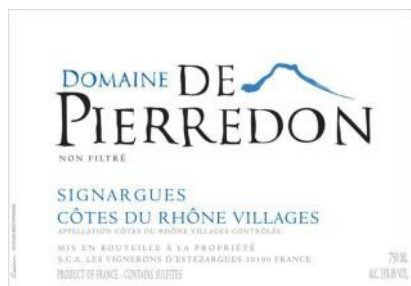


Domaine de Pierredon

Côtes du Rhône



Located near the town of Estézargues (*es-tay-zargue*) in the Côtes du Rhône, Pierredon is an old family operation with 70 hectares (173 acres) of vines managed today by Miryam and Christian Granier. The climate is classically Mediterranean: hot and dry, with a strong influence of the Mistral, the famous wind that roars off the Alps and down through the Rhône Valley to the Mediterranean. The domaine grows both olives and grapes and tends its orchards and vineyards organically. In 2012 it started down the regulatory path of certification, and was fully certified organic with the 2015 vintage.

The Graniers are one of ten primary members of the Estézargues co-op (measured by vineyard surface, they are the second most important member). In addition, there are 20-odd secondary members who sell their grapes to the co-op from less than a couple of hectares. What has set this cooperative apart in France and made it one of the very best—if not the best—in the country, is its individual cuvée policy and its natural winemaking ethic. Starting in 1995, the co-op began making specific cuvées entirely from the best grapes of a given primary member and naming the cuvée after the specific domaine. Following on the heels of that practice was the institution of a set of rules governing wine-making: no adding of yeast or enzymes, no addition of SO₂ except at bottling, and no fining or filtration. This was and is possible because the co-op is relatively small; because its members are serious growers; and because it had two very serious directors bookending the turn of the century (see our profile on Combe Queyzaire on these pages).

Domaine Pierredon has only two individual cuvées made at the co-op: a Côtes du Rhône and a Côtes du Rhône Villages named "Signargues." There is a significant difference in the *appellation contrôlée* rules governing the two legal categories. The *Villages* designation comes with stricter controls, mainly that the vines grow in demonstrably better sites than simple Côtes du Rhône (normally higher elevation, with better air and water drainage and less rich soils), and that the yields are required to be lower. We carry the Signargues Villages cuvée.