



## ∞ DOMAINE DE LA RÉSERVE d'O ∞ Terrasses du Larzac & St.Saturnin

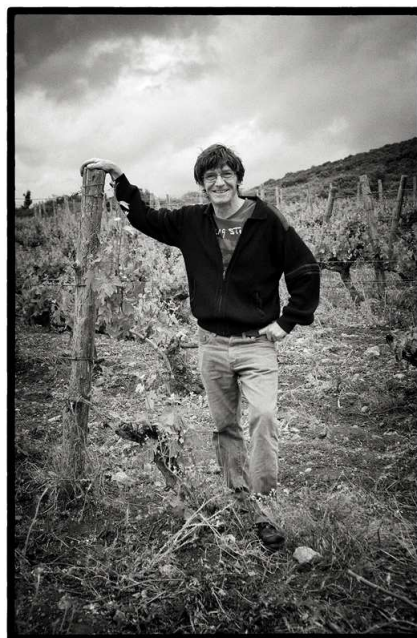
Should the wine-loving tourist travelling to the south of France, or indeed Catalonia, choose the 'middle' route (and well they might, for it is lighter on motorway toll charges and offers some fine scenery) it can afford several moments in which the senses are briefly confounded. Norman Foster's spectacular Millau viaduct is certainly amongst them, and worthy of pause to ascend track beside the *aire* to view this extraordinary feat of design and engineering from a vantage point slightly above the road level. The traveller might then continue south to La Caylar, and take the D9. After a few miles one will find oneself driving through a strange landscape of rock formations, pine trees and wild box, the latter giving the place the appearance of a surreal prehistoric garden, all interspersed with stone-walled meadows grazing Lacaune, Manech, and Basco-Béarnaise sheep, the milk of which provides the raw material for the famous Roquefort cheese. This is the Plateau de Larzac. After a while, passing very little habitation, you reach a bend, then another, and quite suddenly the Languedoc is spectacularly spread out in front and below. Several hairpins beyond lies the village of Arboras. This is the abrupt meeting place between the cool of the high Cévennes and the heat of the Mediterranean south, one of the essential keys to the complexity and poise of the wines of the Terrasses de Larzac. And abrupt it is, for there is a palpable difference in feel from top to bottom.



To this intriguing recipe must now be added the soils, for the *Terrasses* comprise variously limestone marls, sands and gravels, combinations well suited to the Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre, Cinsault and Carignane vines which are permitted here. The appellation covers a rough triangle, cut through by the Herault river, and includes the communes of Aniane, Arboras, Jonquières, Montpeyroux, Puéchabon & St.Saturnin, names increasingly familiar to those lovers of great wine who have ventured beyond the (perceived) safety of Bordeaux, Burgundy and so on.

The history of the grapevine here is long, for the Romans were the first to exploit these high terraces, a culture which was renewed by the Benedictine monks following the foundation of the monasteries in Aniane and St.Guilhelm-le-Desert in around 800AD. However, Larzac's modern incarnation has taken a rather less traditional form, for it has served as a spectacular magnet for talented, innovative and often maverick wine producers, many if not most of them exiles from other walks of life. The first was Aime Guilbert, who settled in Aniane in 1975 and founded the now famous Mas de Daumas Gassac. Olivier Julien, a Larzac 'insider', followed on a decade later, and there have been many others since.

La Réserve d'O is run by Brazilian agronomist Marie Chauffray and her rock 'n' roller and ex-Parisian 'caviste' husband Frédéric, a couple who grew restless with the retail side of the wine trade, settling in 2004 in this wild and scenic place, where they bought 12 hectares of old Grenache, Cinsault and Syrah high up on a craggy, calcereous terrace above the village, beyond which rears the grey sentinel of the Mont Saint Baudille. Wild thyme, sage and fennel grow amongst the vines, which are certified as both Organic and Biodynamic. The couple built a winery out of huge rectangular limestone blocks from the same quarry as provided the materiel for the Roman viaduct at Pont du Gard. It is an entirely gravity-fed affair in which the grapes are brought in under the open eaves of the roof, the wine being vinified and aged in the storey below. Techniques are those of the cult of low-intervention – fermentation under indigenous yeasts, with no enzymes or other additives, no fining or filtration, and very little, sometimes no sulphur at bottling. They make four *cuvées* of red, variations of variety, vine-age and lieu-dit. They all combine vibrant flavours of red and wild black fruits, with notes of black olives and herbs, with a wonderful freshness of character wrought from the unique conditions of this rugged location



2012 **DOMAINE DE LA RÉSERVE D'O 'BILBO'**  
AOC Saint Saturnin

**G**renache more or less *pur*, from venerable vines. Quite light in colour, as may be expected from this thin-skinned stalwart of the south made famous by its status as the majority stakeholder in Chateauneuf-du-Pape, it bounces beautifully fresh, bright red fruits onto the nose. There is a wonderful immediacy here, and a core of sweetly ripe *petits fruits rouges*. It is medium bodied, with an intensely clean strap of acidity which carries a burst of ripe fruit across the palate, and it finishes long, with a twist of fortifying tannin. It is quite delicious.

£12.45 PER BOTTLE    £69.60 PER CASE of SIX (£11.60 EACH)

2013 **DOMAINE DE LA RÉSERVE D'O 'SANSSOO'**  
AOC Languedoc, Saint Saturnin

**T**his bottling, released only until April following the harvest, receives no added sulphur at all, hence the name. It comprises 50/50 30 year old Cinsault and Syrah, cropped at a low 25 hectolitres per hectare. It is deep, almost opaque, with fresh, quite primary notes of blueberry and dark chocolate. It has crystal clear freshness with an arching acidity under which lies a velvety, intense red and black fruit. Very mineral, with a long finish. To be drunk young, this summer & autumn. Only 60 bottles, so it might have to be rationed.

£12.45 PER BOTTLE    £69.60 PER CASE of SIX (£11.60 EACH)

2010 LA RÉSERVE D'O  
AOC Terrasses de Larzac

**G**renache and Syrah with a little Cinsault. Deep, almost opaque ruby. Immediate impression of bottled southern warmth. Clear mineral freshness, fine black *fruits sauvages*, full, fine and mouthfilling, dark fruits, sweet mulberry with a twist of liquorice. The tannins are strong, well structured and clean. Polished and masculine. Drink through to 2016.

£13.65 PER BOTTLE    £76.20 PER CASE *of* SIX (£12.70 EACH)

2011 LA RÉSERVE D'O 'HISSEZ O'  
AOC Terrasses de Larzac

**O**lder plots of Grenache, Syrah & Cinsault, this is raised in a mixture of 2 and 3 year old 228 litre *barriques* and 400 litre *demi-muids*. Bright colour, opaque centre. Rich, open aromas of brooding dark fruits and more lifted red fruits, generous, ripe and round, with hints of cigar tobacco, roast spices and liquorice. Intense, and complex, with a marked ripe sweetness balanced out by full, rounded tannins. Through to 2018.

£17.95 PER BOTTLE    £101.70 PER CASE *of* SIX (£16.95 EACH)

∞ INTRODUCTORY OFFER ∞

A CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, ONE BOTTLE EACH OF SANSO O AND HISSEZ O, AND TWO BOTTLES EACH OF BILBO AND LA RESERVE D'O, £73.00, REPRESENTING A SAVING OF 10% AGAINST THE SINGLE BOTTLE PRICES.

*\* Limited period, normal delivery charges apply.*



∞ SOME EASTER DRINKING THOUGHTS ∞

CHAMPAGNE VEUVE FOURNY  
BLANC DE BLANCS <sub>1er</sub> Cru NV

The wines of this small, family run house have been getting quietly better and better, the epitome now of top class grower's Champagne. Run by Madame Fourny and her two sons, the family exploit some 16 hectares of 1er Cru vines in Vertus on the famous Côte de Blancs, using a mixture of organic and biodynamic principles. Only the first pressing is used, and the wines are subjected to a minimum of three years ageing prior to disgorgement, and a further 6 months "on the cork". The house style here easily confirms the theory that the Chardonnay grape contributes the greatest degree of finesse to Champagne. The non-vintage Blanc de Blancs is rich and creamy, whilst maintaining great elegance and style, a Champagne of considerable harmony. It is also very reasonably priced.

£27.90 PER BOTTLE    £153.30 PER CASE *of* SIX (£25.55 EACH)

2009 VERDEJO – VIURA, FINCA REMENDIO  
RUEDA, SPAIN

The Rueda is Spain's most promising and versatile white wine region, the high, flat plain in the region of Valladolid, to the west of the Ribera del Duero. The crisp nuttiness of Verdejo is held on a tight rein here. Clean, fresh, white stone fruits, intense, with hints of apples and cut grass. Bone dry, and deliciously refreshing, and consistently one of our best sellers.

£9.25 PER BOTTLE    £51.90 PER CASE *of* SIX (£8.65 EACH)

2009 SÉGURET Tradition  
DOMAINE DE MOURCHON

With the 2011 on the way, we still have a few cases of Walter MacKinley's lovely Côtes du Rhône Villages Séguret in the generous, indeed almost hedonistically ripe 2009 vintage. With a seductively glinting clear ruby colour in the glass, it is open, warm and heady to the nose, with a mix of dark and dried fruits, cigar tobacco, forest-floor (so much more poetic as the French *sous-bois*) and a hint of tar or liquorice. In the mouth it is immediate, rich and open, with expansive yet beautifully fresh, ripe fruit right across the palate, driven by a finely grained tannic acidity to a lingering finish. Mature and quite lovely, as good as Chateauneuf-du-Pape, and I cannot think of a wine that would be more delicious with Easter lamb generously seasoned with fresh herbs, as it would be in the hills of northern Provence.

£13.45 PER BOTTLE    £75.00 PER CASE *of* SIX (£12.50 EACH)



## ☞ CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA ☞

Pietro Mascagni

Should the wine trade claim an opera as its own, this is surely as strong a contender as any. And there is, of course, an overwhelming Easter connection. A (some might say 'the usual') heady tale of love, betrayal, adultery, jealousy, remorse and (for this is an opera), murder, all interwoven with religion, it is set in a Sicilian village circa 1890 on Easter morning, and it peripherally involves Alfio, a wine carter, as well as Lucia, a wine shop owner. Its best known moment is the sublime intermezzo, made famous again as the dramatic backdrop to the vengeful mafia murders at the climax to 'The Godfather III' (and for me, in a fame of kinds, by having serenaded my about-to-be wife up the aisle at our wedding, played delightfully crankily on the church organ at Bobbingworth by the late Dr. Geoffrey Tomkins). I always feel that the intermezzo, a favourite of the like of Classic fm, risks veering towards the soupy when taken out of its rather fierce dramatic context, as indeed do many operatic arias. More is sometimes more, with opera. Less well known is the gay, jaunty wine drinking song which takes place as the villagers celebrate after the Easter service, "*Viva, il vino spumeggiante*" – "Hail to the bubbling wine!"

Friends, come here! / Let's drink a glass.  
Here's to the frothing wine, / Sparkling in the glass,  
Like the lover's smile / It inspires rejoicing!  
Here's to the wine that's sincere / That makes every thought a happy one  
And that drowns a black humour / In soft intoxication.

It does, of course, look, sound and 'flow' far better in Italian! I shall be listening to it (all of it, for it is as blissfully short as it is blissful) over Easter, with a glass or two. Now, where am I going with this – ah, yes, but a glass of what?

Any of the earlier suggestions would certainly suffice, surely the Champagne if you are listening in the morning, when Champagne very often tastes at its best. But how about something authentically Sicilian, and inexpensive to boot. Now if you are partying or barbecuing, these two will be just as good. They really don't need an opera at all!

### 2012 CATARRATTO IGP Terre Siciliane, Parva Res

Made in the high Giumarella Hills, east of Marsala (for Marsala wine is where Catarratto grapes used to go) this is a thoroughly modern white, pale in colour, clean, dry and fresh, with notes of citrus and white flowers, a crisp, zesty acidity and a long finish. Its appeal is as clear and easy as its price.

£7.75 PER BOTTLE    £43.50 PER CASE of SIX (£7.25 EACH)

### 2012 NERO D'AVOLA IGP Terre Siciliane, Parva Res

Nero d'Avola is another Sicilian resident, as dark as its name suggests. It is deep in colour, with aromas of black and red cherries, plums and bitter chocolate. On the palate it is intense, juicy and vibrant, with ripe blackberry and raspberry flavours and soft tannins. Perfectly lovely. Buona Parsqua!

£7.75 PER BOTTLE    £43.50 PER CASE of SIX (£7.25 EACH)





‘Great wines from small growers’.

## EASTER 2014

### Wine Shop at Ashlyn’s Opening Times

Good Friday 11.00 am – 4.00 pm

Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> 11.00 am – 4.00 pm

Easter Sunday 11.00 am – 4.00 pm

Monday 21<sup>st</sup> 11.00 am – 4.00 pm

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