



# Mas Combarèla - Press Review **2023**



**2023 Challenge Millésime BIO** (organic wines world's largest trade fair contest - Jan. 2023)

- **Ode Aux Ignorants 2020** **GOLD medal**

**Le Rouge & Le Blanc** (N°147 Jan. 2023 - Cinsault - Return to grace of an "accessory" grape variety)

- **Le Clos Secret 2020** 14,5/20  
*"Fresh and pleasant nose of vine peach. Graphite and pinot notes. Rich and full mouth with blood tannins. Nice concentration of black fruits. Character and chewiness. Solar wine with certain aging potential."*
- **Le Clos Secret 2016** 14/20  
*"Intense cherry and raspberry nose. Palate with a powdery texture. A chubby material, but fresh. Relief. Beautiful graphite and chocolate finish. Wine at its peak."*



**VertdeVin Magazine** (Jan. 2023)

- **Ode Aux Ignorants 2020** 93-94/100 (=16.75/20)  
*"The wine has a ruby color of medium intensity. The nose expresses pronounced aromas of ripe red and black fruits (blueberry, black plum, morello cherry, bigarreau), with herbaceous notes of garrigue and aromatic herbs (rosemary, bay leaf) and a mineral note of wet stone and limestone. On the palate, the wine is fleshy and full-bodied, with rich flavors of ripe red and black fruits (plum, Morello cherry, fresh black fig), notes of bitter cocoa, Sarawak pepper, black olives, and dried bouquet garni (thyme, bay leaf, and rosemary). The tannins are powerful, velvety, and enveloping. **The finish is long, on fresh and dried black fruits (dried blackcurrant, fresh plum, Morello cherry), sweet spices (cloves, liquorice, cinnamon), and bitter cocoa. The acidity is lively, of a medium (+) level. A solar wine, rich, but fresh and balanced. Good aging potential."***

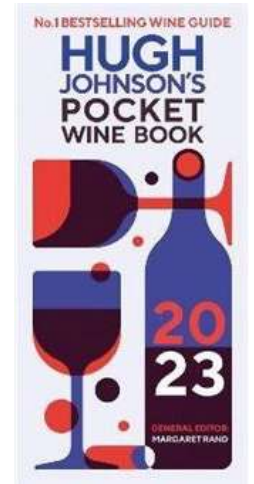



 **Hugh Johnson's Pocket Wine Book 2023** (USA, UK...)

- **Mas Combarèla**

*Among the 10 Terrasses du Larzac recommended estates*

**Terrasses du Larzac L'doc ★★★** Great terroir. High AOP on limestone with cold nights makes fresh, stylish reds. Attracts innovative growers, small plots of vines; 50%+ organic/bio. Try Cal Demoura, Combarela, Jonquières, LA PEIRA, Mas Conscience, MAS DE L'ECRITURE, MAS JULLIEN, Malavielle, Montcalmès, Pas de l'Escalette.




 **Les Echos** (Special Millésime Bio, selection by Yohan Castaing of 50 good value Languedoc organic wines, Jan. 2023)

- **Ode Aux Ignorants 2020**

*“Echoing the comic strip which has allowed many amateurs to take an interest in viticulture, this cuvée, both **generous and fruity**, is a fine example of wines [from the Terrasses du Larzac], this still young appellation.”*



 **The SOMM Journal** (USA, Feb. 2023) - A vinous El Dorado by Wanda Mann

**Twelve Languedoc Producers to Seek Out**


### **Mas Combarèla**

Founded in 2016 by Olivier Faucon, this organic winery produces wines from native grapes in the Terrasses du Larzac AOP. [mas-combarela.com](http://mas-combarela.com)



- **Des Si et Des Mi Rosé 2022** 93/100 (=16.5/20)  
*"Tasted a week before bottling. 50% Grenache. Spontaneous fermentation which lasted three weeks. Despite the very hot, dry vintage, the acidity is good – vines shut down and maturation slowed down. When the rains came just before harvest, the sugars rose very slowly. Sappy and with truly beautiful acidity. Cane candy and soft spices folded through ripe, **succulent fruit**. Grapefruit, peaches and raspberry. **Elegant finish**.(2023-2025)"*
- **Des Si et Des Mi Blanc 2021** 93/100 (=16.5/20)  
*"Certified organic. Mostly Grenache Blanc with some Carignan Blanc and Vermentino. Co-fermentation of all three grape varieties. Eight months of ageing, 90% in stainless-steel vat, with 10% in oak barrels (new) to enhance the wine's texture and structure. As it does every year, Des Si et Des Mi captures the soul of Grenache: creamy density, lanolin bitterness, layers and layers of wild flowers, and, framing it all, long, strong savouriness – this year, tasting of granola and sunflower seeds. But you can also taste the citrusy grapefruit bite of Carignan, bright in its acidity with an almondy curve, and the generous peachy fruit of Vermentino. **As always, this wine is so good!** Made for the table. (2023-2027)."*
- **Des Si et Des Mi Blanc 2022** 93+/100 (=16.5+/20)  
*"Certified organic. Mostly Grenache Blanc with some Carignan Blanc and Vermentino. Tasted two weeks before bottling. Pears, flowers, apples with a super-crunchy fennel and celeriac earth-root licorice finish. Gouleyant. Fragrant herbs on the finish. **Long. Lots of promise**.(2024-2028)"*
- **L'éclat 2021** 94/100 (=17/20)  
*"Certified organic. Carignan Blanc and Chenin Blanc, made in sandstone amphora. 2021 was the great-frost year. Less than 1,000 bottles. Bright and alive. White pepper, salty, crisp white fruit that hints at future quince, apricot and honeysuckle. Very 'central' in the way the fruit holds its place in the palate, but the extraordinary acidity sings and moves through the mouth in spirals and curves and angles. Mossy texture. **Wonderful wine!** I'd love to taste this in five years' time. (2023-2030)"*
- **L'éclat 2022** 94/100 (=17/20)  
*"Certified organic. Carignan Blanc and Chenin Blanc, in sandstone amphora & barrels. More mineral than the 2021 with an interesting hint of potato skin. But masses of juicy white melon and salinity and, as with the 2021, **so much energy** – especially in the acidity. **Really three-dimensional** with a long, angular finish. I'd wait another year before opening this.(2024-2030)."*
- **Des Si et Des Mi Rouge 2021** 93/100 (=16.5/20)  
*"Certified organic. Mostly Grenache with some Carignan and Syrah. Amazing strawberries nose. So much lusciously bright fruit. Real purity. Real energy. Cloves. Supple tannins. This seems to have become even more drinkable since I tasted it six months ago! **It's now irresistible!** (2023-2027)"*
- **Des Si et Des Mi Rouge 2022** 93/100 (=16.5/20)  
*"Certified organic. Mostly Grenache with some Carignan and Syrah. Tasted a month or two before bottling. So, so, so fresh! Like cherry juice and raspberry jelly beans with a dash of liquorice and fresh thyme. Still a baby, but looking every bit **as delicious as Des Si et Des Mi always is**. (2023-2027)"*

- **Le Clos Secret 2021** 95/100 (=17.5/20)  
*“Certified organic. 100% Cinsault from a plot of 50-year-old vines. Hand- picked. Indigenous-yeast starter. 100% destemmed, temperature-controlled fermentation in stainless steel. Aged for 12 months in concrete egg. So much vivacity. Caraway and fennel seed and bright, bright fruit. Super-fine tannins and the cool, herbal breath of garrigue whistling through the wine. This wine is such a joy. It sings of the vineyard. Pulsing with life. **Pure and long and utterly authentic.** (2023-2030)”*
- **Le Clos Secret 2022** 94+/100 (=17+/20)  
*“Certified organic. 100% Cinsault from a plot of 50-year-old vines. Hand- picked. Indigenous-yeast starter. 100% destemmed, temperature-controlled fermentation in stainless steel. Aged for 12 months in concrete egg. This will be released in September 2023. Smells of Turkish delight. Grippy tannins. Peppery raspberry fruit dances down a path of stony minerality and windswept herbs, finishing with a lick of anise. Embryonic, but **already beautiful.** (2024-2030)”*
- **Les Vieux Mazets 2020** 94/100 (=17/20)  
*“Certified organic. 100% Carignan, 75-year-old bush vines. No carbonic. Lovely mesh of fine tannins, **really pure expression of fruit.** Creamy spices with a bit of orange peel and sumac pinging through. Lavender fragrance. Natural acidity gives incredible length. (2023-2028)”*
- **Les Vieux Mazets 2021** 95/100 (=17.5/20)  
*“Certified organic. Old-vine Carignan. No carbonic. The best Vieux Mazet yet! Pure, linear, focused. Tannins have beautiful discipline. The fruit is soaring, and it feels as if **every molecule of wine is thrumming, brimming with life. Wow!** (2023-2030)”*
- **Ode Aux Ignorants 2020** 93/100 (=16.5/20)  
*“Certified organic. Mostly Syrah with some Carignan and Grenache. Mouthwatering fruit. Piquant acidity. **Masses of strawberry-fruited charm,** cooked plums and a touch of just-lit cigar. Chewy, sturdy tannins. Seems fresher than when I tasted it six months ago! (2023-2029).”*
- **Ode Aux Ignorants 2021** 93/100 (=16.5/20)  
*“Certified organic. Mostly Syrah with some Carignan and Grenache. A real baby but loads here. Substance and body; character and integrity. **Power without bullishness.** Damsons and bramble berries give it a dark ripeness, apricot gives it brightness. Real structure. (2023-2030)”*
- **Lueurs d’Espar 2020** 94/100 (=17/20)  
*“Certified organic. Mostly Mourvèdre. Spicy, sweet and succulent. Formidable concentration of dark, indigo-inky fruit and dense, muscular tannins. **There is something compelling about this powerful wine.** I’d decant it for an hour or two before drinking. (2023-2030)”*
- **Lueurs d’Espar 2021** 94+/100 (=17+/20)  
*“Certified organic. Mostly Mourvèdre. Aged in new barrels. To be released in March 2024. Deepest darkest chocolate, cherries, coffee and lots of star anise. **Stunning freshness. Stunning fruit.** Grippy, grippy tannins – tacky, but in a good way. This wine owns your mouth with its confident and power! (2025-2030)”*


 **Perswijn** (Netherlands, wine magazine - April 2023)

- **Ode Aux ignorants 2019** 92/100 (=16/20)  
"Sultry, jammy, intense, olives, plums; powerful and intense, rich, thick and sultry style"

(Zwoel, jamachtig, intens, olijven, pruimen; machtig en intens, rijk, dikke en zwoele stijl.)

**PERSWIJN**  
HÉT WIJNMAGAZINE VOOR LIEFHEBBERS EN PROFESSIONALS

À TABLE AVEC LES GUIDES LEBEY | 16 juin 2023

 **Guides Lebey** (Newsletter 'Le Jour du Lebey' - June 2023)

- **Des Si et Des Mi Rosé 2022** 90/100 (=15/20)  
"We love the delicate smoothness of this pleasant rosé."

  
LE JOUR DU LEBEY  
**Mas Combarèla, Languedoc, Des si et des mi, rosé, 2022**  
On aime l'onctuosité délicate de ce rosé agréable.  
Note Bettane+Desseauve :  
90/100 ; 12 euros

 **Vigneron d'exception** (Leading fine wine e-merchant, June 2023)

- **Des Si et Des Mi Rosé 2022**

"The production is limited, the quality is magnificent."



#### Le rosé du jour : Mas Combarèla en Languedoc

Il s'est fait piller l'an dernier, et nous ne pouvions pas nous réapprovisionner après être tombé en **rupture de stock** dès juin. Cette année, le vigneron Olivier Faucon a bien organisé la pénurie : nous avons pris nos précautions et devrions tenir... jusqu'à juillet !

La **production** est **limitée**, la qualité est magnifique, et le vigneron, "jeune reconverti" depuis quelques années, n'ose pas augmenter ses prix malgré la pénurie et la **"tendance rosé"** qui se répand à travers le monde (et surtout en Amérique) comme une trainée de poudre.

Il n'est plus grossier de déguster du rosé, et les **meilleurs vigneron**s se mettent à en élaborer de très bons... la spirale de la qualité est lancée, et les amateurs n'achètent plus le rosé le moins cher du supermarché pour mettre de l'eau gazeuse ou des glaçons dedans, mais choisissent leurs vigneron comme pour les autres couleurs, s'amusent à comparer les qualités, les cépages, les régions... c'est pourquoi **nous avons sélectionné cette année plus d'une dizaine de rosés**, contrairement aux années précédentes : chacun a son intérêt propre, ses cépages bien particuliers... bref **son identité** !

Cette semaine, place au **Mas Combarèla** (Saint-Jean-de-Fos) issu de **grenache noir, cinsault et mourvèdre** si bien implantés en Languedoc. Olivier Faucon suggère des accords mets-vins originaux : *Carpaccio de saumon, risotto de gambas, grillade de rougets, côtes d'agneau au thym, sushis, curries. Cuisine méditerranéenne, asiatique et plats épicés...* l'embaras du choix !

🇫🇷 **La Revue du Vin de France** (June. 2023 - Organic Wines, Learn with 470 selected wines)

- **Ode Aux Ignorants 2019** 91/100 (=15.5/20)  
*"Depth and power of a wine held by frank and fresh tannins, quite delicate in a sapid dimension. The dense fruity flesh is delicately set with **fine tannin and perfect tension**. Beautiful liquorice and crunchy finish."*



🇫🇷 **Guides Lebey** (Newsletter 'Le Jour du Lebey' - June 2023)


- **Le Clos Secret 2022** 93/100 (=16.5/20)  
*"This pure Cinsault is of **great delicacy** without lacking in constitutive strength. On old rose, liquorice and the scents of the garrigue."*

🇺🇸 🇫🇷 🇮🇹 🇪🇸 **VertdeVin Magazine** (July. 2023)

- **L'éclat 2021** 91-92/100 (=15.75/20)  
*"The wine has a pale color with bright green reflections. On the nose it is mineral with fruit and lightness. There are notes of apple, white peach and white grape. On the palate, it is mineral, fresh and fruity with an acidulous structure. There are notes of white peach, white grape, lemon blossom as well as vanilla seeds. It is a **crystalline wine in its aromatics with a salivating finish on iodine**."*
- **Des Si et Des Mi Blanc 2022** 93-94/100 (=16.5+/20)  
*"The wine has a light, bright and clear straw yellow colour. On the nose, the wine is floral and fruity with a touch of minerality. There are notes of apple, white peach as well as apricot and green mango. There is a solar and floral side with fine notes of lemon blossom and apricot. On the palate, there is a slight sparkle on the attack. We have fruit, spices, freshness with a tangy frame. There are notes of pink pepper, mango as well as crunchy tart apple and white peach. A clear spicy side develops and continues into the more mineral finish. We perceive a little pineapple and lemon blossom or even orange blossom. **Nice balance and delicacy**."*

Mas Combarèla - Des Si et des Mi 2022  
IGP Saint-Guilhem-Le-Désert  
The wine has a light, bright and clear straw yellow colour. On the nose, the wine is floral and fruity with a touch of minerality. There are notes of apple, white peach as well as apricot and green mango. There is a solar and floral side with fine notes of lemon blossom and apricot. On the palate, there is a slight sparkle on the attack. We have fruit, spices, freshness with a tangy frame. There are notes of pink pepper, mango as well as crunchy tart apple and white peach. A clear spicy side develops and continues into a more mineral finish. We perceive a little pineapple and lemon blossom or even orange blossom. Nice balance and delicacy.  
Score : 16.5+/20 (93-94/100)

- **Des Si et Des Mi Rosé 2022** 89/100 (=14.5/20)  
*"A comforting nose with red berries, baked peaches and some mild spices. It's quite soft on the palate with a light body. **Plenty of fruit here with a clean finish.** Grenache, mourvedre and cinsault. From organically grown grapes. Drink now. »*
- **L'éclat 2021** 90/100 (=15.5/20)  
*"A medium-bodied white with cooked lemons, herbs and mild spices. It remains fresh and aromatic on the palate with **good fruit and a lively finish.** From organically grown grapes. Drink now."*
- **Des Si et Des Mi Blanc 2022** 91/100 (=15.5/20)  
*"White peaches, pears, white flowers and hints of green apples. It's medium-bodied with a round and creamy texture on the mid-palate. **Fresh with volume** and weight and a pear-like finish with a touch of bitterness. Grenache blanc, carignan blanc and rolle. From organically grown grapes. Drink now."*
- **Des Si et Des Mi Rouge 2022** 92/100 (=16/20)  
*"A medium-bodied red with fine tannins. **Round and well-balanced** with notes of wild berries, herbs, white pepper funk and mixed spices. It has a herbal edge and wild character throughout with a focused finish. Grenache, carignan and syrah. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold."*
- **Le Clos Secret 2022** 92/100 (=16/20)  
*"A serious red with dark berries, dried thyme, baking spices and stones. Medium to full body with fine, firm tannins. A plethora of peppercorns on the palate gives it a vibrant and wild character. **Energetic and well-balanced** with a flavorful, chewy finish. 100% cinsault. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold."*
- **Les Vieux Mazets 2020** 92/100 (=16/20)  
*"A pretty intense nose with dark berries, bark, earth and freshly ground black pepper. Medium body with fine tannins. **Silky texture with poise and elegance** yet its has a vibrant core of berries and spices giving it vitality throughout. 100% carignan. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold."*
- **Lueurs d'Espar 2020** 92/100 (=16/20)  
*"A focused and layered mourvedre with dark berries, dried herbs, dark chocolate and grilled meat aromas that follow through to a medium body with fine, firm tannins. **Vibrant and textured with so much energy leaning towards the precise developing finish,** full of spices. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold."*

 **Bettane + Desseauve 2024** ([mybettanedesseauve.fr](http://mybettanedesseauve.fr), Sept. 2023)

• **Mas Combarèla ★★★**

*“Olivier Faucon keeps surprising us with his wonderful reds, ethereal and with a rare intensity, impressive by their **delicacy and their saline finishes**. Since its first vintage, this 11-hectare estate has continued to draw closer to the big names. Third star in three vintages, this is not that usual but that is justified”*

- **Le Clos Secret 2022** 93/100 (=16.5/20)

*“This pure Cinsault is of great delicacy without lacking in constitutive strength. Notes of old rose, licorice, and scents of the scrubland.»*

- **Ode Aux Ignorants 2021** 92/100 (=16/20)

*“The density is surprising in this sample taken before bottling. The tannins, though slightly prominent, will integrate during the remaining aging months. In the finish, one can perceive the usual finesse of the cuvée. 2021 will be a fine vintage for the estate.»*

- **Lueurs d’Espar 2021** 93/100 (=16,5/20)

*“The Mourvèdre, formerly known as “l’espar,” dominates in this cuvée. With additional complexity, persistence, and length in comparison to other red cuvées of the estate - all of which are remarkable - this cuvée stands as the flagship of Mas Combarèla.»*



**Mas Combarèla**

★★★☆☆  
Olivier Faucon ne cesse de nous étonner avec ses rouges magnifiques, aériens et d’une rare intensité, impressionnants par leur finesse de grain et leurs finales salines. Depuis son premier millésime, ce domaine de 11 hectares n’a cessé de se rapprocher des grands et mérite amplement la troisième étoile attribuée l’an passé après seulement trois millésimes produits.

■ Ode aux Ignorants, terrasses du Larzac 2021	92
■ Sec : 2015-16 : 23 C : 🍷	
■ Le Clos Secret, saint-guilhem le désert 2022	93
■ Sec : 2016-18 : 20 C : 🍷	
■ Lueur d’espar, terrasses du Larzac 2021	93
■ Sec : 2015-17 : 28 C : 🍷	

 **Jancis Robinson** (visit of the vineyard / winery by Jancis Robinson) (Sept. 2023)

<https://www.jancisrobinson.com/articles/languedoc-round-summer-2023>



6 Sep 2023 - **Languedoc round-up, summer 2023**



*Olivier Faucon of Mas Combarèla, pictured above, is just one of so many over-achievers in France's most extensive wine region. The Languedoc may not be the simplest region to understand, but can you afford to ignore it?*

(...)



**Jancis :** Intrigued by [Tam's enthusiastic tasting notes](#) on the wines of Mas Combarèla, I set off in late July to visit the domaine up in the hills in the south of the Terrasses du Larzac appellation in an isolated spot between Montpeyrroux and the little village of St-Jean-de-Fos.

One of my hobby horses is that wine producers tend to be dangerously lax about security. In far too many wineries anyone could walk in and add a potentially lethal or commercially dangerous substance to a barrel. But this criticism certainly couldn't be levelled at Olivier Faucon (pictured above), who has surrounded the winery and house he has built with a high wall and security gate. Even though he knew exactly when I was arriving, the gate was shut and I had to ring the bell and wait for this ex marketer from Paris. When I asked him about all the security his explanation was, 'Our family is from northern France. When I travel I need to have walls and a gate.' (Tam has regularly been exposed to Faucon's wines as a member of the Languedoc [Outsiders](#)' group.)



*The walled and gated winery and house at Mas Combarèla*

He may not be a native but to judge from his wines, he seems to have intuited the local conditions pretty seamlessly. He says he was inspired to change direction and become a vigneron by Richard Leroy of the Loire, who, similarly, had no wine background – worked in a Paris bank – but has come to be a celebrated wine producer. Another inspiration was a series of cartoons about wine, notably *Les Ignorants*, after which one of his wines is named.

He went to wine school in Beaune and asked to work at Cal Demoura, not too far from what would become his own domaine, a site he chose because of the cool nights thanks to cold air from the mountains to the north. He'd accumulated a bit of capital and initially planned to buy a domaine, sussing out territory all over the south of France. But in the end he bought old-vine vineyards in this wild, hilly, windswept countryside whose produce used to go to the local co-op. They are mainly round his winery plus a few hectares the other side of St-Jean-de-Fos and some even higher up near Arboras, making a total of 12 ha (30 acres) at 150 up to 500 m (490–1,640 ft).

His first vintage was 2016. He built the winery in 2018 and the house in 2019, the year the property was certified organic. 'For 10 years, my income has been zero. The Crédit Agricole is my friend', he says about the dominant bank in the south of France. His wife still works in market research in Paris with a salary he describes as 'correct'.

75-year-old Carignan vines surround the property but through a little wood of truffle oaks to the south, in a strip surrounded by trees and scented garrigue, is what he calls his Clos Secret, effectively a hidden valley, planted with 50-year-old Cinsault vines which produce a particularly characterful wine. A strip of limestone runs diagonally through the property. South-east of it is soil laced with ferrous oxide, north-west of it is sandy.

Faucon has imported a mass selection of Chenin Blanc cuttings from the Loire and also has some old Carignan Blanc vines and some Vermentino, which must now be called Rolle in France, thanks to Italian lobbying. He told me that an appellation for white Terrasses du Larzac is in the works and that quite a few growers there have Chenin planted.


He certainly has an original array of wine names but when I asked this ex-marketing person how Languedoc wines should best be sold to the public he said, 'I don't know'. If they were all of the **quality and sophistication of Mas Combarèla's range**, it might be a bit easier.

Jancis Robinson

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- **Des Si et Des Mi Rosé 2022** 92/100 (=16/20)  
*"50% Grenache, 30% Mourvèdre, 20% Cinsault. Picked on 22 August after vine shutdown. Vigneron Olivier Faucon said, 'Historically I didn't like rosé but I used to work in Asia and liked their food. Rosé goes very well with it. I want lots of flavour without having to take out the colour.' Short press. Certified organic.  
Less distinctive than the reds though **very floral and aromatic** – just a bit technical-tasting. Little bit too chewy on the end. 12.5%. Drink 2024 – 2025"*
- **Des Si et Des Mi Blanc 2022** 93/100 (=16.5/20)  
*"This could be AOP Languedoc. Used to be 100% Grenache Blanc but from 2020 it's 70% Grenache Blanc. In 2022 includes 15% Carignan Blanc, 10% Rolle (Vermentino), and 5% Chenin Blanc for the first time. 10% aged in barrique. Certified organic.  
**Very lively** on the nose with a hint of lime and blossom. Apparently it does age quite well but it would be a good aperitif. 12.5%. Drink 2023 – 2025"*
- **L'éclat 2021** 93/100 (=16.5/20)  
*"Second vintage. 60% Carignan Blanc, 40% Chenin Blanc – a mix of south and north of France! 40% aged in barriques. Certified organic.  
Very pale. Substance on the palate comes from the Carignan and freshness from Chenin, I assume. Very refreshing. Racy. A bit of **texture and ambition. Gastronomic.** 13%. Drink 2023 – 2027"*
- **Des Si et Des Mi Rouge 2022** 93/100 (=16.5/20)  
*"This wine, intended to be a fruity wine for early drinking, was until the 2021 vintage bottled as AOC Languedoc. It is now AOC Terrasses du Larzac. The name is a local expression meaning 'things like this and things like that'. 55% Grenache, 25% Carignan, 17% Syrah, 3% Cinsault. Made and aged in tank. To be released September 2023 (needs a year's ageing for Terrasses du Larzac). Certified organic.  
Transparent garnet. Powerfully fruity nose. Good fresh fruit and just a little tannin on the end. Very approachable already. **Charming.** 13.5%. Drink 2023 – 2027"*

- **Le Clos Secret 2022** 94/100 (=17/20)  
*"100% Cinsault. Interesting vintage because of the drought, says vigneron Olivier Faucon. On 14 August there was 14 mm of rain and then a few showers at the end of August and in September. The grapes swelled after rain – the same phenomenon as in Bordeaux. The vines shut down before then. Délestage at the start of fermentation and afterwards daily remontage during fermentation. Then infusion. No pigeage. Long extraction. Faucon blends in some Cinsault from another plot. Matured in concrete eggs only (no oak). To be released September 2023. Certified organic.*  
*Transparent garnet. Intense nose. **Very supple indeed** on the surface even if there are lots of tannins underneath. Real vivacity and bite. Morello cherry. Long. 14%. Drink 2023 – 2030"*
- **Les Vieux Mazets 2021** 94/100 (=17/20)  
*"100% Carignan, average age 75, the oldest vines round the winery. Mazet is a local name for an old cabin in a vineyard such as there is on this property. Frost shrank the crop – all the countryside was 'like winter' for two months after it. The wine is inspired by Daniel Domergue's Minervois Clos Centeilles. Made like Le Clos Secret. Sometimes carbonic maceration but not in 2021. All destemmed. To be released September 2023. Certified organic.*  
*Glowing mid crimson. Less aromatic than this producer's Cinsault. Lots of gentle fruit and **lovely gentle texture with meaty freshness**. I wouldn't guess this was Carignan if served blind and I cannot give a higher compliment! Some tannin. 13.5%. Drink 2023 – 2030 "*
- **Ode Aux Ignorants 2021** 95/100 (=17.5/20)  
*"50% Syrah, 30% Grenache, 15% Carignan, 5% Mourvèdre. 95% vines from the high Arboras site. Long élevage in 500- and 228-litre barriques, old and new, plus about 40% in concrete or tank. Aimed at the cartoonists who inspired vigneron Olivier Faucon and wrote a book Les Ignorants. They were the first to taste this wine. Exported to Finland in tiny quantity as a parallel import because of Tam's enthusiastic tasting notes. To be released end 2023. Certified organic.*  
*Mid garnet. Savoury nose. Then delicate and very appetising. So gentle! Long. Dry finish. **So much going on here!** 14%. Drink 2024 – 2032"*
- **Lueurs d'Espar 2018** 94/100 (=17/20)  
*"70% Mourvèdre (the maximum allowed in Terrasses du Larzac) plus 20% Carignan and 10% Syrah. Mourvèdre is called Espar in the Hérault and Gard departments. On 25- to 30-year-old Grenache roots, grafted in 2017. 2.5 years' élevage in quite a lot of new oak. Also a sandstone amphora. Certified organic..*  
*Deeper colour again for the older wine! This **has mellowed nicely**. Molten liquorice. 14.5%. Drink 2022 – 2028"*

 **En Magnum** (Languedoc, the land of possibilities. Selection of producers who joined the French elite. Sept. 2023)

- **Ode Aux Ignorants 2020** 94/100 (=17/20)  
*"This vintage confirms the **gracile style of this delicate and full bodied cuvée**, an ode to all those who were ignorant but who now know what is a great wine."*




 **Hugh Johnson's Pocket Wine Book 2024** (USA, UK...)

• **Mas Combarèla**

*Among the 12 Terrasses du Larzac recommended estates*

*Terrasses du Larzac L'doc ★★★ Great terroir nw of Montpellier. High AOP on limestone with cold nights makes fresh, stylish reds. Attracts innovative growers, small plots of vines; 50%+ organic/bio. Try Cal Demoura, Combarela, Jonquières, La Peira, Mas d'Agamas, des Brousses, Conscience, DE L'ECRITURE, MAS JULLIEN, Malavielle, Montcalmès, Pas de l'Escalette. Neighbouring AOP*



 **Languedoc e Roussillon** (Giorgio Fogliani's book selecting 300 wines from the region. Oct. 2023)

• **Mas Combarèla**

*"Recent domain which was founded in 2016 by Olivier Faucon, who undertook this profession out of passion and enthusiasm after a different previous career. It has 12 hectares certified organic and a range of 7 vintages: a white, a rosé and five reds, including two Terrasses du Larzac and two single-varietals (cinsault and carignan)."*



• **Ode Aux Ignorants 2018**

*"serious, ambitious, of Rhone inspiration: bloody and spicy, slightly smoky, it has volume, dense tannins and a beautiful mineral finish. It seems particularly cut out for aging ».*

**Mas Combarèla**

34150 Saint-Jean-de-Fos | +33(0)6.19.42.07.00 | mas-combarela.com  
| contact@mas-combarela.com

Azienda recente, è stata fondata nel 2016 da Olivier Faucon, che ha intrapreso questo mestiere per entusiasmo e passione dopo una carriera di tipo diverso. Conta 12 ettari certificati biologici e una gamma di 7 cuvées: un bianco, un rosato e cinque rossi, di cui due terrasses e due monovittigno (cinsault e carignan).

L'unico vino assaggiato, il terrasses-du-larzac *Ode aux ignorants* 2018<sup>15</sup>, è serio, ambizioso, di ispirazione rodaniana: sanguigno e speziato, appena fumé, ha volume, tannini fitti e una bella chiusura minerale. Sembra particolarmente tagliato per l'invecchiamento. •

 **idealwine** (idealwine journal - News :

<https://www.idealwine.net/mas-combarela-fait-briller-les-terrasses-du-larzac/> Oct. 2023)

JOURNAL IDEALWINE

FOUR CACTUSÉE DESIGN

Mas Combarèla fait briller les Terrasses du Larzac

> Article > Annonces

## Mas Combarèla Illuminates the Terrasses du Larzac

After only three vintages, Olivier Faucon has become a darling of critics, championing a new generation of winemakers. His talent and fresh approach to the craft shine through in the vines he cultivates on the Terrasses du Larzac, yielding wines that marry character with an ethereal quality. Olivier is a vinicultural personality to watch, as his beginnings show great promise.



Everything about Mas Combarèla exudes freshness and novelty, starting with its vintner. Olivier Faucon's path to viticulture was not preordained. After a career in marketing and communication that took him and his wife through the streets of Europe and Asia's most beautiful cities, he felt the call back to the land. Once again, literature demonstrates its power to free minds and inspire men. It was after reading a graphic novel, "Les Ignorants" by Étienne Davodeau, that Olivier Faucon had this revelatory vision: he would become a winemaker.

After a professional retraining - earning a BTS in viticulture and oenology from Beaune - he embarked on further training, staying close to his Burgundian comrades at the A-F Gros estate. He later joined Vincent Goumard in Languedoc, refining his expertise and offering his assistance at Mas Cal Demoura. He fell in love with the region and its wines, ultimately deciding to settle there and establish the domain we know today as Mas Combarèla in 2016.

### **Appellation...**

While Olivier Faucon's domain is recent, so is the appellation on which he operates. It wasn't until 2014 that the Terrasses du Larzac received their recognition as an AOC within the Coteaux du Languedoc, under which the terroir had previously been classified. The Languedoc vineyard itself is older, but it saw significant development in the early 21st century, as vintners moved away from a "volumetric" view of wine to a more peasant-style vinification, closely tied to the identity of the land.

A place that is "both spectacular and intimate," the Terrasses du Larzac are encircled by three of France's major sites: the Cirque de Navacelle, the Lake Salagou-Cirque de Mourèze, and the Gorges de l'Hérault. Limestone cliffs and dolomite mix with oak forests and vine-covered slopes, painting a relief of dazzling mosaic of colors. This rare geological heritage, in the process of UNESCO labeling, offers vintners an extensive playground where each has the opportunity to express their art in a unique way.

**ATTENTION:** The people of Languedoc make a point of emphasizing that the vineyards of the Terrasses du Larzac are not on the Larzac plateau itself, but cling to its foothills. This is an important distinction because the relief of Larzac dominates and protects the vineyards, significantly influencing the climate of the appellation area.

### **...and Promising Wines**

Olivier Faucon is part of a generation of neo-winemakers who, after professional retraining, naturally turned to organic agriculture from the outset. The terroir provides a superb environment for the development of these organic and identity-driven wines. The presence of a rugged but generous nature encourages vintners to work in symbiosis rather than in opposition to it. In 2022, over 70% of the vineyard was worked in accordance with the specifications of organic farming.



Extending over this AOC but also over the IGP Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert, the 11 hectares of the Mas Combarèla domain pay tribute to the region's grape varieties. Grenache Noir, Cinsault, Mourvèdre, Syrah, and the heritage Carignan grape engage in a pulsating dance in the domain's blends,

presenting a rare accuracy, as highlighted by critics. Vinifications are carried out with precision and delicacy, revealing the finesse of this terroir.


Olivier Faucon also offers profound expressions of ancient grape varieties, dedicating entire cuvées to them (Le Clos Secret and Les Vieux Mazets are respectively single-varietal Cinsault and Carignan).

This is a domain to discover, still accessible, to keep an eye on because the future holds great promise for these Languedoc wines.

### Bettane + Desseauve Wine Guide - 3 out of 5 Stars

Olivier Faucon never ceases to amaze us with his magnificent, airy reds of rare intensity, impressive for their fine texture and saline finishes. Since its first vintage, this 11-hectare domain has steadily approached greatness and thoroughly deserves the third star awarded last year after only three produced vintages.



 **Decanter** (Special reports Languedoc, Terrasses du Larzac, etc. Decanter Magazine & decanter.com, by Natalie Earl, Nov. 2023)

### « 10 reasons to REDISCOVER LANGUEDOC

Decanter's Regional Editor for Languedoc has spent a lot of time in the southern French wine region over the past year, and has been bowled over by the quality on offer. Here she gives us 10 of many good reasons to look at its terroirs, estates and wines through fresh eyes :

1 - Whites (...)

2 - Individuality

(...) Terrasses du Larzac is one of the most dynamic appellations, with a sense of community and mutual respect among its producers. The influx of newcomers over the last 10 years, welcomed by the appellation's leading names (not always given in Languedoc), has created a fusion of sharp minds, fresh ideas and consequently standout wines. (...)

3 - The outliers (...)

4 - Experimentation (...)

5 - Lighter, fresher wines (...)

6 - Greener drinking (...)

7 - Old vines (...)

8 - Indegenous varieties (...)

9 - Imported grapes (...)

10 - People & place (...)

# 10 reasons to REDISCOVER LANGUEDOC

Decanter's Regional Editor for Languedoc has spent a lot of time in the southern French wine region over the past year, and has been bowled over by the quality on offer. Here she gives us 10 of many good reasons to look at its terroirs, estates and wines through fresh eyes

STORY NATALIE EARL

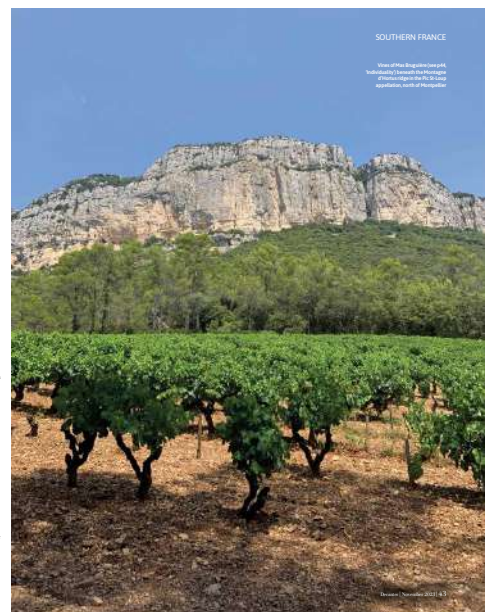
A region as vast and geographically complicated as Languedoc is difficult, if not impossible, to generalise about. With so many appellations, sub-appellations, microclimates, grape varieties and terroirs, it's more than just the sum of its parts. Languedoc has moved into a new era, extending beyond the tempo of 'grape value' and 'costs, here we go!'. Now is the time to discover the cutting edge of what's happening in this region. Here, don't walk to wrap up the exciting wines of Languedoc.

## I Whites

Most famous for its reds, Languedoc's white wines are unique, in that they are becoming a real source of freshness, intrigue and deliciousness. There are still vast plantings of international varieties such as Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc in the region, but it's the local varieties that make the most complex and interesting wines. Carignan Blanc and the rare Gaio, Grenache Blanc and Gaio, Terre, Bourboulon, Rolle, Mauzac and Clairet are being used to great effect in blends, alongside adopted varieties such as Roussanne, Marsanne, Viognier and Chenin Blanc.



Some producers are leaning in on single-variety styles, and when seasonal from old vines this can work very well, giving great concentration and varietal definition. There's one appellation that's dedicated solely to the production of dry whites, Picpoul de Pinet, which since its accession to appellation status in 2013 has become a huge commercial success. Other whites of the Languedoc region look set to follow suit. Sometimes it's an entire appellation that impresses, while at others it's more about individual producers. The whites of La Cigale, class, saline and fresh - have risen in profile as a serious rival to its neighbour nearby Roussillon's racy acidity; look out for those from Terras de Goudou that present for light and Chateau Bousquet's new Mer. Terrasses du Larzac, where white varieties thrive in Languedoc's cooler reaches, is working on plans to have its appellation regulations updated in order to include white wines. Check out producers Domaine La Cite de la Vigne, Les Vignes Oublies and Mas Cal Demouré for some extremely complex whites. For those impressed by some white Cariboues, but here you do have to know your producers, start with the elegant La Regon from Marzac, Magneron from St-Robert, and the whites from Chateau La Baronne and Pierre Boiret.



## Languedoc : seven names to know

Beyond the names already cited, the following producers should also be on your radar....

(...)

### MAS COMBARELA, Terrasses du Larzac

A relatively new domaine in the appellation, founded in 2016 by Olivier Faucon, and one to watch. [mas-combarela.com](http://mas-combarela.com)

(...)

### Terrasses du Larzac report 2023: Latest releases tasted

*'I've been blown away by the style and class of these wines. This really is Languedoc's bijou,' says Natalie Earl as she assesses the most recent vintages and gives her verdict on the resulting wines.*

The Terrasses du Larzac zone is fairly spread out, the vineyard area forming a v-shape around the foothills of a limestone plateau, the Causse du Larzac. The areas classified under the appellation appear a little scattergun when looking at a map. They're concentrated around the village of Jonquières, the bottom of the 'V', while others are some 30km northwest and a few more some 50km northeast.

This is one of few appellations where Carignan is a principal variety (not relegated to a secondary or accessory variety). The others are Syrah, Mourvèdre and Grenache, with Cinsault becoming more important too.

I've been blown away by the style and class of these wines. This really is Languedoc's bijou. It is beginning to be reflected in the price of the wines, however, so now is the time to start snapping them up.

### Tasting notes and scores for the top Terrasses du Larzac latest releases:

(...)

#### • Lueurs d'Espar 2020 92/100

*"A riper, richer nose of plums and fresh figs, and a strong scent of pine. The acidity surges and flows across the plump, squishy cherry palate. A lovely mouthful. An iodine note emerges on the finish as well, ferrous and savoury. Supple tannins."*

#### Mas Combarèla, Lueurs d'Espar, Terrasses du Larzac, Languedoc- Roussillon, France 2020

My Wines

**SINGLE TASTING**

Tasted by: Natalie Earl  
(at Jonquières, France, 30 Jun 2023)  
Part of Terrasses du Larzac report 2023: Latest releases tasted  
Drinking Window: 2023 - 2028

02

A riper, richer nose of plums and fresh figs, and a strong scent of pine. The acidity surges and flows across the plump, squishy cherry palate. A lovely mouthful. An iodine note emerges on the finish as well, ferrous and savoury. Supple tannins.



Producer	Mas Combarèla
Brand	Lueurs d'Espar
Vintage	2020
Wine Type	still
Colour	Red
Country	France
Region	Languedoc-Roussillon
Appellation	Terrasses du Larzac
Sweetness	Dry
Closure	Cork
Alcohol	14.50%
Body	Medium
Grapes	70% Mourvèdre 10% Syrah / Shiraz 20% Carignan / Carifera

## Languedoc: seven names to know

Beyond the names already cited, the following producers should also be on your radar...

**CLOS DES JARRES, Minervois** Vivien Hemelsdael makes fresh wines that sometimes stray away from the appellation norms. [leclodesjarres.fr](http://leclodesjarres.fr)

**DOMAINE DE VILLENEUVE, Pic St-Loup** Softly spoken and a fount of knowledge, 28-year-old Victorine Fraisse is the new generation now heading up this family domaine. [domaine-de-villeneuve.com](http://domaine-de-villeneuve.com)

**ETIENNE FORT, Limoux** Converting a portion of his family's vineyards to organic and rescuing them from the cooperative, Etienne makes elegant, expressive Crémant and Blanquette. +33 (0)6 33 43 41 46

**LES HAUTES TERRES, Limoux** A reference for high-quality still and sparkling in Limoux. [domaineshautesterres.com](http://domaineshautesterres.com)

**MAS COMBARELA, Terrasses du Larzac** A relatively new domaine in the appellation, founded in 2016 by Olivier Faucon, and one to watch. [mas-combarela.com](http://mas-combarela.com)

**MAS FOULAQUIER, Pic St-Loup** A biodynamic domaine in the northern reaches of the appellation, established by former architect Pierre Jéquier in 1998 and run since 2003 with his wife Blandine Chauchet. [masfoulaquier.fr](http://masfoulaquier.fr)

**YOHANN MORENO, Corbières** A new young winemaker in Durban-Corbières, making waves in the natural wine scene. [@morenoyohann](http://morenoyohann)