Red clay, galets, sand, gravel, limestone marl

VINE AGE

25-110+

VARIETIES

Grenache, Mourvedre, Syrah, Cinsault, Roussanne, Clairette, Grenache Blanc

FARMING

Certified organic (ECOCERT) and practicing biodynamic

HARVEST

Manual

CELLAR

Destemmed, short pre-fermentation maceration, fermentation and maceration from 2-3 weeks with delestage, aged in concrete and 350L French oak barrels

limestone and marl in Les Esquillons and Beaurenard, to red clay and gravel in Gallimardes, Les Serres and Les Plagnes. They grow mainly Grenache, with an average vine age of 50 years old, with smaller amounts of Mourvedre, Syrah, Cinsault, Roussanne and Bourboulenc.

Their aforementioned modest cellar, the domaine of Sophie, is equipped with stainless steel tanks for fermentation and concrete vats for the aging of most of their wines. Some of the Roussanne and a portion of their other cuvées are aged in 350L French oak barrels, the percentage depending on the characteristics of the vintage. In years where the Grenache is both abundant and complex they make a bottling of their oldest vines, the Châteauneuf-du-Pape Vieilles Vignes, in addition to their regular Côtes-du-Rhône, Lirac and Châteauneuf-du-Pape Blanc and Rouge. Each cuvée begins with hand-harvested grapes that are destemmed and crushed upon reaching the cellar. They are allowed a short pre-fermentation maceration of a few days. Fermentation and maceration last between 2-3 weeks with delestage for a gentler extraction. After pressing the wine is aged primarily in concrete with a small amount aged in 350L barrels. These are wonderfully elegant and balanced wines that showcase the potential for Grenache to be viewed as the Pinot Noir of the Mediterranean.

