

Selections



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Introducing the “Wow!” Wines from Domaine La Croix Chaptal



Domaine

LA CROIX CHAPTAL

When he heard we were going to the big Vinisud wine show in Montpellier (southern France) last February, our mentor M. Esparza of Inter Caves wines in Saint-Rémy de Provence told us to look up Charles-Walter Pacaud. “He has a treasure trove of wines from the Languedoc” he enthused. So, early one morning, somewhat subdued from a week of



Charles Pacaud - the savvy businessman greets his many admirers in Montpellier

tasting hundreds of wines, eating too much and getting far too little sleep, we ventured into one of the huge exhibition halls and tottered our way over to the Domaine La Croix Chaptal booth where the ebullient Charles-Walter Pacaud was holding court (nobody should be ebullient that early in the morning). Even at this most disagreeable hour, agents from around the globe were hovering, awaiting their few moments with this emerging wine-world luminary. Fortunately, M. Esparza had warned Charles that we were coming and soon we were talking and tasting with our engaging host (actually, as is usually the case, Hélène was talking and I was tasting). “Wow!” I mumbled several times. I just couldn’t help myself. Wine after wine, from rosé to white to red and finally sweet, was chocked full of tantalizing flavours and was beautifully made. Once again, M. Esparza had guided us in the right direction.

Coteaux du Languedoc

The Coteaux de Languedoc, part of the huge Languedoc-Roussillon region of southern France (producing more wine than Australia or Bordeaux), is itself a large and varied wine producing area that fans out from Montpellier near the Mediterranean up to the Massif Central. As Paul Strang notes in his excellent book, 'Languedoc-Roussillon, The Wines and Winemakers', "Certainly the most diffuse and varied appellation of Languedoc-Roussillon, Coteau du Languedoc is an amalgam of vastly differing landscapes and terroirs; the wines made there are equally diverse in style. But in each region there is bound to be a handful of growers succeeding in making some of the best wine of the south."

While wine grapes have been cultivated in the area since Roman times, it was the Benedictine Monks who really developed the reputation of the Languedoc from the tenth to the nineteenth centuries. For trivia fans, here is how the area got its name. Languedoc describes the division between southern France where yes was "Oc" and the north where yes was/is "Oui". It simply means the language where they say Oc!

The Domaine

Domaine La Croix Chaptal can be found in a hamlet called Cambous, which is located on the western part of the rural district of St André de Sangonis, 30 kms north-west of Montpellier. The estate dates from at least 1826 where it was listed in the



Charles in his natural habitat,
displaying the 2006 bounty

area's first land registry as part of the Seigneurie of Cambous owned by Edouard Auguy de Vitry, a lawyer in Gignac. He built the existing cellar and festooned it with the Croix du Languedoc, enhanced by a heart which gives rise to today's name of the estate. Charles purchased the property from Auguy de Vitry's descendants in 1999 and has been restructuring and restoring it ever since.



La Croix Chaptal

The estate consists of 25 hectares of vineyards and 10 hectares of woods sprawling over the slopes leading to the Terrasses du Larzac. Pebbles and gravel are the main components of the poor soil that is naturally drained on the hilltops and plateau that are constantly swept by those pesky winds, the Mistral and the Tramontane. But it is ideal for grape vines. The Syrah thrives on the cold clay soils while the Clairette du Languedoc, (the grape of the renowned local white wines) Grenache and Old Carignan develop to their full potential on the warmer

soils.

Before creating Domaine La Croix Chaptal, Charles worked for several wine companies well known for their innovative spirit and modern winemaking techniques. He has combined this experience with a healthy appreciation for tradition to produce truly remarkable and enjoyable wines. For more information about the winery, please visit www.lacroixchaptal.com.

The “Wow!” Wines of Domaine La Croix Chaptal

While it might seem like hyperbole, my tasting notes from Vinisud for Domaine La Croix Chaptal do have “wow” written all over them. These are really, really good wines. While Charles does not believe in pursuing wine awards, all of his wines receive multiple rave reviews in the wine press. All come in **six-bottle cases**, but think about ordering a couple because you will wish you had even more. We will be **placing our order for these fine wines on December 13th**.

2005 Domaine La Croix Chaptal Rosé “Domaine” – (12.5% Alc./Vol.) \$15.95



This is a full-bodied yet subtle rosé made by the saignée method (rosé wine can be made in five different ways – in the saignée or bleeding method, crushed or broken red grapes are chilled and the juice stays in contact with the skins for 12 to 48 hours. The alcohol acts as a solvent, extracting colour, tannin and aroma from the skin. The juice is then drawn off by static draining, rather than by pressing and then is cold fermented like a white wine.) This beautiful vibrant pink wine is made from 40% Carignan, 40% Grenache and 20% Syrah grapes and has been partially aged in new oak. It has full, rich aromas of strawberries, raspberries and other red fruit along with a hint of citrus, which carries

through to the nice crisp finish. This is a very serious rosé that will keep for several years and will go well with pork, ham and Oriental dishes. [Click here](#) to get this wonderful wine well before next summer.

2005 Domaine La Croix Chaptal Blanc “vieilles vignes” – (13.0% Alc./Vol.) \$15.95



This is a very, very good white wine at a very reasonable price. It is made from old Clairette du Languedoc blanc vines. The grapes are all hand picked and destemmed, pressed and left in contact with the skins for a very short time. It receives traditional vinification on its lees (25% in new oak and 75% in stainless steel tanks). Total production is only 8,000 bottles. It is a full-bodied, fresh and very clean white wine with tantalizing aromas of butter, toasted bread, almonds and citrus fruit. It is very smooth and finishes with a nice citrus aftertaste. It is a great wine to drink alone as an aperitif and will go well with shellfish, fish in white sauce or soft cheeses. This wine is drinking well now and will evolve to a

hazelnut taste in the second or third year (it then goes well with white meat accompanied by mushrooms in a white sauce), and later to a walnut taste (then it goes well with a whole range of cheeses). [Order](#) some of this delightful white for pure drinking pleasure.

2004 Domaine La Croix Chaptal Rouge “Cuvée Charles” – (13.0% Alc./Vol.) \$21.95



This one has the maestro’s name on it, so it had better be good! And it is, with more than twenty glowing citations from the wine press including four stars from Guide Dussert-Gerbert. It is made from 38% Syrah, 37% Carignan and 25% Grenache, is unfiltered and rests in oak barrels for a full year. The yield is a stingy 32 hectolitres per hectare. This is a beautiful, complex full-bodied wine. WOW comes to mind when I just think about it. It is a brooding dark ruby colour with aromas of raspberries, black currants, wild brush, toffee, chocolate, toasted coffee and kirsch. It has beautiful, complex tannins and has a long, lingering aftertaste. This fine Coteaux du Languedoc is drinking well now and will

age brilliantly for many years. Serve with red meat, game or cassoulet. [Order](#) some of this classic, well-priced wine now for great drinking in a few months time.

2004 Domaine La Croix Chaptal “Les Origines” Cambous – (13.0% Alc./Vol.) \$28.95



Average yields of 17 to 25 hectolitres per hectare pretty much says it all, although I have to admit that another WOW punctuated the tasting. Through this wine Charles seeks to express the unique terroir of Cambous as it must have been in the Xth century when the monks of Gellone Abbey owned it. The wine is made of 85% Carignan, 10% Grenache and 5% Syrah. The grapes come from only the best plots and everything to do with making the wine is done with a painstaking care. It is gently oaked and receives no filtration. On the nose, this deep garnet wine has the aroma of strawberry and raspberry jam, a hint of Provençal spice and garrigue (the fragrant underbrush in southern France). In the mouth it is astonishingly full, round, supple and very well structured with lots of finesse in the tannins. This is definitely a wine for patient collectors. I wouldn't touch it for five years and it will live for many years beyond. [Click here](#) if you would like a Coteaux de Languedoc classic for your cellar.

Delivery Update

We are constructing a new section of our website to provide you with delivery progress reports on the wines you have ordered. It is expected to be completed within the week. In the meantime, here is the latest news on the whereabouts of your wine:

Cave de Lavilledieu du Temple – These should all be delivered by now. If you don't have your wine, please contact your local LCBO outlet. Also, please let us know what you think of these wines.

Champagne Forget-Brimont – was cleared by the LCBO on Friday, November 17th and local deliveries have begun; add two to three weeks for out-of-town deliveries.

Château Saint Jacques d'Albas – our fourth d'Albas shipment was cleared on Wednesday, November 15th. Local deliveries have begun; add two to three weeks for out-of-town deliveries.

Château Beauferan – arrived at the LCBO on November 10th. We'll keep our fingers crossed for a pre-Christmas delivery.

Château Robin – was picked up from the winery last Friday and is due at the LCBO warehouse on December 1st. With much luck we might have it by Christmas but I think early January is more likely given the workload at the LCBO during the holidays.

Domaine Palon – left the winery November 3rd and is scheduled to arrive at the LCBO December 8th. This will be a January delivery.

A Minervois Evening (or Two) – Completely Sold Out

Soon to Emerge from Arthur's Cellar

Next will be the brilliant white Vins de Pays Duché d'Uzès (a recent find) from Domaine Chabrier Fils, the storied wines (literally – get all the information in advance from the delightful book, 'Virgile's Vineyard – A Year in the Languedoc Wine Country by Patrick Moon) from Domaine Virgile Joly, some special Côtes du Luberon from Château de l'Isolette, more wonderful Minervois from La Famille Léonore, some more Parker rated Châteauneuf-du-Pape from Mousset-Barrot, nectar from the Burgundian house of Alex Gambal, two marvellous Italian Barbera d'Asti and many others.

Member Feedback

We really appreciate your feedback because it allows us to improve and better respond to your requirements. Many of your suggestions have already been put into place 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,

Hélène and Jim

PS: Our wines are also available for restaurants and other establishments that serve beverage alcohol by the glass – their prices will be a little lower because PST is not charged. If you are aware of any that might be interested, please let us know.

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