

DOMAINE DES TOURELLES

Vieilles Vignes Cinsault



ORIGIN

Lebanon

APELLATION

Bekaa Valley

SOIL

Clay limestone

AGE OF VINES

50+

ELEVATION

1050 meters

VARIETIES

Cinsault

FARMING

Practicing organic

FERMENTATION

*Hand harvested, natural yeast fermentation
in concrete vats, 10 day maceration*

AGING

8 months in neutral French oak barrels

While only 30-50km from the Mediterranean coast, the Bekaa valley in Lebanon is at an average elevation of 1000 meters and surrounded by mountains – Mount Lebanon in the west and the Anti-Lebanon range in the east. Both ranges are composed of limestone, sandstone, and dolomite which has weathered to form heavy clays in the center of the valley where cereal grains are grown, and poor, gravelly, clays on the edges where vines and olive trees thrive. Despite its southern latitude, its elevation ensures warm, dry days and cool nights during summer. In winter, the oak- and cedar-clad mountains are snow-covered ensuring plenty of groundwater year-round.

Blessed with an ideal climate for growing grapes, Faouzi Issa and Domaine des Tourelles have a simple philosophy of sustainable and manual farming, social responsibility, hand harvesting, indigenous fermentation, minimal SO₂, and a preference for neutral oak aging for their red wines except for the Marquis des Beys and Syrah du Liban. Temperature control for the red wines is entirely passive and based on centuries of knowledge on how to keep cool in a hot climate. While the majority of the wines ferment in cement tanks dating back to the mid-19th century, the whites and rosé are fermented in temperature-controlled stainless steel tanks to preserve their freshness. The byproducts from the fermentations are composted and returned to the soils. These are not only sustainably-made wines, but they are wines of tremendous authenticity, minimally made, and nourishingly Mediterranean.

What is it about Cinsault that has us excited? As a variety, it is perfectly adapted to heat and drought and in the Bekaa Valley, the conditions are perfect to keep its vigor in check. When fully ripe it retains remarkable floral aromatics and delicate but forthright red fruit flavors. Alcohol levels are moderate for a Mediterranean red variety and it preserves a high level of acidity. Not only does Faouzi Issa know of Cinsault's potential, but he has both old vines of Cinsault on hand, and the intuitive confidence to let it express itself naturally by fermenting it, undisturbed, with indigenous yeasts in his family's ancient concrete tanks and aging it only in well-seasoned French oak barrels.

