

ROTEM AND MOUNIR SAOUMA

(Above) One of the eight vineyards across five villages of the appellation that Mounir has been able to acquire, allowing for 100% estate fruit.



Châteauneuf-du-Pape Arioso 2015

Châteauneuf-du-Pape, France

ESTATE

Burgundy meets the Rhône. An utter respect for tradition, in some ways a total break. We have watch as Mounir and Rotem Saouma, of Burgundy producer Lucien Le Moine, slowly developed their estates and wines in Châteauneuf-du-Pape, and the results today are too extraordinary and distinct to ignore. The wines are stunning: precise, intense, complex, expressive visions of Châteauneuf. They somehow speak to the past, but also to the present (and we would guess, the future), all in their own voice.

WINE

Mounir Saouma's story in the Chateauneuf-du-Pape started with a state sale of a small plot in Pignan, one of the most famous vineyard areas of Chateauneuf-du-Pape. Within this first vineyard acquisition, Mounir has one plot of 100% Grenache planted in the 1930s which yields naturally at a miniscule 1 ton per acre. From these vines he produces Arioso. On the label is aptly explained: "Arioso is a style of opera somewhere between an aria and a recital. We chose this name for our wine because it is evocative of both the ethereal and profound".

VINEYARD

Soils: Unique rocky alluvial vineyards (the famous "galets") and sandy soils of the area.
Yields: Average of 1 tons per acre, average age of the vines is 90 years.

WINEMAKING

Grape Varieties: 100% Grenache
Fermentation: Whole cluster vinification after an 11 day cold maceration.
Aging: 3 years in 229 and 500 liter barrels, never racked or sulfured.
Alcohol: 14.5%

VINTAGE

After the moderately wet 2014 vintage, 2015 was a relief, with hot, dry weather predominating. Drought conditions slowed maturity while raising sugar levels, and a burst of rain in August caused acid levels to drop. The powerful reds are rich and tannic wines that will take some time to smooth out and unfold. The white can be heady. Here again, Mounir's approach handled the vintage perfectly, and he focused on moderate extraction, producing red wines of elegance and detail. His whites are more 'Meursault' than 'Puligny' in this vintage – rich and savory.

Wine Spectator

98

"A stunning display of fruit, with a seamless and beguiling show of açai, raspberry, plum and blackberry puree notes gliding through in lockstep. Light anise, black tea and incense elements weave around while the finish is pulled along by a mouthwatering combo of shiso leaf and iron details, with the fruit easily keeping pace. Approachable now because of the fruit, but this will cellar well for some time." - JAMES MOLESWORTH, 9/2010

97

Vinous