

Selections



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The Gorgeous 2005 Gigondas from Domaine du Cayron

In late January H el ene and I once again strode eagerly through the portals of the Inter Cave wine emporium in Saint-R emy-du-Provence, anxious to see what new treasures our friend and mentor Christian Esparza had lying in wait for us. After the requisite greetings and jibes about my lack of progress in mastering the French language we got on to serious matters. “Do you know the highly esteemed Gigondas house owned by the Faraud family?” questioned Christian. “Come try their 2005 Domaine de Cayron.”

I will save the tasting notes for a little later. Suffice to say for now that it was brilliant. However, we were concerned that if we approached Domaine de Cayron we would be in conflict with our superb supplier just down the road, Domaine Palon, producers of C otes-du-Rh one, Vacqueyras and Gigondas so popular with our *H el ene chatting with Christian Esparza* clients. “Not to worry”, mused Christian, “these are two very different styles Gigondas that will actually complement each other. The Cayron is very traditional while the Palon is a more modern wine. And, the Farauds and Palons are great friends and have long supported each other.”



So the next day we headed north-east into the country past Ch ateaneuf du Pape towards the imposing jagged heaps of rock called the Dentelles (lace) de Montmirail. We passed by Domaine Palon and climbed the hill into the small, charming village of Gigondas (where there seem to be more cats and dogs than citizens) – Domaine de Cayron is on the left as you approach the town square.

Gigondas

This classic Provençal hill town has narrow sidewalks inching up the Dentelles, more tractors and mini-trucks than cars, a hodgepodge of houses and caveaux, and shade trees aligned strategically around the village's square (where a game of boules is usually in progress). Gigondas was once the site of impressive Roman villas, as artefacts from the Roman occupation of France have been found throughout the village and surrounding vineyards. The word Gigondas is believed to be derived from the Latin word *jocundits*, which meant 'merry city'.



From the 19th Century, Gigondas' reputation for the warmth of its wines led to strong demand from Burgundy négociants for Gigondas in bulk for blending. From Corton to Chambertin, cutting with Châteauneuf du Pape or Gigondas was commonplace, less favoured crus getting cheaper, gut-scorching North African instead.

Up until 1971 Gigondas was just another village of the Côtes du Rhône appellation. But thanks to the efforts of Pierre Amadiou, Edmond Chauvet and Hilarion Roux who strongly believed in the merit of its wines, Gigondas was awarded its own appellation status that year. The Gigondas growers, convinced of the importance of Grenache to their wines, persuaded the authorities to raise the maximum proportion of this grape from 65% to 80% in 1986. The aim was to reduce plantings of Cinsault, a grape that produces large quantities of thin wine, and to increase the proportions of Syrah and Mourvèdre.

As Robert Parker notes in his excellent book 'Wines of the Rhône Valley', "Gigondas remains one of the wine world's great bargains. Gigondas is never a shy or subtle wine. Its appeal is its robust, frank, generous, extroverted character, in addition to its value. It is to be savoured and admired because of these virtues. Great wines from Gigondas will rival those of its neighbor Châteauneuf du Pape and the wines produced under the skillful hands of the Faraud family often do just that."

Domaine de Cayron

Considered by many to be the benchmark producer in the appellation (Robert Parker deems it to be one of only three 'Outstanding' producers), Cayron produces a Gigondas of phenomenal richness and incredible longevity. You'd be hard-pressed to find a more terroir-expressive wine anywhere in the Southern Rhone; bold, explosive, stunningly evocative garrigue flavors careen from the glass, blaring their stamp of origin like a neon sign. These are old-styled, powerful wines of enormous fruit amplitude and irresistible personality. Furthermore, Cayron is among the most age-worthy of Gigondas, delicious upon release, but improving for well over a decade and holding strong for a long time thereafter. This 16-hectare domaine, run by the Faraud family, is a classic and truly top-flight estate.

The Faraud family has been making just one wine, an extremely concentrated, intense Gigondas for over 150 years - and it is consistently an excellent value. Michel Faraud recently turned over the operation of his winery to his three daughters – Delphine, Sandrine and Roseline. They work very hard in the vineyard, restricting yields and always harvesting their vines at their maximum ripeness. The wine then rests in old wood for a year before it is bottled. The Farauds don't fine or filter their Gigondas and the massive amounts of ripe black fruit flavors found in their wine are always tempered by a profoundly complex expression of the terroir.



Sandrine, Delphine and Roseline

The Wine

Everything at Domaine du Cayron seems to be done the old fashioned way and the result is a full-bodied, sensual wine that truly excites the senses. The press at the left with Sandrine, Roseline and H el ene standing guard is not a prop; it is used for every vintage (after the grapes have been hand-picked and sorted). And the huge, old oak foudres on the right, with Sandrine acquiring one of our tasting samples, each contain a complete vintage.



We happily tasted several vintages and there is a definite consistency of charm and character between them – a real house style that reflects their terroir and family traditions. They are being made the way the Farauds want them and are not manipulated to appeal to the prejudices of wine writers or large importers. They don't

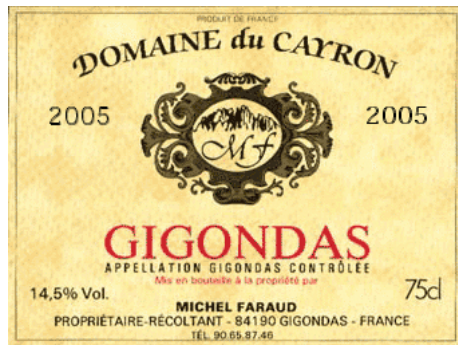
have to – each vintage is practically spoken for before the bottling begins.



The Farauds have kindly agreed to ship their treasures in **six-bottle cases**. Our allotment for the 2005 vintage is **only 30 cases**, so please order now to avoid disappointment. We plan to take your orders to the LCBO on **Wednesday, July 9th**.

2005 Domaine de Cayron Gigondas – (14.0% Alc. by Vol.)

\$34.00/btl. - \$204/6 btl. Case



70% Grenache; 15% Cinsault; 14% Syrah; 1% Mourv dre
23 hl/ha!!

40+ years average age of vines

This is a very big, serious and classic Gigondas from a great vintage that needs at least another year in the bottle before consuming. Note the yield ... a most stingy 23 hectolitres per hectares. It is a beautiful dark red with an intense nose of spring flowers, black raspberries, minerals and cherries. In the mouth it is full, elegant and dense marked by cherry and cassis notes with a very, very long finish. It will go wonderfully with red meats (magret de canard would be divine), game and a wide variety of cheese.

Here is what **Robert Parker** says: "The 2005 is a bigger, beefier, richer wine, bordering on rustic, but it pulls back just before it goes over the edge. Dense plum/ruby with notes of incense, black pepper, lavender, black cherries, and cassis, the wine is spicy, herbal, meaty, and a classic Gigondas to drink over the next decade. This classic producer of Gigondas (40 acres with relatively old vines) makes wine based on 70% Grenache, 15% Cinsault, 14% Syrah, and the rest Mourv dre. The wine is aged 6-15 months in old foudres." Score 89-91/100 - *Wine Advocate* (Mar 2008)

Stephen Tanzer adds: "Wonderfully complex and seductive bouquet of strawberry, dark cherry, garrigue and baking spices. Supple red and dark berry flavors are gently supported by soft acidity, finishing with building power and lightly chewy tannins." Score 91/100 - *Stephen Tanzer* (Apr 2008)

This is a truly monumental, age-worthy wine that will reward patience. [Order](#) your classic Gigondas now.

Note: the price includes \$1.00 per bottle handling fee.



Would you like to visit the source of many of Arthur's Cellar wines? Does a relaxing week living on a luxurious Provençal country estate appeal? Do markets in quaint villages, visits to our vineyards, lunch in restaurants perched on hillsides or cantilevered over streams, gourmet dinners with a local flair and so much more sound tempting? H el ene is hosting small groups of about ten guests for one week stays at the beautiful Saint Albergaty Bastide in the countryside near Avignon in Provence. Please see www.ofrance.ca for all the delicious details.

This fall's visit is sold out, but reservations are now being booked for 2009. There is room for six guests for the week of September 19 to 26, 2009 and H el ene would be pleased to consider additional dates for next fall. Just let her know.

Share a Case



Is a full case too much of a good thing? No problem. Just click beside the icon shown at the left as it appears on the "Wine Details" on our website and leave a note saying how many bottles you would like. For full details, see [Share a Case](#).

Soon to Emerge from Arthur's Cellar

Next will be some delightful Beaujolais from Domaine du Penlois followed by the terrific, value-priced C otes-du-Rh one from Ch ateau Bosc la Croix and the return of many of your favourites including Domaine Palon, Domaine Chabrier Fils, Ch ateau de l'Isolette and Maison Alex Gambal.

Member Feedback

Your feedback is greatly appreciated. It helps us improve our club and better respond to your requirements. Many of your suggestions have been implemented and we are working on several others. Thank you and please keep the comments coming (jaswalker@arthursellers.com).

For the wine club to be successful, we need as many wine buying members as possible – please forward this newsletter to likely prospects and keep those referrals coming.

Thank you and cheers!

H el ene and Jim

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