



# LA PÈIRA

EN DAMAISELA



- LA PÈIRA 2009-2010 WINE ADVOCATE & RHONE REPORT REVIEWS -

# LA PÈIRA

"Wines that need not fear comparison with any of the world's wine icons"

Wine Advocate

"As profoundly delicious as all but a handful of crus rendered anywhere in France"

Wine Advocate

"Among the very greatest wines of the Languedoc"

Wine Advocate

"Now recognised as one of the very top wines in France"

Simon Field M.W - Berry Bros & Rudd

"I try to avoid the kind of macho superlatives which can devalue the currency of wine criticism, but the efforts which the team at La Pèira have made with the 2005, 2006 and 2007 vintages really did "blow me away."

Andrew Jefford – The New France

"So with the samples delivered to the homes of those who write about wine. All deserve a taste, most a note, but I've never come across one that rearranged my inner pantheon in the way that truly great wine can. Never, that is, until a few weeks ago...An estate whose wines so impressed our household when first sampled that we have referred to its creating triumvirate as "the geniuses" ever since."

Andrew Jefford – World of Fine Wine

"The flagship wine from this new venture is easily going to be the next great global cult wine. Think Clos Erasmus or Masseto"

Gary Vaynerchuk - Wine Library

"Easily one of the top wines of the region (and I'll gladly include all of the southern Rhône in that comparison)"

Jeb Dunnuck - The Rhone Report

"It has exactly what I cherish in a wine and what I strive for with my own wines" -

Manfred Krankl Sine Qua Non

"The [La Peira] 2007, which was such a sensational vintage in Southern France, is one of the most voluptuous and exciting wines I've tasted this year. The texture and the depth of flavor are amazing. It reminded me at different moments of 1989 La Mission [Haut-Brion], [Fattoria Galardi] 2004 Terre di Lavoro and 1990 [Henri] Bonneau [Reserve des] Célestins."

Wall Street Journal - Jay McInerney

"La Pèira? I published some very enthusiastic notes on my purple pages" Jancis Robinson

"Very fine and polished. Full of pleasure: sweet start and then a dry finish. I'd love to see this alongside other serious Syrahs" 17.5 JR La Peira 06 | "Sleek and refined and smells as though it may be a little austere and claret-like on the palate but in fact it is hugely seductive and rich and glamorous" 17.5 La Peira 2007 Jancis Robinson

Cited as one of the very top domaines of the Languedoc-Rousillon by Jancis Robinson, Andrew Jefford, and the Wine Advocate

"As profoundly delicious as all but a handful of crus rendered anywhere in France"

David Schildknecht - Wine Advocate 2011



# LA PÈIRA

" The deep alluvial fan that is the basis for this site is only barely tilted, as it might be in St. Helena or Rutherford, St.-Estephe or Pomerol ... and these comparisons will not seem inapt once you experience the quality of La Peira's wines."

David Schildknecht - Wine Advocate 2011

## Profile

- Owners: Karine Ahton & Robert Dougan.
- Responsable du Domaine: Jérémie Depierre.
- Classification: Terrasses du Larzac.
- Sector: Sainte-Brigitte (Jonquières/Saint-André).
- Vineyard area: 11.4 HA.
- Vineyards/Lieux-dits: Bois de Pauliau, Bellefeuille (Belle Fiolle).
- Soil: Gravelly Quaternary alluvial deposits (Pliocene Age). These deposits were derived principally from the mountains of Late Jurassic (about 150 million years old) limestone to the north. The gravels (along with sand, silt, and clay) were laid down in stream channels and in what are known as alluvial fans (cônes).
- Average annual production:: 300 cases of the grand vin, La Pèira. 500 cases of the second vin, Las Flors de la Pèira.
- Vineyards are planted with Syrah, Grenache, Mourvèdre, Cinsault, Carignan, Viognier & Roussanne.
- Other wines: Obriers de la Pèira, Deusyls (blanc).





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### La Pèira en Damaisèla

*On the the first vertical tasting La Pèira at Berry Bros. & Rudd*

When journalist Andrew Jefford wrote to us to recommend a nice wine that he had been sent, subsequently written up as the best Languedoc he had ever tasted, we were delighted to begin our relationship with La Pèira, now recognised as one of the very top wines in France. Co-owners Rob Dougan and Karine Ahton identified the Terrasses de Larzac as the best terroir in the South of France, and - working with gifted oenologist Claude Gros and Bordelais winemaker Jérémie Depierre - set about to craft its premier wine. The nature and extent of their success will be evidenced at this ground-breaking tasting. Winemaker Jérémie has as his cohort the maverick Rob Dougan, whose varied achievements, before he caught the wine bug, include composing the theme to the film The Matrix. They are both highly entertaining characters, allied by a love of their product, and this promises to be a most enjoyable and instructive tasting.

**Simon Field MW Berry Bros & Rudd 2010**

# THE WORLD OF FINE WINE

ANDREW JEFFORD DRINKS LA PÈIRA EN DAMAISÈLA

## Moroccan coffee and clean cagettes

The most apt analogy, perhaps, is the publisher's slush pile that legendary stack of unsolicited manuscripts where, sandwiched between laborious first novels, eccentric diets, and the childhood reminiscences of the elderly, the house reader dreams of finding a golden text to wave at cynical seniors. So with the samples delivered to the homes of those who write about wine. All deserve a taste, most a note, but I've never come across one that rearranged my inner pantheon in the way that truly great wine can.

Never, that is, until a few weeks ago. Then it was that a relatively ramshackle

package of boxes arrived from the Languedoc containing 11 bottles and a text. The bottles (cask samples, in the main) had beautiful, austere classical labels with puzzling, hard-to-pronounce names. No UK importer, let alone retailer. Just an apologetic e-mail, a few days earlier, from one of the wine's creators, Rob Dougan, alluding to their presence a year before at a tasting in Bordeaux that I'd been unable to attend.

Enough waffle. These are the best unsolicited samples anyone has ever sent me. My pantheon has been rearranged.

"One sip of the 2006 and you realize that those black fruits have untrammelled purity and depth. The sip's a dive. Not only that, but the dream of the Languedoc winethat, although busy with fruit, stillsucceeds in gathering scents of the hills into itself, like shadows into night is brilliantly realized here."

[Click here to read the full article](#)

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Robert M. Parker, Jr.'s

**The  
WINE  
ADVOCATE®**



**"As profoundly delicious as all but a handful of crus rendered anywhere in France"**

(Wine Advocate Issue #195, June 2011)

**"My colleague David Schildknecht has written about this estate, which many observers consider to be the most exciting estate in the Languedoc."**

(Robert Parker - Issue #201 June 2012)

**"Wines that need not fear comparison with any of the world's wine icons"**

(Wine Advocate Issue #195, June 2011)

# RHONE REPORT

“this estate continues to produce world class wines that show not only plenty of distinctive character, but a level of polish and refinement that isn’t often found – from anywhere”

Jeb Dunnuck: The Rhone Report on La Pèira March 2011

“Easily one of the top wines of the region (and I’ll gladly include all of the southern Rhône in that comparison)”

Jeb Dunnuck: The Rhone Report on La Pèira March 2011



## LES MEILLEURS VINS DU LANGUEDOC-ROUSSILLON THE RHONE REPORT » 2012

2007 Domaine Gauby Côtes du Roussillon Villages La Muntada	98
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La Pèira and Gauby's Muntada the top Languedoc-Roussillon Wines in Jeb Dunnuck's The Rhone Report  
Jeb Dunnuck's The Rhone Report La Pèira & Languedoc-Roussillon Reviews: 2008-2009-2010 Vintages

# - LA PÈIRA 2009 VINTAGE -

"Superlative 2009 and 2008 renditions"

The 2009 La Peira topped both the Languedoc-Roussillon in the Wine Advocate's assesment of the vintage.

- Wine Advocate -

"This estate is set apart by their ability to produce wines that not only show thrilling levels of fruit and texture, but also manage to hold onto a sense of purity, elegance, and balance. "

- Rhone Report -

# LA PÈIRA 2009



## Wine Advocate

### 2009 La Pèira Terrasses du Larzac La Pèira (95-96)

I tasted on this occasion the 2009 Terrasses du Larzac La Pèira – roughly two-thirds Syrah, one-third Grenache – in both its (pre-) assemblage and as individual components. Bursting with heady, lilac-like sweet floral perfume that could be traced to its Grenache, along with liqueur-like cassis and black raspberry, **this expands thrillingly on a viscous, subtly creamy yet persistently vibrant, juicy, and buoyant palate, with fresh ginger, nutmeg, and licorice adding complex spice and a Syrah-induced savor akin to salted roasted meat pan drippings serving for an umami rating approaching three digits on a hundred-point scale.** An attractively rich undertone of chocolate is apt to recede slightly once this acquires its modest pre-bottling dosage of sulfur. This dynamic show should be worth following for the better part of a decade. (The raw materials for the 2010 La Pèira were similarly – well, to clarify, actually quite distinctly – sensational.)

#### David Schildknecht Wine Advocate

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## The Rhone Report

### 2009 La Pèira Terrasses du Larzac (98 pts.)

More perfumed, floral, and sexy than the slightly brooding '08, the 2009 La Pèira Terrasses du Larzac – a blend of 60% Syrah and 40% Grenache that's aged in 60% new French oak – boasts knockout **aromas of sweet crème de cassis, raspberry ganache, crushed flowers, licorice, graphite, and sappy garrigue that flow to a full-bodied, perfectly balanced, and surprisingly elegant palate.** Despite the overall size here, it's far from over the top and possesses a deep, yet semi-opaque color to go with a creamy, energetic texture, beautiful purity of fruit, and polished tannin that emerges on the mid-palate and carries through the finish, framing the sweet fruit beautifully. Benefiting from a substantial decant, this is thrilling stuff that should have a long drink window (I followed this bottle for 4 days and it was never short of stunning); I would give bottles 2-3 years in the cellar, and then plan on drinking over the following two decades.

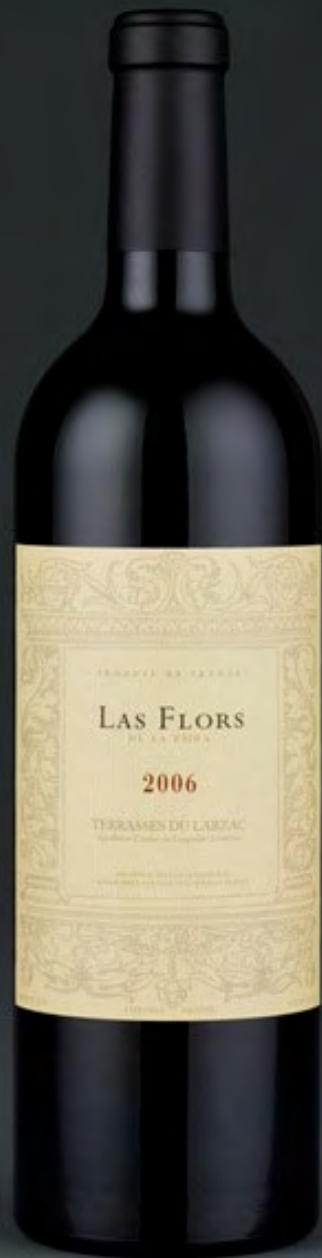
#### Jeb Dunnuck's The Rhone Report

March 2012 La Pèira 2009 PDF Copyright 2012, The Rhone Report Reprinted with permission



# LAS FLORS DE LA PÈIRA

## 2009



### Wine Advocate

**2009 Las Flors de la Pèira Terrasses du Larzac (93-94)**

The 2009 Terrasses du Larzac Las Flors de la Pèira – somewhat more than a third each Syrah and Grenache, with minority components of both Mourvedre and Cinsault – features lightly-cooked, sweetly ripe black and red raspberries aromatically shadowed by their distilled counterparts and wreathed in headily- and seductively-perfumed buddleia, peony, and heliotrope. **Richly-textured and full, yet preserving a core of vibrant primary juiciness, this cuvee’s Mourvedre component offers subtle underlying beef blood and chocolate while a long finish preserves a remarkable sense of transparency to both the wines floral as well as its stone, peat, iodine and mouth-wateringly saline mineral elements.** This multi-registered, dynamically complex cuvee should merit at least 6-8 years’ attention. (This year, the Syrah and Grenache that will make up roughly 85% of the eventual Las Flors blend were married even before malo, so one can already speak with confidence of a salty, meaty, impeccably fruity and deeply savory 2010 Las Flors.

**David Schildknecht Wine Advocate** Aug 2011 Las Flors de la Pèira 2009 PDF Copyright 2011, The Wine Advocate, Inc. Reprinted with permission

### The Rhone Report

**2009 Las Flors de la Pèira Terrasses du Larzac (95 pts.)**

The 2009 Las Flors de la Pèira Terrasses du Larzac, a blend of 55% Grenache, 30% Syrah, 10% Mourvèdre, and 5% Cinsault, is stylistically closer to the grand vin than to the Les Obriers de La Pèira; it is **certainly the best vintage of this cuvee I’ve tasted to date.** Aged in 5% new barrels, it delivers a decidedly sexy, polished profile with creamy raspberry, currant, graphite, and floral aromas that flow to a full-bodied, plush, seamless Languedoc that is incredibly polished and rich. Possessing no hard edges and a voluptuous profile, it fleshes out beautifully with air, and while it lacks the overall intensity of its big brother, there’s no denying the similarities and this stands on its own as great wine. Given the overall purity and balance, this is delicious now, yet should have upwards of a decade or more of longevity. (95 pts.)

### Jeb Dunnuck’s The Rhone Report

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# OBRIERS DE LA PÈIRA

## 2009

### Wine Advocate

### The Rhone Report

#### 2009 Obriers de la Pèira Terrasses du Larzac (90-91)

#### 2009 Obriers de la Pèira Terrasses du Larzac (89 pts.)

Tasted as a pre-assemblage (although I also tasted the individual components), La Pèira's Cinsault-Carignan 2009 Obriers de la Pèira is initially smoky and nutty in a slightly reduced way, needing aeration to reveal more diverse and alluring scents of hibiscus, mulberry, and kirsch. **Dark berries and beet root mingle with black tea and brown spices on a richly-textured yet infectiously juicy palate. Alkaline and wet stone suggestions underline a lingering finish.** Some of the fine inner-mouth florality exhibited by this wine's 2008 rendition was approached in the largest lot of the 2009 – which remained in upright wooden fermentor – but submerged in the blend, hopefully to eventually reappear. Expect this to reward for at least 3-4 years. (From the upright fermentor in which most of it was aged, the 2010 base wine already smelled and tasted irresistible in April, but it was to be blended with several small barrels of concentrated, minerally old vines Carignan, not all of which were through malo – although most of the cellar had completed that transformation.)

A blend of 65% Cinsault and 35% Carignan that's aged all in wooden vats and older barrels, the 2009 La Pèira Terrasses du Larzac Obriers de La Pèira is **a supple, delicious red that possesses a savory, earthy profile of damp earth, leafy herbs, lavender, and assorted spices to go with a core of plum and pit fruits.** Medium-bodied on the palate, with a seductive, rounded texture and plenty of length, this has loads of character, and should be consumed over the coming 3-5 years. As is common with this cuvee, it needs plenty of air to show at its best, so if drinking anytime soon, don't be afraid to decant. (89 pts.)



#### David Schildknecht Wine Advocate

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# - LA PÈIRA 2010 VINTAGE -

"The raw materials for the 2010 La Peira were similarly – well, to clarify, actually quite distinctly – sensational."

-Wine Advocate -

"'08 is rock solid here, the '09s are every bit as good as the '07s, and the 2010s look to be even better!"

- Rhone Report -

# LA PÈIRA 2010



## Wine Advocate

### 2010 La Pèira Terrasses du Larzac La Pèira (NA)

The raw materials for the 2010 La Peira were similarly – well, to clarify, actually quite distinctly – sensational.

(On reviewing the 2009 La Pèira Terrasses du Larzac La Pèira 95-96 - highest rated wine in the region for it's vintage)

## The Rhone Report

### 2010 La Pèira Terrasses du Larzac (97-100 pts.)

Tasted as a final blend, the 2010 La Pèira Coteaux du Languedoc Les Terrasses du Larzac is set to be bottled in June of 2012. The same blend and elevage as the '09 (60/40 Syrah and Grenache aged in 60% new French oak), it has a more classic, structured, and mineral-driven profile with utterly captivating aromatics of crème de cassis and pit styled fruits that are intermixed with notions of roasted herbs, chocolate, crushed stone, and candied flowers that literally soar from the glass. **Deep, layered, and yet still incredibly light and elegant on the palate, with spectacular purity of fruit, loads of richness, and fantastic freshness, this full-bodied beauty might just eclipse both the '07 and '09.** Opening up with air (as with the other cuvees, I followed this bottle for multiple days) and showing more structure, this will most likely require 3-5 years of bottle age, and have upwards of two decades of longevity.

### David Schildknecht Wine Advocate

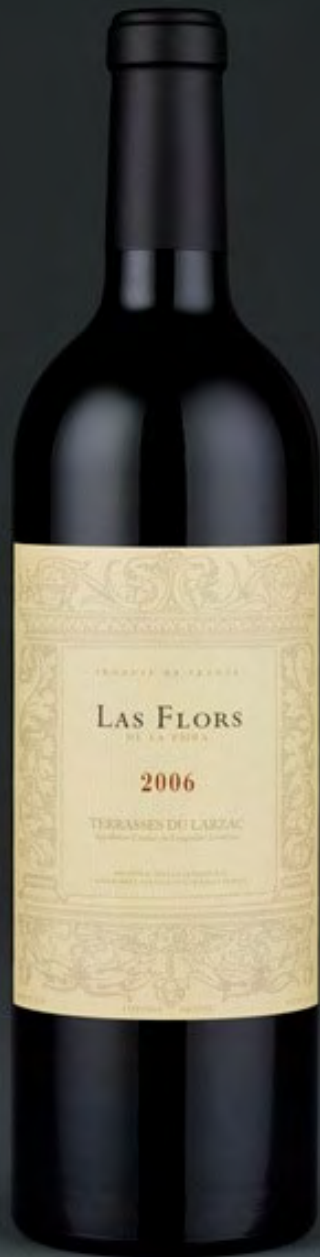
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### Jeb Dunnuck's The Rhone Report

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# LAS FLORS DE LA PÈIRA

2010



## Wine Advocate

### 2010 Las Flors de la Pèira Terrasses du Larzac (NA)

“One can already speak with confidence of a salty, meaty, impeccably fruity and deeply savory 2010 Las Flors”

(On reviewing the 2009 Las Flors de la Pèira Terrasses du Larzac 93-94)

## The Rhone Report

### 2010 Las Flors de la Pèira Terrasses du Larzac (93-96 pts.)

As with the other 2010s from this estate, the 2010 La Pèira Coteaux du Languedoc Les Terrasses du Larzac Las Flors, tasted as a barrel sample, shows a deeper, richer, and more black fruit driven profile than its '09 counterpart. A blend of 55% Grenache, 30% Syrah, 10% Mourvèdre, and 5% Cinsault aged in 25% new barrels, it possesses an inky color to go with sweet, perfumed notes of black cherry, pepper, sappy garrigue, black licorice, and mineral characteristics on the nose. Full-bodied and rich on the palate, with surprising elegance and silkiness to the texture, this improves with air, and while it will be approachable on release, it should have no issues evolving gracefully for upwards of a decade or longer. (93-96 pts.)

**David Schildknecht Wine Advocate** Aug 2011 Las Flors de la Pèira 2010 PDF Copyright 2011, The Wine Advocate, Inc. Reprinted with permission

**Jeb Dunnuck's The Rhone Report** March 2012 Las Flors de la Pèira 2010 PDF Copyright 2012, The Rhone Report Reprinted with permission

# OBRIERS DE LA PÈIRA

2010



## Wine Advocate

### 2010 Obriers de la Pèira Terrasses du Larzac (91)

My colleague David Schildknecht has written about this estate, which many observers consider to be the most exciting estate in the Languedoc...An intriguing blend of 65% Cinsault and 35% Carignan aged 18-24 months in wood foudres. This much Cinsault usually produces a light wine as well as magnificent roses, but this offering is surprisingly deep. *The flowery component of this varietal, combined with deep raspberry and kirsch-like fruit, medium body and an elegant style give this wine a Burgundian sensuality and finesse.* I do not believe this remarkable 2010 will age well given its varietal composition, but who really knows? Certainly it is brilliant now and should continue to drink well for 3-4 years. *Don't miss it, especially if you love flowers, raspberries and finesse.*

### Robert Parker - Wine Advocate

June 2012 Obriers de la Pèira 2010 PDF  
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## The Rhone Report

### 2010 Obriers de la Pèira Terrasses du Larzac (91-93 pts.)

Tasted as a final blend, the not yet bottled 2010 Obriers de La Pèira is even more impressive than the '09. A blend of 65% Cinsault and 35% Carignan that's aged all in wooded vats and older barrels, it yields a beautiful array of savory, mineral-laced aromas of black cherry, plum pit, wild herbs, lavender, and toasted walnut shell that carry into *a medium to full-bodied Languedoc that has brilliant purity of fruit, a deep, layered mid-palate, and a building, lengthy finish that keeps you coming back for another sip.* Even better on the second day, this elegantly styled, complex red should drink beautifully on release, yet age gracefully for 5-8 years. (91-93 pts.)

### Jeb Dunnuck's The Rhone Report

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## Wine Advocate Top Languedoc-Roussillon 2009

Year	Wine Name	Rating ▼	Maturity	Price
<input type="checkbox"/> 2009	La Pèira en Damaisèla Terrasses du Larzac la Pèira	(95-96)		
<input type="checkbox"/> 2009	Domaine Gauby Cotes du Roussillon la Muntada	94		
<input type="checkbox"/> 2009	Chateau de la Negly Coteaux du Languedoc la Porte du Ciel	(93-94+)	Early	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2009	Chateau Puech-Haut Coteaux de Languedoc Prestige	93		\$ 17
<input type="checkbox"/> 2009	Chateau Puech-Haut Coteaux du Languedoc Saint Drezero Bosc Negre	93	Early	65
<input type="checkbox"/> 2009	Clos des Truffiers Coteaux du Languedoc Clos des Truffieres	(93-94+)	Early	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2009	Domaine le Roc des Anges Carignan 1903 VDP des Pyrenees Orientales	93		53
<input type="checkbox"/> 2009	Hecht & Bannier Faugeres	(93-94)	Early	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2009	Hecht & Bannier Saint Chinian	(93-94)	Early	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2009	Jean-Louis Tribouley Orchis	(93-94)	Early	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2009	La Pèira en Damaisèla Terrasses du Larzac Las Flors de la Pèira	(93-94)	Early	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2009	Maxime Magnon Corbieres Rozeta	93		\$ 28-30
<input type="checkbox"/> 2009	Calvet-Thunevin Cotes du Roussillon Villages les Trois Maries	(92-93)	Early	120
<input type="checkbox"/> 2009	Chateau Ollieux-Romanis Corbieres Blanc Cuvee Prestige	92	Mature	28-30
<input type="checkbox"/> 2009	Chateau Puech-Haut Coteaux du Languedoc Pic Saint Loup Clos du Pic	92	Early	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2009	Clos Marie Coteaux du Languedoc Manon	92	Mature	28
<input type="checkbox"/> 2009	Clos Marie Cuvee Simon Pic St Loup	(92-93)	Early	38
<input type="checkbox"/> 2009	Clos Marie Les Glorieuses Coteaux du Languedoc Pic St Loup	(92-93+)		
<input type="checkbox"/> 2009	Domaine Anne Gros Jean Paul Tollot Minervois les Carretals	92	Early	70

#194 #195  
WA 2011

LA PÈIRA 2009

# The Wine Advocate Vintage Guide (2011 - 1970)

(as of 12/28/2011)

Click over cells to see contents, slide right to see earlier years (non-slider page for phones).

Country: Region wines	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001
<b>Austria</b> Riesling & Gruner Veltliner	NT	88I	89I	86R	90R	91I	87I	88I	89I	89T	88I
<b>Alsace</b>	NT	NT	79I	90T	90R	79I	87R	86E	82R	86R	91R
<b>Bordeaux: St Julien/Pauillac/St Estephe</b>	NT	98T	99E	91E	86E	87E	95T	88T	95T	88T	88R
<b>Bordeaux: Margaux</b>	NT	95T	97E	90E	86E	88E	98T	87T	88I	88T	89E
<b>Bordeaux: Graves</b>	NT	99T	98E	91E	87E	87E	96T	88T	88I	87T	88R
<b>Bordeaux: Pomerol</b>	NT	95T	98E	96E	86I	90T	95T	88E	84E	85E	90E
<b>Bordeaux: St. Emilion</b>	NT	94T	93E	92E	86I	88E	99T	88E	90I	87E	90E
<b>Bordeaux: Barsac/Sauternes</b>	NT	NT	96E	87E	94T	88E	96T	82E	95E	85E	98T
<b>Burgundy: Cote de Nuits red</b>	NT	NT	95E	88I	84E	89I	98T	83C	91T	91R	86I
<b>Burgundy: Cote de Beaune red</b>	NT	NT	95E	89I	80E	82I	96T	79C	88T	89R	79I
<b>Burgundy white</b>	NT	NT	90R	91T	91I	90E	90R	91R	84R	92R	86C
<b>Burgundy: Beaujolais</b>	NT	88E	97R	84R	85R	89R	95R	81C	93R	86C	75C
<b>Champagne</b>	NT	NT	NT	NT	NT	NT	88I	93T	88I	95T	88R
<b>Languedoc and Roussillon</b>	NT	95T	89I	90I	92T	90I	88T	88T	87I	NT	NT





## Wine Advocate

### On La Pèira:

La Pèira en Damaisèla is the property of London-based composer Robert Dougan, located between Jonquieres and Aniane, on two adjacent parcels of no known previous distinction, but to which in 2004 instinct led him either with remarkable prescience or remarkable luck.

The deep alluvial fan that is the basis for this site is only barely tilted, as it might be in St. Helena or Rutherford, St.-Estephe or Pomerol ... and these comparisons will not seem inapt once you experience the quality of La Peira's wines. Claude Gros consults here, expense seems not to have been spared on a new facility (with, of course, lots of new barrels), and Bordeaux-trained Jeremie Depierre is the hands-on (or, as I am sure he and Dougan would prefer me to put it "hands-off") winemaker. New barrels of 500-600 liter capacity are favored here, incidentally, rather than classic (225 liter) barriques. I had the good fortune to taste the La Peira cuvees of 2005 and 2006 in late 2007 – before any wines had been released – and again this past December, when I tasted the extraordinary 2007s here for the first time. As this report goes to press, the first of the three red bottlings is about to be released in its 2007 rendition, but neither of the two other red

cuvees from the 2006 vintage although all three were bottled at around 20-22 months has even been released yet.

**(David Schildknecht Wine Advocate June 2009)**

✦ La Pèira: David Schildknecht's Wine Advocate Reviews 2008-2009-2010

✦ La Peira: David Schildknecht's Wine Advocate Reviews 2005-2007

## On Wine

Incisive criticism and accessible advice on the world of wine

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### Tasting Languedoc-Roussillon

By Jay McInerney

The Languedoc-Roussillon is a vast and geologically heterogeneous region (witness the compound name), a crescent stretching along the Mediterranean from the Pyrenées to the Costières de Nîmes, producing an ocean of wine, most of which is not really interesting.

But I was reminded again last night of the enormous potential of this region (or, to be more precise, these two regions) when I opened a bottle of 2007 La Pèira en Terrasses du Larzac Coteaux du Languedoc within a week of relishing a bottle of Domaine Gauby Côtes du Roussillon La Mutanda.

Gérard Gauby is one of the pioneers of the region, who farms biodynamically and creates wines from very old vines which combine power and finesse. The La Mutanda was an extraordinarily rich and complex wine which had great lift and delineation and never seemed overblown for all its density and power. (Didn't actually make notes, it was one of those nights.)

La Pèira en Damaisela is a new domain owned by, according to the estimable David Schildknecht on eRobertparker.com, "London-based composer Robert Dugan." Despite the different (or incorrect) spelling, I'm wondering if this is the same person as Robert Dougan, aka Rob D, the Australian-born DJ and composer of the dance hit "Clubbed to Death." The song gained club fame on its release in '95, and later in a remix called the Kurayamino Mix, on the soundtrack of "The Matrix."

If it's him, Mr. D is a very multitalented guy indeed, although no one has actually suggested that he makes the wine himself, Claude Gros and Jérémie Depierre being the winemakers of record. But in addition to great ears the guy apparently has a great nose for terroir.

At any rate, the 2007, which was such a sensational vintage in southern France, is one of the most voluptuous and exciting wines I've tasted this year. It's extremely ripe, rich and viscous, with those warm notes of hot-climate Grenache, but it stops short of being baked or raisiny, the sweet Grenache fruit balanced by deep dark chocolate and earthy bass notes.

The texture and the depth of flavor are amazing. It reminded me at different moments of '89 La Mission, '04 Terre di Lavoro and '90 Bonneau Célestins. (I got my bottle from Sokolin and then, curiously enough, got an offer for the wine from Premier Cru a few days later.)

## On Wine

Incisive criticism and accessible advice on the world of wine

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### Tasting Languedoc-Roussillon

By Jay McInerney

And just to round out my mini-tour of this sprawling region, I got to taste the 2005 Grange des Pères out of magnum the other night at Terroir. Daniel Johnnes was hosting a tasting of his new Bordeaux portfolio, which is terrific, and reasonably priced, though it seemed kind of odd to be drinking Bordeaux at this geek mecca, with the great Paul Grieco himself, the king of Riesling, presiding.

Less anomalous in this context was the Grange des Pères which Daniel had brought along. Grange des Pères was one of the first of the new-wave, premium Languedocs, and it appears to be more than holding its own in recent vintages, while my latest experience suggests that the wine is built to improve with age.

The '05 was drinking beautifully—a big burly southern wine with spicy gamy notes. GDP is a blend of Syrah, Cabernet and Mourvedre, but in this vintage, on this particular night, the Mourvedre was dominant.

Lately Languedoc and Roussillon are increasingly finding their own identities, and no doubt further appellations will be carved out of both regions. Wines like these can only raise the profiles of each.

**" One of the most voluptuous and exciting wines I've tasted this year. The texture and the depth of flavor are amazing. It reminded me at different moments of the 1989 La Mission Haut-Brion, 2004 Galardi Terre di Lavoro and 1990 Henri Bonneau Réserve des Célestins. "**

Jay McInerney - Wall Street Journal

You are here: [Home](#)>>[Tastingarticles](#)>>[LanguedocRoussillon](#) tasting notes

## Languedoc-Roussillon tasting notes

10 Ju 2009 by Jancis Robinson

### LA PÈIRA

*Berry Bros' notes:* La Pèira is located on the limestone plateau of the fashionable enclave of Les Terraces du Larzac. First planted by the Romans, these beautiful vineyards share the terrain with the Roquefort-producing sheep. The 'Domaine' consists of a stone barn, its location almost exactly half way between the two great properties of Grange des Pères and Mas de Daumas Gassac

**La Pèira 2007 Languedoc, Terrasses du Larzac** 17.5 Drink 2009-16

*Syrah with a little Grenache.*

Blackish crimson. Leathery Syrah on the nose - rather sleek and refined and smells as though it may be a little austere and claret-like on the palate but in fact it is hugely seductive and rich and glamorous. Amazingly sweet seeming! 14.5%

**La Pèira, La Flors de la Pèira 2007 Languedoc, Terrasses du Larzac** 17 Drink 2011-15

*Syrah and Grenache with about 20% Mourvèdre.*

Oaked. Very deep crimson. Light nose. Sweet start with a gentle texture but still quite a bit of firm fruit tannin. A brooding wine for superior barbecues. Alcohol, tar and liquorice on the finish. Not ready yet but there is both sweetness and freshness in this wine. Well done! Long. 14.5%

**La Pèira 2006 Languedoc, Terrasses du Larzac** 17.5 Drink 2011-17

Thick, dense and very oaked Syrah. The oak is more obvious than on the 2007 and the whole is just a little too tannic at the moment. Lots of tar and a very dry finish, though there is certainly a gloss on this and it's much more sophisticated than the average Languedoc red. Very fine and polished. Full of pleasure: sweet start and then a dry finish. I'd love to see this alongside other serious Syrahs. 14.5% £50 *Berry Bros*

**La Pèira, La Flors de la Pèira 2006 Languedoc, Terrasses du Larzac** 16.5 Drink 2010-15

Floral nose - pretty low key, and with more than a hint of oak on the nose and finish but the fruit is good. Just a tad over oaked but it just manages to be fresh and not overripe - less obviously ripe than the 2007, though there is a hint of alcohol on the finish. Big and sweet and easy. Cappuccino notes and then a little rusty on the finish. 14.5% £22.95 *Berry Bros*

**La Pèira, Deusyls 2005 Vin de Pays de l'Hérault Blanc** 17 Drink 2009-10

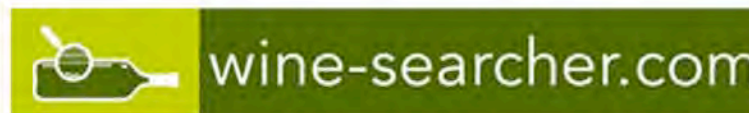
Dense and racy and honeyed and like a lovely Northern Rhône white. Really exciting and good. Honeysuckle. Low acid though. 14.5% £22.95 *Berry Bros*

**La Pèira, Les Obriers de la Pèira 2006 Languedoc, Terrasses du Larzac** 16.5 Drink 2008-10

Mid crimson with very fresh fruit and quite a bit of acidity and tannin. Much skinnier than the 2007. Alcohol shows a bit, not quite as seductive as the 2007. Lively, rich and spreads across the palate with minerals and a bit of coffee before the rusty nail. Integrity here. GV 14.5% £10.45 *Berry Bros*

" Sleek and refined and smells as though it may be a little austere and claret-like on the palate but in fact it is hugely seductive and rich and glamorous. "

Jancis Robinson sur La Pèira 2007

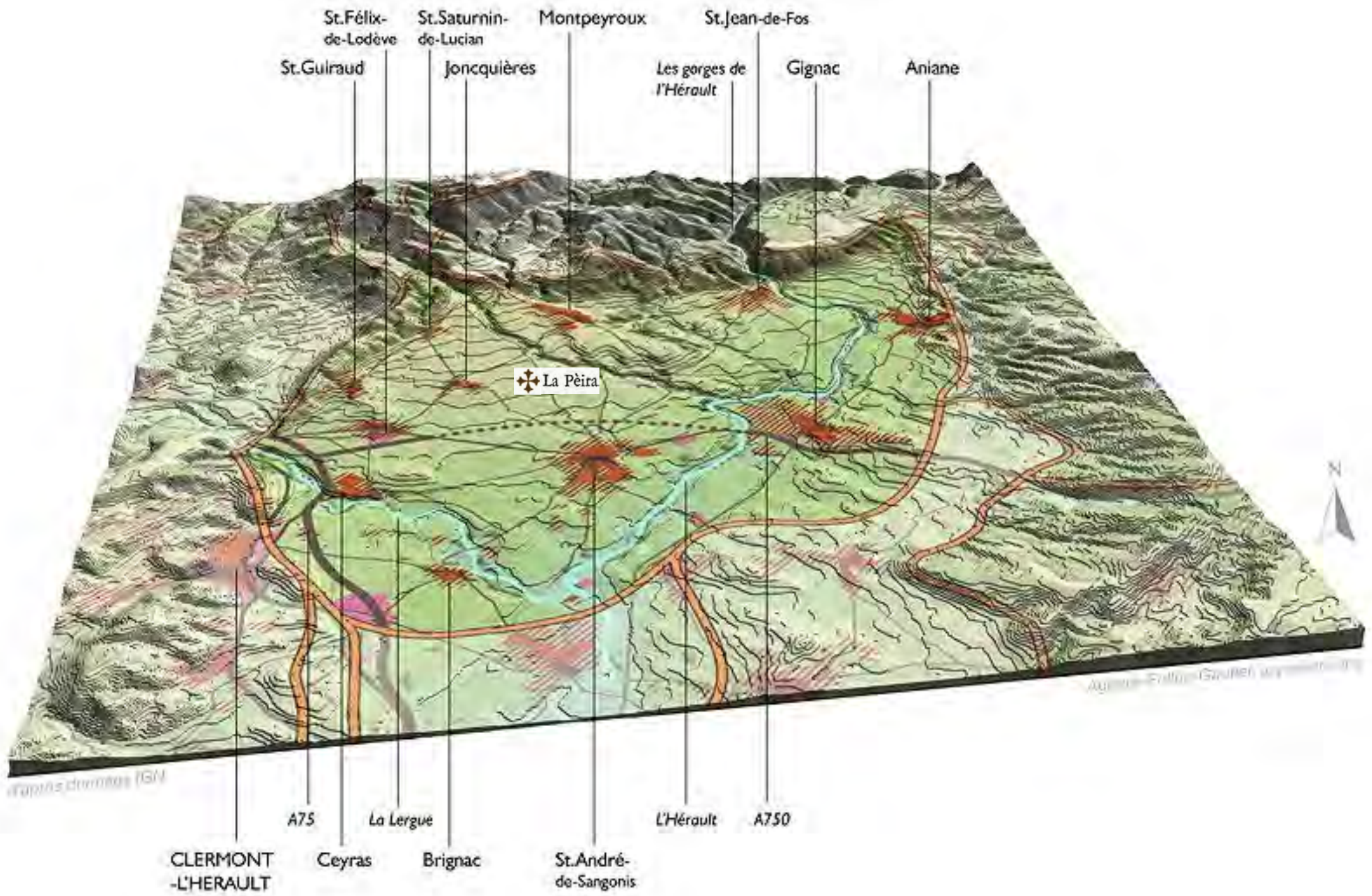


Score	Vintage	Wine (and search link)
98.9	2005	<a href="#">Sine Qua Non Syrah The 17th Nail in My Cranium</a>
98.8	1982	Chateau Latour
98.6	1990	Krug Champagne Clos du Mesnil
98.3	2002	Sine Qua Non Syrah Heart Choreia
98.2	2001	Chateau d'Yquem
98.2	2007	Domaine de la Janasse Chateauneuf-du-Pape Vieilles Vignes
98.2	2007	Maybach Family Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon Materium
98	2008	Chateau Boswell Cabernet Sauvignon Jacquelynn Beckstoffer To-Kalon Vineyard
98	2008	Kapcsandy Family Winery Roberta's Reserve State Lane Vineyard
97.8	2007	Domaine du Pegau Chateauneuf-du-Pape Cuvee da Capo
97.8	2006	Araujo Estate Cabernet Sauvignon Eisele Vineyard
97.8	1989	Chateau de Beaucastel Chateauneuf-du-Pape Hommage a Jacques Perrin
97.8	1997	Shafer Cabernet Sauvignon Hillside Select
97.7	1989	Chateau Haut Brion
97.5	2007	<a href="#">La Peira Terrasses du Larzac</a>
97.4	1990	Chateau Margaux
97.1	1991	E. Guigal Cote-Rotie La Mouline
97.1	2007	Scarecrow Cabernet Sauvignon
97	1982	Chateau Pichon Longueville Comtesse de Lalande
97	1990	Lucien et Andre Brunel Chateauneuf-du-Pape Les Cailloux Cuvee Centenaire
97	2006	Buoncristiani Cabernet Sauvignon The Core
97	2005	Clarendon Hills Astralis
97	2007	Bryant Family Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon Proprietor Grown
97	2001	Marquis Philips Shiraz Integrity

For the full list of the 100 top-rated wines tasted in 2010, see the [CellarTracker Tasting Notes page](#).

“Many observers in the Languedoc-Roussillon believe the vineyards/terroirs located in the sector...in and around the village of St.-Andre de Sangonis produce some of the finest wines of the region.”

Robert Parker



## Rockyards and stonejuice

Excerpt from Andrew Jefford's Article Rockyards and Stonejuice.  
Link to full article here: <http://www.andrewjefford.com/node/311>

I left Pézenas for a close look at Terrasses du Larzac. Where is the greatest terroir in Languedoc? You could make a case for Faugères, for Pic St Loup, for parts of St Chinian, for Minervois La Livinière, maybe for La Clape, but after my trip I have to say that if you were to write me out a cheque for a million euros and tell me to go to find somewhere to make great red wine, I would look most closely of all at Terrasses du Larzac.

(By the way, I am not insulting French Catalonia by including it, as French wine law now uncomfortably does, in "Languedoc". For me, Roussillon is another region altogether.)

Terrasses du Larzac is a mineral playground with an least five internal terroirs. After my trip, I know a little more than I did, but it's wonderfully complex and there's lots more to learn. Mas Jullien, Grange des Pères and Mas de Daumas Gassac have been variously responsible for most of the reputation of the area so far, but there are others on the way up, most notably La Pèira en la Damasèla (which, like Mas Jullien, lies near Jonquières).

This is the domain I referred to in my last blog entry; theirs are the unknown wines I will be writing about in my 'One Bottle' column for World of Fine Wine issue 21. I try to avoid the kind of macho superlatives which can devalue the currency of wine criticism, but the efforts which the team at La Pèira have made with the 2005, 2006 and 2007 vintages, sampled in the UK, really did "blow me away." Indeed they blew me all the way to the vineyards and the new, spotless winery, where I met winemaker Jérémie Depierre, who has worked all over France and obviously learned a huge amount along the way, and Rob Dougan, whose initiative and project it is (with his partner Karine, a Mauritanienne who grew up near Montpellier). R&K live in the UK but commute, EasyJet-style, to help make it happen with the talented J.

Actually, I was rather nervous about visiting since I had liked these wines so much that I thought I might have gone (stand by for another military cliché) over the top in that WOFW piece. We tasted the component parts of the '07 blend again. Phew! I hadn't. Awesome – and that's the last macho superlative today. I'm not sure I've ever tasted better Mourvèdre; certainly not since I was last in Bandol.

Rob looks very cool and dashing on all his websites but he was looking rather bedraggled and poète maudit when we met; when I asked where the money had come from to make these wonderful wines and build the winery, he showed me the holes in his shoes. Jérémie confirmed, though, that Rob is a jusq'au-boutiste. The brief was that he didn't mind what J did just as long as compromise didn't play any part in it. Tiny yields (7 – 26 hl/ha), sorting, very slow, non-interventionist wine-making: it works. But it wouldn't work as well as it does if there wasn't great terroir there in the first place.

Look out for these stunning wines in due course from Berry Bros in the UK and from the retailers supplied by Eric Soloman in the US. Robert Parker has just given the 06 vintage of the third wine (Les Obriers) a lovely write-up and 93 points, and I'm looking forward to finding out what David Schildknecht thinks of them in due course.



L'énigmatique Rob Dougan  
à La Pèira



Joel Foucou Plan de l'Om

There were other amazements in beautiful Terrasses du Larzac. The Pèira vineyards are on flat, pebble-strewn benchland, but when you get into the St Jean de la Blaquièr sector, you get into hills of almost terrifying stoniness. The tough schist vineyards of the aptly named Domaine de la Sauvageonne, dynamited into being, make parts of the Douro seem tame, while parts of Joël Foucou's nearby Plan de L'Om are on an astonishing red rock of volcanic origin locally called ruffes (the rest is on schist).

The wines vinified by Gavin Crisfield at Sauvageonne tasted as mineral as the vineyards look (though none of them, not even the cuvée called Les Ruffes, is mono-terroir); I loved the purity of the 2005 Pica Broca and the 2005 Puech de Glen.

The Cinsault is sometimes called 'the Pinot of the Languedoc', and a sip of the 2006 Plan de L'Om Paysage (85% of which is 100-year-old Cinsault) proved the point deliciously. The Oeillade, too, is a kind of liqueur of the garrigue. (This gets to Berry Bros, too, though I can't find any on the website just now.)

Over at St Jean de Fos, Laurent and Geneviève Vidal at Mas Conscience have both river-rolled pebbles and limestone rock debris in different vineyards: wines like L'As and the pure Carignan Le Cas have greater gentleness and suppleness, though no less regional character, than at Jonquières and St Jean de la Blaquièr. (Berry Bros again! Simon Field has been sleuthing.)

I had dinner with the articulate Vincent Goumar, who took over from Olivier Jullien's father Jean-Pierre at Mas Cal Demoura from the 2004 vintage; as well as medical practitioner and writer Jean-Louis Sagne of Causse d'Aboras. Their wines were perfect dinnertime choices, actually, since both domains' ranges are characterised by finesse, elegance and balance in the Languedoc context. The top Causse d'Arboras cuvée is called 'Les Trois J': it got off to a wonderfully warm and unctuous start in 2003 (these are some of the highest sited vineyards in Terrasses du Larzac, so held on well in the Big Heat), and the 2004 is deft and supremely drinkable, too, almost like the Languedoc equivalent of a well-made, mature Bordeaux. My pick of the Mas Cal Demoura wines was the 2006 Feu Sacré, an almost pure old-vine Grenache which contrived to be simultaneously suave, muscular and mineral.

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**"Awesome – and that's the last macho superlative today. I'm not sure I've ever tasted better Mourvèdre; certainly not since I was last in Bandol."**

# TERRASSES DU LARZAC

**Bettane et Desseauve**  
**(Michel Bettane & Thierry Desseauve**  
**Appellation of the year 2011 Terrasses**  
**du Larzac )**

“A work of 30 years, the name of the Terrasses du Larzac was the product of the imagination of industry professionals, when deciding to distinguish certain terroirs of merit from the immense AOC Côteaux du Languedoc.

This type of decision is often dictated by political imperatives rather than real qualitative evidence. There is none of that here.

The geological fracture zone between the plateau of Larzac and the Mediterranean Sea, located north of the department of Hérault has a incredible potential – illustrated elsewhere in the late 1970s by a wine who never sought the AOC, the famous Daumas Gassac.

Now joined by other cult wines...this sector very much deserves a status apart.

*A terroir. A real one.”*

[\[Pour le lien cliquez ici\]](#)

**Andrew Jefford – The Financial Times**  
**8 august, 2009**  
**" I Think the Answer lie in the Soil "**

" What 2009 suggests, though, is that some of the greatest vineyard land in the south of France did indeed lie close to hand – but not exactly where the Mondavis thought it did. That land could, moreover, have been purchased by the Mondavis without any need to battle Guibert. The name to look out for is Terrasses du Larzac."

[\[Pour le lien cliquez ici\]](#)

**Andrew Jefford – Decanter Magazine**  
**2009 “Enjoy the Languedoc – It won’t**  
**be here forever”**

“But where is the best spot in the Languedoc? I’ve treasured bottles from wild Corbières, plush La Clape, perfumed Pic St-Loup (brilliant for Syrah), chunky St-Chinian and mineral Faugères. The gravels and warmth of Pezenas have long sung in the wines of Prieuré de St-Jean de Bébian, and are now starting to do the same at Axa’s Mas Belles Eaux. Yet I now have a theory, which I’m going to enjoy spending the rest of my life putting to the test. My theory is that Terrasses du Larzac is the greatest spot in the Languedoc.”

[\[Pour le lien cliquez ici\]](#)

**A n d r e w J e f f o r d – h t t p : / /**  
**andrewjefford.com – 2008**  
**Rockyards and Stonejuice**

“Where is the greatest terroir in Languedoc? You could make a case for Faugères, for Pic St Loup, for parts of St Chinian, for Minervois La Livinière, maybe for La Clape, but after my trip I have to say that if you were to write me out a cheque for a million euros and tell me to go to find somewhere to make great red wine, I would look most closely of all at Terrasses du Larzac.”

[\[Pour le lien cliquez ici\]](#)

"Balance, harmony and substance were always Mas Jullien hallmarks, and you can find the same qualities in the wines of Château de Jonquières, Mas de l'écriture and, especially, the astonishing wines of La Pèira"

Andrew Jefford on La Pèira / Financial Times (2009)

FINANCIAL TIMES AUGUST 8/AUGUST 9 2009

4 LIFE & ARTS

## Food & Drink

# I think the answer lies in the soil



**Andrew Jefford**  
Wine

**B**ack in 2000 and 2001, Aimé Guibert of Mas de Daumas Gassac and the Mondavi family famously battled over a few morsels of Languedoc hillside. The spat is now historical, though the dying embers of acrimony received a final glow when Jonathan Nossiter ventilated them in his 2004 documentary film *Mondovino*. It seemed to be a tale of local protectionism (Guibert) fending off, via beguiling rhetoric, a company bent on exploiting virgin native scrub for a global marketing opportunity (Mondavi). Neither side emerged bathed in glory.

The Mondavi claim was that unplanted hillside close to Mas de Daumas Gassac and its Vins de Pays rival Grange des Pères was the ideal spot in the Languedoc to grow Syrah. Viticultural experiments take decades to evaluate, and since Mondavi's desired parcels remain unplanted, that particular hypothesis seems unlikely to be confirmed or refuted.

What 2009 suggests, though, is that some of the greatest vineyard land in the south of France did indeed lie close to hand – but not exactly where the Mondavis thought it did. That land could, moreover, have been purchased by the Mondavis without any need to battle Guibert.

The name to look out for is Terrasses du Larzac. It was coined by Olivier Jullien of Mas Jullien, creator of some of the most harmonious and enduring Languedoc red wines of the modern era. Larzac is the limestone upland grazed by sheep whose milk is curdled, in damp caves, into salty, deliciously rank Roquefort. The vineyards of this particular *cru* within the overall Côteaux du Languedoc appellation lie on the slopes and benches to the south of this high country. Its definition (the parcels include land in 32 villages) is recent, dating from 2005.

Those intrigued by vineyard geologies and their effect on wine will find much to enjoy in the years ahead here. Many of the vineyards in this V-shaped morsel of northern Hérault are on the gravelly limestone rubble in which so many of France's vines feel comfortable. There are also rolled pebbles over sandy silt where the river Hérault formerly meandered, as well as an astonishingly savage, schist rockyard around St Jean de la Blaquière and a strange, blood-red volcanic earth beneath it known locally as *ruffe*. The red glacial soil vaunted by Aimé Guibert of Mas de Daumas Gassac and originally beatified by Bordeaux's Henri Enjalbert in the 1970s also lies in the Terrasses du Larzac, though the appellation isn't claimed by the Guiberts as their wine is principally made from the interloping Bordeaux variety Cabernet Sauvignon. (The blend of the red Grange des Pères is more Languedocien in style, as both Syrah and Mourvèdre play a leading role, but its Cabernet Sauvignon component also excludes it from the appellation.)

Other beneficial aspects of this unique spot vaunted by growers include the wind which, according to Pascal Fulla of Mas de l'écriture, makes it easy to grow vines without chemical sprays. Sébastien Fillon of Clos du Serres also points out that the proximity of the Larzac plateau means cool summer nights after hot days, with diurnal temperature variations of up to 20°C: as refreshing here as they are in Argentina's Mendoza or Australia's Adelaide Hills.

It's too soon yet to draw clear distinctions between these sub-regions within Terrasses du Larzac, though the results certainly vary. The most challengingly mineral flavours of all can be found in the wines of Domaine la Sauvageonne, sited in those schist rockyards; those of the Mas Plan de l'Om (in the volcanic red soils) are pure,

smooth, light-fruited, tasty and balanced; while at 320m above sea level the limestones of Causse d'Arboras achieve a refinement and an elegance often said to elude Languedoc reds.

For palate completeness, however, head for the least geologically showy part of the appellation: the central benchlands of flat but well-drained limestone gravels. Balance, harmony and substance were always Mas Jullien hallmarks, and you can find the same qualities in the wines of Château de Jonquières, Mas de l'écriture and, especially, the astonishing wines of La Pèira.

### Terrasses du Larzac

#### Established leaders

La Grange des Pères; Château de Jonquières; Mas de Daumas Gassac; Mas de l'écriture; Mas Jullien

#### The new generation

Causse d'Arboras; Le Clos du Serres; Mas Cal Demoura (now run by Vincent Goumar); Mas des Chimères; Mas Conscience; Mas de Plan de l'Om; Domaine de Montcalmès; La Pèira; La Réserve d'O; La Sauvageonne.

The wines of **La Pèira** are stocked by Berry Bros & Rudd in the UK. (tel: +44 (0)800-280 2440. [www.bbr.com](http://www.bbr.com)), as are the wines of Mas Conscience, Mas de Plan de l'Om and Mas de Daumas Gassac. For US stockists of La Pèira, contact Eric Solomon Selections. tel: +1 704 358 1565. [www.europeancellars.com](http://www.europeancellars.com). A leading UK stockist of Languedoc wines including many of the above is Terroir Languedoc Wines. tel: +44 (0)1756-700 512. [www.terroirlanguedoc.co.uk](http://www.terroirlanguedoc.co.uk). Clos du Serres is stocked by Stone, Vine and Sun. tel: +44 (0)1962-712 351. [www.stonevine.co.uk](http://www.stonevine.co.uk).

This small, 11.6ha domain is the creation of one of the most unlikely Languedoc proprietors I have ever met: Rob Dougan. He's a dishevelled musician and composer of alternative bent who seems to have effaced his Australian origins almost completely in more than 20 European years. Together with his partner, a lawyer of French-Mauritian origin called Karine Ahton, he has created (with winemaker Jérémie Depierre and consultant Claude Gros) a range of wines of striking depth and originality yet great truth to place, too.

La Pèira itself is a Syrah-Grenache of microscopic yields that contrives to summarise its entire region: it smells of evening on the hills and tastes like a liqueur of *garrigue*. Las Flors de la Pèira includes some Mourvèdre, too, and is chewier and earthier than La Pèira, though every bit as concentrated and head-turning. Les Obriers de la Pèira is a simpler, less multi-dimensional Cinsault-Carignan blend, but wonderfully drinkable. There are also tiny quantities of a voluptuous white Viognier-Roussanne Vins de Pays. These were the finest new wines I tasted in 2008.

Evolution, of course, never ends in the wine world, and other parts of the Languedoc such as La Clape, Pic St Loup, St Chinian and Faugères routinely challenge Terrasses du Larzac for supremacy. That they do so underlines the fact that this is one of the most exciting regions of the world for wine quality. Even if the Mondavis missed out.

Andrew Jefford is the author of *The New France: A Complete Guide to French Wine*. He is a senior research fellow at the University of Adelaide, and wine writer in residence to the Wine 2030 Research Network

Jancis Robinson is away



# LA PÈIRA

Les Vendanges du Mourvèdre en 2005



[Pour voir le vidéo, cliquez ici](#)

# LINKS

*Links to additional articles/reviews*

*Click on the following titles to access*

✦ La Pèira and Gauby's Muntada the top Languedoc-Roussillon Wines in Jeb Dunnuck's The Rhone Report

✦ La Pèira's Matissat tops Andrew Jefford's Decanter Blind Tasting of "almost ninety of Languedoc's finest red wines"

✦ Robert Parker on La Peira

✦ Jeb Dunnuck's The Rhone Report La Pèira & Languedoc-Roussillon Reviews: 2008-2009-2010 Vintages

✦ Old Mourvèdre – October 2005 – Last Day of our First Harvest at La Pèira (Terrasses du Larzac) - Video

✦ The World of Fine Wine Languedoc-Roussillon tasting with Andrew Jefford, Michael Edwards and Marcel Orford-Williams

✦ [BETTANE & DESSEAUVE 2011 : Appellation of the Year : TERRASSES DU LARZAC \(Appellation de l'année\)](#)

✦ Leading Languedoc: Jancis Robinson's/ Andrew Jefford's (FT) and Updated Robert Parker's Wine Advocate Best Producers List

✦ [Blog Français](#)

✦ La Pèira: David Schildknecht's Wine Advocate Reviews 2008-2009

✦ La Peira in Cellartracker's top-rated Wines for 2010

✦ Rene Gabriel (Weinwisser) entdeckt La Peira! (Terrasses du Larzac)

✦ Manfred Krankl of Sine Qua Non on La Peira

✦ Roberson Wine Merchant's 'Legends of Southern France' Tasting report in Decanter Magazine

✦ '30 Great Wines from the Languedoc-Roussillon' tasting: La Peira tops the Languedoc in Neal Martin's Wine Advocate & The Wine Gang's notes

✦ Little-Known Languedoc Wine becomes Gary Vaynerchuk's Highest-Rated Red of all time...

✦ La Peira: David Schildknecht's Wine Advocate Reviews 2005-2007

✦ [Blog English](#)





# LA PÈIRA

TERRASSES DU LARZAC

La Pèira en Damaisèla  
SCEA Robert Dougan  
34725 Saint-Saturnin-de-Lucian, France  
Tél & Fax: +33 (0)4 67 44 79 48  
[www.la-peira.com](http://www.la-peira.com)

Robert Dougan Tél. +44 (0)207 231 9466/+44 (0)7734 103988 Email: roth109@aol.com  
Jérémie Depierre Tél. +33 (0)4 99 06 95 10/+33 (0)6 12 27 94 13 Email: dejerpierre@yahoo.com

(one bottle)

ANDREW JEFFORD DRINKS LA PÈIRA EN DAMAISÈLA

# Moroccan coffee and clean *cagettes*

The most apt analogy, perhaps, is the publisher's slush pile—that legendary stack of unsolicited manuscripts where, sandwiched between laborious first novels, eccentric diets, and the childhood reminiscences of the elderly, the house reader dreams of finding a golden text to wave at cynical seniors. So with the samples delivered to the homes of those who write about wine. All deserve a taste, most a note, but I've never come across one that rearranged my inner pantheon in the way that truly great wine can.

Never, that is, until a few weeks ago. Then it was that a relatively ramshackle package of boxes arrived from the Languedoc containing 11 bottles and a text. The bottles (cask samples, in the main) had beautiful, austere classical labels with puzzling, hard-to-pronounce names. No UK importer, let alone retailer. Just an apologetic e-mail, a few days earlier, from one of the wine's creators, Rob Dougan, alluding to their presence a year before at a tasting in Bordeaux that I'd been unable to attend.

Enough waffle. These are the best unsolicited samples anyone has ever sent me. My pantheon has been rearranged. I've told Rob I think that he and his team are geniuses. Rob says that he only washes the *cagettes* and that it's all down to the quality of the coffee their Moroccan vineyard workers brew. The winemaker, Jérémie Depierre, is advised by Claude Gros, who has a hand in many of today's Languedoc greats. Claude in turn, according to Rob, "allows Jérémie a lot of leeway to explore." Moroccan coffee, sane advice, exploratory winemaking, super-clean *cagettes*: whatever it is, it's working.

The series consists of three red wines in three vintages (2005, '06, and '07), together with one white in two vintages (2005 and '06). As of June 2008, only the debut 2005 red vintage plus both vintages of the whites have been bottled...From which you might correctly deduce that the approach is a gentle and patient one and that the wines aren't being hurried along for commercial ends. When you learn how small the yields are (7–26hl/ha, depending on wine and vintage), and when you consider the investment in



equipment and labor (hand-picking, of course, plus sorting tables, oak vats, and new barrels in a wide range of sizes), then you hope that the infant enterprise is well financed. These bottles, though, should spring like grasshoppers from shop shelves and Web pages. Allocation, I hope, will be the long-term challenge.

Since this column is called "One Bottle," I feel duty bound to pounce on just one of the 11, though I would happily have sung the praises of any of them. Which one? Obriers de la Pèira is a savory Cinsault/Carignan blend aged in large wood. Las Flors de la Pèira is a GSM (Grenache/Syrah/Mourvèdre) aged in smaller new barrels with lees (there is no racking of any of the wines "unless strictly necessary"). It's a kind of liqueur of the garrigue. La Pèira en Damaisèla is Syrah/Grenache (ditto) and has the lowest yields of all: It's even more mouth-entrancingly concentrated than the Flors, but with a more ethereal, perfumed style. The white (of which there are fewer than a hundred cases) is a succulent, glycerous, gently scented Viognier/Roussanne blend sold as Vin de Pays de l'Hérault. So... one bottle? I'm torn between the 2006 Las Flors and the 2007 La Pèira. Let's take the former, even though I've given both the 2006 and 2007 Pèira slightly higher pre-bottling scores because I have such a soft spot for grumpy old Mourvèdre.

Aromatically, the bottle will need stowing for a while. There are creamy black-fruit characters but just a touch of reduction (thanks, no doubt, to the grumpy one). Comparison with the 2005 shows how this will slowly blossom into

something teasingly complex, with all manner of warm-evening nuances. One sip of the 2006 and you realize that those black fruits have untrammelled purity and depth. The sip's a dive. Not only that, but the dream of the Languedoc—wine that, although busy with fruit, still succeeds in gathering scents of the hills into itself, like shadows into night—is brilliantly realized here. All of these wines have substance, but this more than most. There's freshness, too, unpinning that fruit with appropriate discretion. The result is a balanced, thrilling, vivacious, deep, creamy, and perfumed red wine, but one pregnant with a sense of origin as few are. It's shot to the center of my Languedoc orbit.

What I don't yet know is whether or not there is something unique about this gravelly limestone site underneath the plateau of Larzac (where sheep nibble thyme to make Roquefort), or whether wines rich with this level of beauty would be possible elsewhere in the region given equivalent levels of care and attention from the same team. The vines, at between 10 and 40 years, are not notably old. Watching the terroirs of the Midi slowly acquire color and character as the years go by is a privilege given to those of us alive now. The flavors here seem to have slightly more intrinsic austerity than in warm La Clape, more flesh and a different style of perfume than in Pic St Loup, more overall generosity than in rugged Corbières, and greater freshness than in sweet Roussillon, though I have tasted great wines from both Minervois and St Chinian that have a similar profile. Mas Jullien, whose 1998 is the best mature Languedoc in my notebook, lies nearby.

As, of course, does Mas de Daumas Gassac and Grange des Pères. Languedoc varieties like those used in La Pèira seem to me to be what the stones long for, and it is with them that wine from these old Roman roads can best rival wonderful but overadulated Bordeaux. If I had land here, I wouldn't plant Cabernet. Perhaps, though, we are lucky to have both, and lucky to be able to make the comparison. In that sense, Languedoc leads the rest of France. ■