

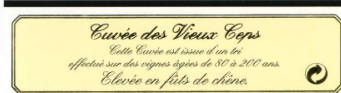


EUROPVIN
Christopher Cannon

CHATEAU BARREJAT

MADIRAN

FACT SHEET



OWNER

Denis Capmartin

PRODUCTS

White wine :

Pacherenc du Vic-Bilh, Sec, Château Barréjat

Red wines :

Madiran, Château Barréjat

Madiran, Cuvée des Vieux Ceps, Château Barréjat

SIZE OF THE VINEYARDS

27 hectares

LOCATION OF THE VINEYARDS

Château Barréjat lies just outside the village of Maumusson, in the northern half of the Madiran appellation. This is some 40 kms north of Pau, just into the département of the Gers. The vines are located in one parcel, on well drained slopes surrounding the property.

The climate here is favourable, with the moderating effects of the Atlantic and Pyrenees balancing the heat and sun found this far south. In particular, local influences ensure long warm and dry autumns, and the grapes are usually harvested in mid-October in perfect conditions.

SOIL

Composed of sand and clay, mixed with gravel and tiny stones. This drains well, and encourages the vine to send roots deep into the subsoil looking for water.

GRAPE VARIETIES

Pacherenc du Vic-Bilh: 85% Gros Manseng, 15% Arrufiat

Madiran: 60% Tannat, 40% Cabernets Franc & Sauvignon

Madiran, Cuvée des Vieux Ceps: 80% Tannat, 20% Cabernets Franc & Sauvignon

AVERAGE AGE OF THE VINES

Madiran: average 40 years old

Madiran, Cuvée des Vieux Ceps: uses very old Tannat vines, ranging in age from 80 to over 200 years old !

Tannat was one of the few varieties not destroyed by Phylloxera. The Capmartins have preserved some extraordinary pre-phylloxera specimens, and replant by 'layering' from these in



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the traditional manner.

AVERAGE PRODUCTION

Around 180 000 bottles per year total

VINIFICATION AND AGEING

Pacherenc du Vic-Bihl: Hand-harvested, with rigorous selection; the grapes are gently crushed, and then left for 12-16 hours skin contact (maceration pelliculaire). After pressing and settling, the must is cool fermented at 15-16°C, in lined cement tanks.

Madiran, Tradition: Hand-harvested, then crushed and totally destemmed; traditional vinification with a cuvaison period of 18 to 21 days. Ageing takes place in a mixture of cement, fibreglass and stainless steel tanks, plus old oak foudres of 60 to 80 hectolitres before bottling 18 months later.

Madiran, Cuvée des Vieux Ceps: Similar traditional fermentation, but with even longer cuvaison of 21 to 25 days. Malolactic fermentation and ageing take place in new oak.

TASTING NOTES

The Barrejat Tradition is a deep ruby colour, with a pink-purple rim. The brooding nose quickly opens to reveal roasted meat, dried herbs, black fruit and even chocolate. On the palate, the tannins are present but not overwhelming, ripe rather than dusty; good acidity gives the wine a fresh attack, leading into ripe black fruit. The finish balances tannin and fruit well; drinking after 2 years, it has the potential to age 5.

NOTES ON THE PROPERTY

Château Barréjat has been in the Capmartin family for many generations. Denis Capmartin has recently taken over running the property from his father, Maurice. The vineyards are located in the best part of the appellation, next door to those of Alain Brumont at Domaine Bouscassé. Here, the well-drained soils produce consistently rich, but not overly heavy wines.

Unlike Brumont, Capmartin does not believe that great Madiran requires 100% Tannat. Rather, he is a master exponent of careful blending - balancing the structure and sheer power of Tannat with the fresh red fruit of Cabernet Franc and the classy complexity of Cabernet Sauvignon. This ensures that his wines are relatively approachable when young.

Madiran has a history of fine wine production dating back to Roman times. During the Middle Ages, the wines were highly-valued by pilgrims passing through on the road to Santiago de Compostela. Nobody is sure at what stage Tannat appeared in the area, but one can be sure that it formed the majority of the blend by the mid-19th century, because the wines had by then gained a reputation as undrinkable when young, but magnificent when aged. The Madiran



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vineyards virtually disappeared in the first half of this century, but a few old Tannat vines remained, notably those of the Capmartin family.

These extraordinarily old vines (one is claimed to be well over 200 years old, and looks it !) are vinified and aged separately, and the wine is now bottled as 'Cuvée des Vieux Ceps'. It is an intensely concentrated expression of terroir, and ranks with the new megastars of the appellation.

All the Château Barréjat wines are approachable and characterful, and very reasonable prices mean that they represent truly outstanding value for money.