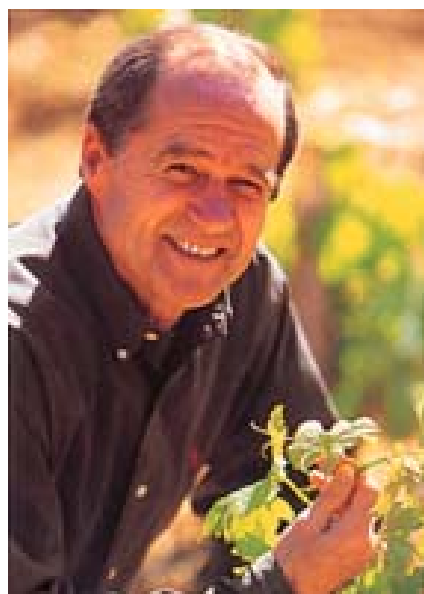




CHATEAU ETANG DES COLOMBES CORBIERES

FACT SHEET



OWNER

The Gualco family

PRODUCTS

White wines :

Corbières (Blanc), Blanc de Blancs, Château Etang des Colombes
 Corbières (Blanc), Cuvée du Bois des Dames, Château Etang des Colombes
 Vin de Pays d' Oc (Blanc), Viognier, Château Etang des Colombes

Rosé wine :

Corbières (Rosé), Gris de Colombes, Château Etang des Colombes

Red wines :

Corbières (Rouge), Cuvée Tradition, Château Etang des Colombes
 Corbières (Rouge), Cuvée du Bicentenaire, Vieilles Vignes, Château Etang des Colombes
 Corbières (Rouge), Cuvée du Bois des Dames, Château Etang des Colombes

SIZE OF THE VINEYARDS

80 Hectares in total.

LOCATION OF THE VINEYARDS

At Lézignan-Corbières, about 20 Kilometres east of Narbonne on the northern edge of the Corbières appellation.

SOIL

Gravel, limestone and clay with pebbles.

GRAPE VARIETIES

Blanc de Blancs : 40 % Grenache Blanc, 30 % Macabeo, 30 % Bourboulenc

Bois des Dames (Blanc) : 90 % Grenache Blanc, 10 % Bourboulenc

Vin de Pays d' Oc : 100 % Viognier

Gris des Colombes : 30 % Grenache, 30 % Cinsault, 20 % Syrah, 20 % Mourvèdre

Rouge Tradition : 40 % Grenache, 30 % Carignan, 20 % Syrah, 10 % Mourvèdre

Bicentenaire : 50 % Grenache, 30 % Carignan, 20 % Syrah

Bois des Dames (Rouge) : 50 % Carignan, 40 % Syrah, 10 % Grenache



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AVERAGE AGE OF THE VINES

Average 40 years, with young vines from a progressive replanting programme 'balanced' by seriously old Grenache and Carignan vines...up to 80 years in age.

AVERAGE PRODUCTION

Around 400 000 bottles per year

VINIFICATION AND AGEING

Blanc :

Harvested by hand the grapes are lightly macerated on their skins for 4 - 5 hours. Before being fermented they are pressed and the heavy deposits removed. Fermentation takes place in stainless steel vats over 7 days. The temperature is maintained between 18 and 19°C. Malolactic is not allowed to take place. The wine is racked twice and then stabilized by decreasing the temperature, precipitating the tartrates. The Cuvée Bois des Dames ferments and ages for one year in new small oak casks with regular 'bâtonnages'.

Rosé :

The Rosé is made by the 'saignée' method, i.e. running off of the juice after a skin maceration of several hours. Vinification is the same as for the whites.

Rouge :

Picking is by hand and each grape variety is vinified separately. Complete destemming. The whole grapes are macerated cold over a long period of two to three weeks, starting their fermentation towards the end of this period. After pressing, the must is placed in cement vats for further fermentation. The temperature is controlled at between 22 and 32°C. The malolactic fermentation follows and lasts for about 20 days. The wine is subsequently racked before being fined and racked again. At the end of the winter the wine is blended. The 'Rouge' is then aged in vat, with 10 % in oak, for up to two years. The Cuvée Bicentenaire is selected from older vines and is aged in wood for 6 months. The Cuvée Bois des Dames is also a selection of the oldest vines, receives a somewhat longer maceration and ages for one year in new oak casks.

TASTING NOTES

The white and rosé are very fresh and delightful for drinking during the summer following the harvest. They are fat with lots of fruit, assertive aromas and easy charm. The Viognier has all the spicy exotic appeal one finds in a good Condrieu.

The red wines are very special. They represent some of the finest values in the south of France. The 'traditional' Cuvée is released about three years after the harvest. It has become mellow and rich with plenty of fruit and the delightful spicy character of a good Corbières. One can almost smell the herbs and plants of the wild Corbières hills.



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The Cuvée Bicentenaire is more sophisticated with depth and polish. It has tremendous fruit and a touch of oak, adding to the complexity. One would be hard pressed to find better value in this part of France.

The Cuvée Bois des Dames, aged in new oak, is quite unique. Both the red and white are in a class of their own, not usually associated with the South of France. The new oak balances well with the fruit. The complex, spicy, oaky flavours are delicious. They place these wines in the same class as the classic French producing areas further north.

MARKETING

55 % of the wines are exported to Northern Europe, the United States, Japan and Australia. In France they are sold to restaurants, specialized shops and private customers.

NOTES ON THE PROPERTY

The Château Etang des Colombes (loosely translated as Dove Pond) was originally part of the property of the Archbishop of Narbonne. Like all Church property, the State confiscated the Domaine in the 18th century. Since then it has passed into the hands of various families, the best known of which are the De Montforts and the De Niquets, Lords of the Crusades.

In 1818 the land was divided up among several families. The present owner of the Château and surrounding vineyards is Henri Gualco, the third generation. He has brought Château Etang des Colombes to the top of the league in the Corbières Appellation and is, moreover, very active in promoting the area. He is president of numerous local organizations, as well as the national president of 'Les Caves Particulières', the largest organization of independent wine growers.

Henri, with his wife Françoise and son, Christophe, run Etang des Colombes with immense dedication and enthusiasm. In the early 1990's the family purchased Château Saint James, a neighbouring property of a similar size. This estate is gradually being restructured and replanted. It will no doubt become another leading property in the area.

Corbières :

This is the largest appellation of the Languedoc. The vineyards cover about 15 000 Hectares but are spread out over 11 subdistricts - Sigean, Durban, Quéribus, Termenès, Saint-Victor, Fontfroide, Lagrasse, Serniès, Montagne d' Alaric, Lézignan and Boutenac - all with their own 'terroir'. The country is hilly and rugged, alternating between lush green valleys and bare rocky hill tops. Small quantities of white and rosé wine are produced but the area is famous for its rich aromatic red wines, reminding one of the distinctive wild herbal aromas of the rough Mediterranean landscape.