

Domaine Les Bastides

Côteaux d'Aix-en-Provence



The Wines

- *Côteaux d'Aix Blanc*: This is based on Vermentino and Sauvignon Blanc with some Clairette from parcels growing on north-facing slopes. Carole is a big fan of this wine, and she gets a lot of texture and flavor out of her grapes. This normally undergoes full malolactic fermentation and has no need of acid "adjustments." On average, one tank is made each year, or 250 cases.
- *Côteaux d'Aix Rosé de Saignée*: Based on Grenache and then Cinsault with sometimes a dollop of Mourvèdre. This is a full-bodied, textured wine with structure that makes it superb at the table. It's made only in good years and production averages 800 cases maximum.
- *Côteaux d'Aix Rosé de Carole*: This is the rosé made via direct press, in which the grapes are directly and lightly pressed to make this wine. It is a much clearer wine than the rosé de saignée, readily understood and easily appreciated. It's based on Cabernet Sauvignon with Grenache and a little Mourvèdre. Production averages 1,500 cases.
- *Côteaux d'Aix Rouge*: A 70-30 blend from vines averaging 30 years old (the oldest parcel dates from 1964) of Grenache and Cabernet Sauvignon growing on slopes between 720 and 985 feet above sea level. The grapes are de-stemmed, fermented separately, and aged over the first winter in tanks where clarification and malolactic fermentation happen naturally. Then the wine is blended and put into *foudre* for roughly 12 months. Production averages 830 cases.
- *Côteaux d'Aix Rouge Valéria*: This is a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon with some 40% Grenache from the same parcels as the rouge traditional above, and the wine is treated the same except the time in *foudre* is roughly doubled. Valéria was an important Roman in the region during the days of the Roman occupation. Production averages 1,100 cases.
- *Vin Cuit*: The wine that Jean Salen single-handedly resurrected from old recipes he dug up when he launched his own production (today there are still only a handful of producers). It is a traditional wine from the region of Aix-en-Provence, and Thomas Jefferson noted 17 bottles of *vins cuits de Provence* in one of his inventories at Montpellier. The wine can be made of any number of varieties, but in the case of Domaine Les Bastides it is the juice of Grenache and only Grenache that simmers in a cauldron over a wood fire for hours on end, constantly stirred, never boiled, until it's reduced by 25-30%, whereupon it's chilled down and put into tank to ferment very slowly, then filtered and bottled before Christmas without any added sugar or spirits. Traditionally, this was served during Christmas holidays with 13 desserts symbolizing Christ and his apostles.

Les Bastides does not make this wine every year because it requires a concentrated vintage (and it does come from a single vintage even though it's labeled without a year because the production is too small to order an expensive run of labels specifying the vintage; Carole orders a large run to be used for multiple vintages).

This Vin Cuit is a rich and surprisingly elegant wine, redolent of apricots and quince, and it is nothing if not delicious. Production averages 150 cases.