



Mas Combarèla - Press Review **2022**

Jancis Robinson (/Tamlyn Currin, UK) (Jan. 2022)



- **Des Si et Des Mi Blanc 2020** 16,5/20 (=93/100)
*"White flowers, chalky hay, wet chalk, soft rye bread warm out the oven. You can smell the Grenache Blanc! Very flowery on the palate, but in that distinctive Grenache-Blanc palate which is all about tiny, dried, wild rock flowers caught up with dried grasses and pressed between rough flax-paper pages. Only Grenache Blanc manages to taste both sepia and newly snapped at the same time. Lemon verbena. Sage. Golden pears canvassed across a taut framework of bitterness. **Introvert complexity. This is so gourmand...** practically begging for fish en papillote or plaice in brown butter and caper sauce. (2022-2024)."*
- **Des Si et Des Mi Rouge 2020** 16.5/20 (=93/100)
*"**Friendly, juicy, sappy glugful of happy wine.** This wine tastes like a party at a festival in a retro Airstream trailer where the warm summer air tastes of ripe cherries and smells of weed, where the campfire smoke is playing darts with the incense sticks from the next-door tent, and languid folk music drifts up through the guy ropes and face-taps your furrowed brow until it gives in to a beatific smile. (2021-2023)."*
- **Le Clos Secret 2020** 17/20 (=94/100)
*"Cinsault like this confirms my head-below-parapet conviction that Cinsault already is and will increasingly be, in this world of climate change, a variety that deserves to be reclassified as 'fine'. Retaining every ounce of its southern-France, wild, windswept, garrigue-scented, fresh-blood and strawberries dipped in liquid-Brighton-rock-candy Cinsault character, it nevertheless expresses itself with the **translucent grace and stained-glass-window glow that really beautiful Pinot Noir does.** The tannins have the same sylph-like slip: tricking you into thinking that they're not there, flickering in the shadows, biting in places you least expect them to be. This wine is **impish, magical, noble**; moon, rock, blood, herbs. The goddess Diana in a glass? (2022-2027)."*
- **Ode Aux Ignorants 2019** 17/20 (=94/100)
*"This is earthy, in an earth-connected, earth-rooted kind of way. A wine that smells of wild hedgerow berries stained on your palms and your fingernails after you've been foraging and now you're lying on the autumn-damp raw earthed grass that is still warm from the dying afternoon sunshine but **the cool dew of the early night is already settling like invisible cashmere and you can see the first stars in the French-navy-blue of the early night sky.** You can smell fresh mushrooms, nearby – perhaps you kicked them accidentally as you walked up this barrow. You can smell the crush of green grass beneath your neck. And in this wine you can still taste the memory of the sharp, intense, black, ripe berries you've spent the afternoon picking and the bitterness of their leaves that got in the way and the warm skin and laughter and mock-serious concentration of the person you picked them with. A wine you want to drink with that exact person.(2022-2028)"*
- **L'éclat 2020** 16.5+/20 (=93+/100)
*"Crisp, clear-singing fruit on the nose with white-linen and green-apple brightness and clarity on the palate. Seemed straightforward at first, but then **the acidity started to layer up the build,** bringing the intensity of apricots, a millefeuille of lime and grilled-grapefruit citrus, bay leaf, crushed cardamom and a certain grip. Subtle bitterness plays across the*

palate. **There's a lot going on here**, but it needs another year in bottle. I would leave it to the end of 2022 or 2023.(2023-2026).”

- **Lueurs d'Espar** 17/20 (=94/100)
“Classic Mourvèdre density and concentration on the nose, and then, like slowly drawing your finger through thick purple-blue ink on black vellum, a wine that is animal and animal skin and the rigidly tight skin of tannic wild winter berries and the tannic rigor-rigidness of bare bony winter trees etched against flint skies. There is no charm, but caverns of echoing soul in this essence-of-Mourvèdre wine. I say 'no charm', which makes it sound tough and unresilient, which it isn't either. The tannins are like Sylvia Plath's punctuation: you don't see them until you're taught to, and then you realise that every jolt of words is contained in the full stops, the commas, the marks that aren't words. **Don't drink this wild wine unless you have a wild soul**, and even then, don't drink it alone, and **don't drink it without a dark night and something slow-cooked and sensuously dark to eat.**(2023-2029)”

La Revue du Vin de France (Changing life to become a winegrower - Jan. 2022)

They have taken the plunge for the world of wine by Idelette Fritsch

They were bankers, engineers, computer scientists, journalists... Today they are winegrowers, wine merchants or sommelièrs. Their success fuels the myth of a wine Eldorado accessible to those who want to change their lives and experience the dream of making wine. Between myths and stubbornness, the new promised land of the “neos” is terra incognita .

October 2021. Olivier Faucon, who arrived in Terrasses du Larzac in 2016, is a happy winemaker. He has just bought the anniversary edition of *Les Ignorants*, the graphic novel by Étienne Davodeau (ed. Futuropolis) which he has been collecting in all languages since its release in 2011.

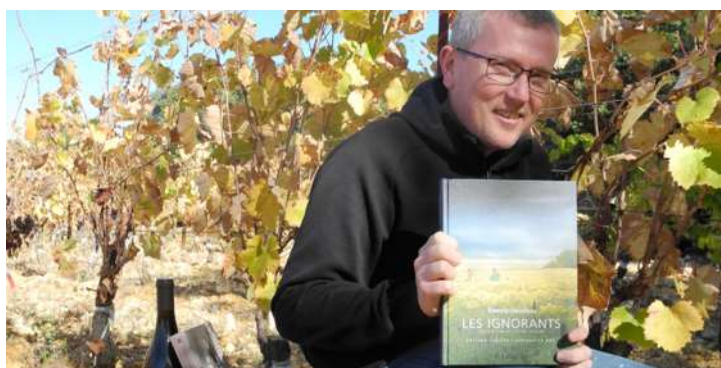


In this limited edition augmented by a joint interview, the authors – the Angevin cartoonist and the winemaker Richard Leroy – pay homage to him between the lines by citing the – numerous – vocations aroused by this book. Olivier Faucon had sent them a case of his first wine *Ode aux Ignorants*, vintage 2016... The year of his rebirth as a winemaker at Mas Combarèla, after a first career in international marketing.

Initiatory story

After fifteen years spent between Taiwan, Shanghai and Paris as an employee for holding companies (the survey company Kantar, the outdoor advertising giant JCDecaux and the Chinese conglomerate Haier, specialist in household appliances), Olivier acquires 10.5 hectares of vines on the Causse d'Arboras and in Montpeyroux, without cellars, to create his domain ex nihilo.

How could the reading of a comic strip, even in the form of an initiatory story, arouse the vocation of a second life, after the first already fulfilled? “Reading the true story of Richard Leroy, a former Parisian banker who became a winemaker in Anjou, I said to myself: why not me? “, recounts Olivier Faucon.



The stimulus, in 2013, comes at the age of 40 : leaving the Paris region, returning to the land, going through a solid training in Burgundy, doing a season with a star of the appellation (Vincent Goumard, at Mas Cal Demoura), investing all his savings in the purchase of vines, borrow from the bank over seventeen years to settle in 2016.

With, at his side, Laure Friscourt, who keeps her job in consulting in Paris, for the Ifop marketing institute. And, let's say it straight away, still no salary for him today despite recognized and appreciated wines. The case of this brilliant winemaker is far from isolated.

In a few decades, the world of wine has gone from a model of traditional family transmission to an abounding entrepreneurial dynamism: everywhere, people leave a structured, often urban living environment, to settle in the vineyard, make wine or approach it by marketing it. (...)

- **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 flesh with dense fruit is delicately set with **fine tannin and perfect tension**. The finish is liquoricey and crunchy .”*

ELLE à Table (Terrasses du Larzac, the eldorado of neo-winegrowers - Jan. 2022)

- **Ode Aux Ignorants 2018**

*“A favorite for this estate which has continued to progress since its installation in 2016 on the Terrasses du Larzac. After 15 years of marketing, Olivier decides to change his life after reading a comic strip. But not just any: that of “Ignorants”, by Etienne Davodeau, which became a best-seller, and to which Olivier then paid homage by creating a tribute cuvée ‘Ode Aux Ignorants’. In 2013, he started a viticulture-oenology training in Burgundy, but it was on the Larzac side that he wanted to move. He landed an internship in one of the flagship estates of the appellation, Mas Cal Demoura, and at the same time looked for vines. He ended up finding a few hectares and had a cellar built. Its wines are **balanced, harmonious, elegant**. This is an ambition that shows itself but which is well controlled, which is not easy. **Very promising**. Our favorite cuvée: Ode Aux Ignorants .”*



Terre de Vins (Languedoc, gain altitude ! - Jan. 2022)

- **Ode Aux Ignorants 2019** ❤️ 16,75/20 (=93,5/100)

“ ‘A paradise for grapes’, announces this estate with their vineyard located at 350 meters altitude, above the Hérault valley. And indeed, this cuvée Ode Aux Ignorants is a delight (52% syrah, 30% carignan, 14% grenache, 2% mourvèdre, 2% cinsault). It is named in homage to the comic strip of Etienne Davodeau, which was at the origin of Olivier Faucon’s adventure as a winegrower.

*Clean, juicy, bloody, very garrigue, camphorated, here is a wine marked by superb freshness, a ripe and chiseled frame, a tonic and thirst-quenching material that **stretches in length and complexity**. Remarkable. Suggestion: pork tenderloin with its thyme jus.”*

