



# DOMAINE SAINT GAYAN

## GIGONDAS

### FACT SHEET



#### OWNER

Jean-Pierre Meffre and his wife, Martine

#### PRODUCTS

White wine :

Côtes-du-Rhône Villages (Blanc), Sablet

Red wines :

Côtes-du-Rhône (Rouge)

Côtes-du-Rhône Villages (Rouge), Rasteau

Gigondas

Gigondas, Font Maria

Châteauneuf-du-Pape (Rouge)

#### SIZE OF THE VINEYARDS

38 Hectares in total :

1.4 Ha Sablet Blanc

11 Ha Côtes-du-Rhône

5 Ha Côtes-du-Rhône Villages "Rasteau"

16 Ha Gigondas

2 Ha 'Fontmaria'

0.75 Ha Châteauneuf-du-Pape

#### LOCATION OF THE VINEYARDS

The vineyards are widely spread over five communes : Gigondas, Courthezon (Chateauneuf-du-Pape), Rasteau, Sablet and Seguret. The Côtes-du-Rhône comes from vines planted in "Villages" territory at Sablet and Seguret. The cellars are on the northern edge of the Gigondas appellation below the Dentelles de Monmirail.

#### SOIL

Mostly clay and limestone with more sand and chalk at Sablet and more gravel at Rasteau, on the arid plateau named "Plan de Dieu". At Gigondas the soil is stony with clay and limestone. At Courthezon, the classic Châteauneuf-du-Pape soil with large rounded pebbles.

#### GRAPE VARIETIES

Sablet Blanc : 40% Viognier, 30% Bourboulenc, 15% Grenache Blanc, 15% Clairette

Côtes-du-Rhône : 65% Grenache, 20% Syrah, 5% Mourvèdre

Rasteau : 66 % Grenache, 27% Mourvedre, 7% Syrah



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Gigondas : 80% Grenache (Old vines), 15% Syrah, 5% Mourvedre

Gigondas 'Fontmaria' : 80% Grenache, 20% Syrah

Châteauneuf-du-Pape : 88% Grenache, 6% Syrah, 6% Mourvedre

#### AVERAGE AGE OF THE VINES

Sablet Blanc : 12 years old

Côtes-du-Rhône : 40 years old

Rasteau : 25 years old

Gigondas : 60 years old - some of the Grenache vines are more than 100 years old

Châteauneuf-du-Pape : 55 years

#### AVERAGE PRODUCTION

Côtes-du-Rhône : 45 hl/ha giving more than 3 000 cases per year

Rasteau : 40 hl/ha giving about 1 250 cases per year

Gigondas : 30 hl/ha giving more than 4 000 cases

Châteauneuf-du-Pape : 32 hl/ha for about 250 cases

#### VINIFICATION AND AGEING

Winemaking is very traditional at Saint Gayan. Picking by hand. No destemming. Only light 'fouillage'; about half the grapes stay intact. A long vinification in cement vats. Maceration lasts three to four weeks. Malolactic fermentation followed by long ageing in vat and oak 'foudres' for the regular Gigondas. Clarification is more by racking than fining. There are 3 or 4 rackings each year and only light filtration and fining when inevitable prior to bottling. The Meffres are never in a hurry. Their policy is to draw out the fermentation as long as possible. Allow the malolactic to take place naturally during the summer after the harvest and bottle only when they feel the wine is ready, after the tannins begin to soften. The Côtes-du-Rhône and the Rasteau are also kept about 18 months before release.

Cuvée Font Maria is a new Gigondas from Saint Gayan. It is a selection of the best Grenache and Syrah grapes, from old vines with ideal exposures, aged in 50% new oak barrels. Because the wine is so rich and full-bodied, it can support the oak without being dominated by it.

#### TASTING NOTES

The wines of Saint Gayan are considered among the very finest of the appellation. They are wines that are rich and concentrated, made for ageing.

The Côtes-du-Rhône is made from old vines at Sablet and Seguret, technically this is a Côtes-du-Rhône Villages but Meffre prefers to have only one Villages wine from his vineyard at Rasteau. Certainly the quality of the Côtes-du-Rhône is that of a villages. It has a deep colour,



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plenty of fruit and a richness that one would never expect in a straight Côtes-du-Rhône.

The Rasteau is special. The soil on the "Plan de Dieu" plateau at Rasteau is very stony and poor. The yields are low and the wines very rich and concentrated. In addition in Meffre's Rasteau, a high proportion of Mourvedre (30 %) adds to the complexity and gives ageing potential. This wine is of a quality that is equivalent to a good Châteauneuf-du-Pape or a Gigondas. Quite tannic and closed when young, the wine mellows after 4 or 5 years showing wonderful spicy peppery flavours and massive black cherry fruit on the palate. "Bright deep plum; nose of warm, earthy leather (Mourvèdre) and ripe, mouthfilling flavours, with plenty of muscle. More rustic than Gigondas, but ideal with rich food." (Rhône Renaissance - Remington Norman)

The 1989 Gigondas has been described by Robert Parker as a "blockbuster Gigondas with .... steel." 91 points. Of course 1989 was an exceptional year but other good vintages like 1988 and 1990 received similar praise. The style is basically classic with aromas of peppery black fruit and truffles, enormous complexity and concentration allowing ageing for at least 12 to 15 years in a good vintage. "The Meffres make one of the finest, classiest Gigondas reds, since they successfully fuse a well-rounded power with a balance and discretion of flavour that make it quietly very impressive. In boxing parlance, this is the sort of wine competing in the higher weights, but holding the skilled footwork and strength of a young Muhammed Ali. There is always a lot of depth in the wine ..." (The Wines of the Rhône - John Livingstone-Learmonth)

"Intense, limpid dark colour; fine aromas of stony griotte cherry leading to a firm, well-structured palate packed with ripe fruit; ... Very good plus." (Rhône Renaissance - Remington Norman)

### MARKETING

About 55 % of the production is exported mainly to the UK, USA, Australia, Japan and other European markets including Belgium, Germany, Sweden and Iceland. In France the Domaine makes direct sales to enthusiastic consumers, retailers and some restaurants including Le Crocodile (Strasbourg), Georges Blanc (Vonnas) and Beaugravière (Mondragon).

### NOTES ON THE PROPERTY

The history of wine in Gigondas dates back to Roman times. They called the Village "Jocunditas" : joy and happiness. The Meffre family has a long history connected with Gigondas as well. It was in the early 15 th century that they first planted vineyards among the fruit and olives trees. Until the frosts of 1929 and 1956, the olive was an important activity at Saint Gayan. An excellent olive oil was produced with the same care and devotion as the wine. Today the vine dominates and Saint Gayan is considered a leading estate in the Southern Rhône. The very high proportion of old vines planted on a poor clay, limestone soil, resulting in low yields, is the ideal recipe for quality. Located at the foot of the spectacular "Dentelles de Montmirail", Saint Gayan benefits also from a unique micro climate without mist and very dry. However, large reserves of water below ground compensate for the lack of rain. Nevertheless, nature can be extremely violent. In september 1992 a dramatic storm caused massive flooding resulting in loss of lives in the nearby villages, and the destruction of 3 hectares of vineyards at Saint Gayan.



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Today Jean-Pierre Meffre and his wife Martine run the estate together respecting the traditions inherited from 6 centuries of observation and experience by the same family.

"This is an excellent estate dedicated to making robustly styled, natural wines that are always among the best of the traditional heavyweights of Gigondas." (Wines of the Rhône Valley - Robert Parker)