



MATISSAT



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“I’m not sure I’ve ever tasted better Mourvèdre”

ANDREW JEFFORD

“It’s up with the greatest expressions of
this variety in France”

JEB DUNNUCK





MATISSAT 2020

*“It reminds me of midnight: dark, quiet, impenetrable, enigmatic...
but, at its best, full of strange magic.”*

Andrew Jefford

Never ones to wish to distract from the estate's La Pèira wines, we nevertheless found ourselves in 2007 harvesting Mourvèdre of excellent quality that, when it came to blending, could not find its place alongside the Syrah and Grenache in the La Pèira blend, and so was bottled alone.

This practice has continued, and for some years, we've harvested a small plot of Mourvèdre that makes up the entirety of this wine - Matissat. The wine is grown a few steps away from where it is vinified - on the same plot as the Syrah and Grenache of La Pèira on the *Bois de Pauliau*.

The *Bois de Pauliau* is a bit of an anomaly in our region of the south of France.

It has been an AOC since 1948, as the most northerly zone of the white Clairette - so for just over half a century. It received its second AOC for red wines, the Terrasses du Larzac designation (Bettane and Desseauve's French appellation of the year in 2011) in 2014.

Just nearby, still in the Clairette AOC again, France's oldest winery (10 AD) was discovered (Decanter July 2007), and Clairette itself has been produced at least since 77-79 AD when Pliny the Elder named the whites of Baeterrae (Beziers) along with the resinous wines of Vienne as the sole two wines of exception from what is now France.

Harvested in the October mists, a time of chilled mornings, cold nights, and vine leaves turning to autumnal ruby, blood red, and rust, there is something special both about this time of year and this grape variety to us.

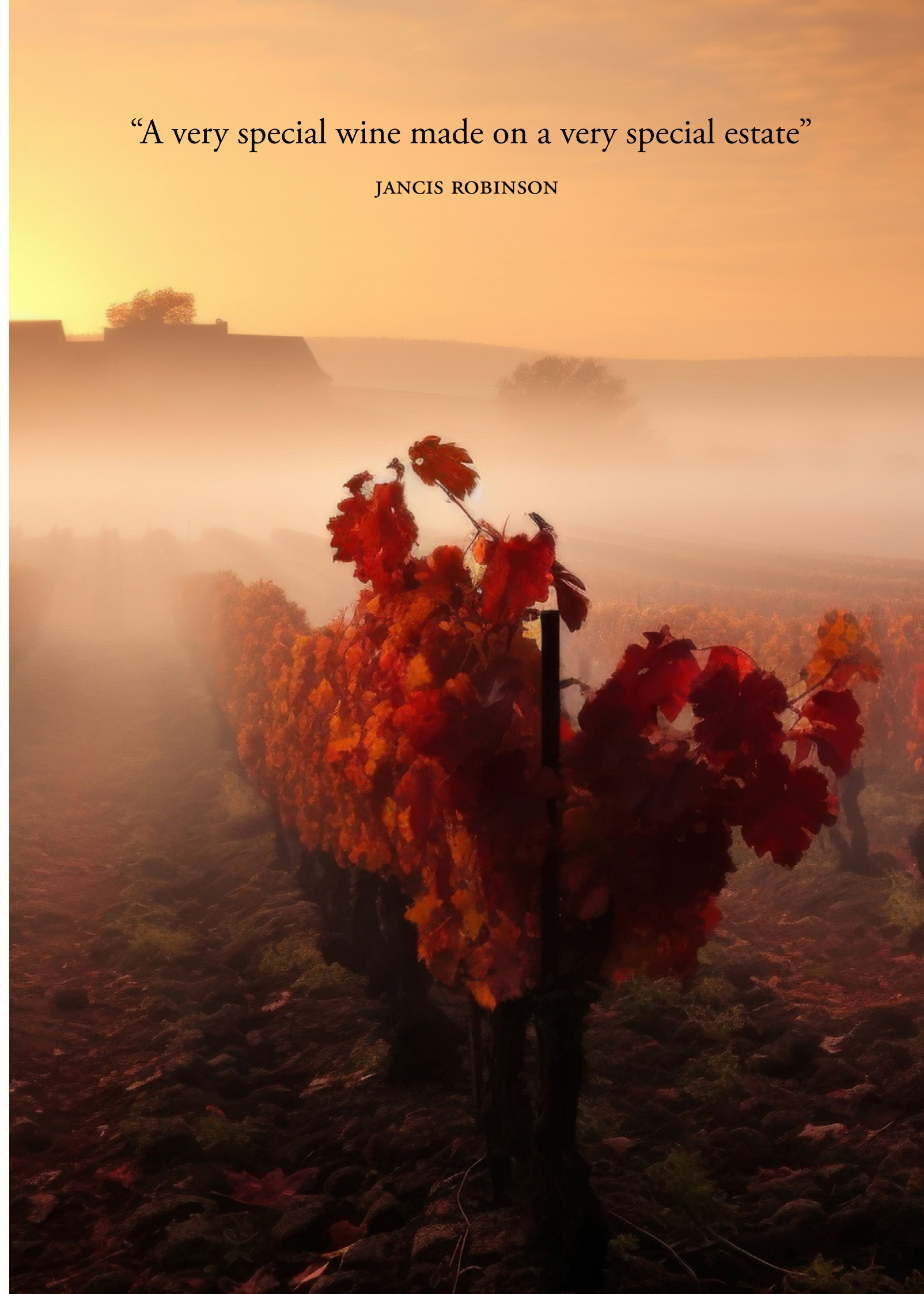
Late-ripening, tannic, and with its own earthy inimitable character, Mourvèdre also has an extraordinary ability to age and to unfold and show more with time. Andrew Jefford's description of the cépage is interesting: “It reminds me of midnight: dark, quiet, impenetrable, enigmatic... but, at its best, full of strange magic.”

Given growing areas such as Bandol come to mind when thinking of Mourvèdre, or certain wines such as the Beaucastel's well-known ‘Homage’, it's a surprise to learn that these noted examples are mostly blends. The Beaucastel is 60 percent, and top Bandol estates such as Tempier advise against bottling pure Mourvèdre.

After repeated tastings - and having held off releasing the wine - we started to feel there was some proof in the glass. And that like a Nebbiolo grown in Barolo or Barbaresco, or a Pinot Noir grown in Burgundy, here was a pure Mourvèdre that was complete, complex, and valid on its own singular terms. The vineyard is tiny and less than a thousand bottles are made.

“A very special wine made on a very special estate”

JANCIS ROBINSON



“...their increasingly celebrated Matissat”

JANCIS ROBINSON



“What Mourvèdre it is! Harvested only in late October, that component of this wine displayed the variety’s archetypal chocolate, bay laurel, and raw meat”

DAVID SCHILDKNECHT



THE 2020 VINTAGE

The Year

- Generous Autumn Rains / mild December.
- Warmest February since 2001 in the Hérault resulted in an early budburst.
- Early risk of frost, yet no significant damage, unlike 2021
- Warm conditions in April and May allowed successful flowering.
 - Heavy rains in May caused some downy mildew, though less severe than 2018.
- Cool and stormy weather in early June then hot, dry summer, yet without extreme heat-waves that often stress the vines.
- Mid-June onwards, weather dry and hot, allowing the grapes to mature perfectly.
- The early harvest brought in an average-to-good volume of grapes.

The Result

- Round, expansive mouthfeel, ripe, seamless tannins
- Wonderfully balanced vintage
- Lovely purity of fruit: both cassis and black raspberry fruits
- Deep, profound, dense wines with long finishes
- Simon Field, Master of Wine, once wrote of the ethereal elegance that seemed to be the calling card of the La Pèira wines, even in years of inherent richness. The 2020 reds are no exception.



“There has been more ballyhoo about this domaine than any other since Daumas Gassac”

PAUL STRANG THE WINES AND THE WINEMAKERS



TASTING NOTES

MATISSAT 2020

“..the 2020 Matissat is a Mourvedre-dominated release that’s closed and backward yet loaded with potential. Darker fruits, peppery herbs, graphite, and some meatiness emerge on the nose and it’s medium to full-bodied, has beautiful tannins, a balanced, layered mouthfeel, and a great finish. It’s not, however, for those looking for instant gratification. It needs 3-4 years of bottle age and I suspect see its 20th birthday in fine form.” (in barrel) Jeb Dunnuck 93-96/100

JEB DUNNUCK 93-96/100





JANCIS ROBINSON ARTICLE

This vertical of a particularly fine Languedoc wine is offered as a taster for the big collection of tasting notes on wines from this, surely France's best-value wine region, to be published later this week.

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La Pèira, or La Pèira en Damaisèla to give it its full name, is a particularly promising enterprise in the exciting Terrasses du Larzac subregion high above the plain of the Languedoc. The illustration below shows exactly where the estate, advised by the admirable oenologist Claude Gros, is to be found. There is clearly real sensibility for the local terrain and varietal traditions.

But as one of the outfit's partners, musician Rob Dougan, pointed out to me, they decided to try one variety that is not strictly speaking of the region and, moreover, to make it, most unusually, in 100% varietal form. Here's how he described their increasingly celebrated Matissat:

We think it's a wonderful expression of Mourvèdre as grown in the inland hills of the Hérault - in the piedmont of the Larzac - far away from its coastal haunt of Bandol.

We're surprised to find it's one of a handful of pure Mourvèdre wines each year in France, and that even in Bandol the practice is frowned upon: 'The tradition has always been to blend. You should be suspicious of 100% Mourvèdre cuvées, which can be simplistic'

(Daniel Ravier of Dom Tempier in Bandol).

Here in the Terrasses du Larzac, temperatures drop sharply in late September and October.

My father-in-law, who studied medicine in Montpellier, remembers one winter, a fellow student from Norway complaining he'd never been so cold in his life. Harvested in October's morning fogs (as I mentioned in my letter to you) it's about as close we'll come at La Pèira to making a Nebbiolo.

With the same process and single cépage each year, I'd hope the wine might offer an interesting window on vintages 2007-2011 in the Terrasses du Larzac (Bettane and Desseauve's 'Appellation of the Year' in 2011).

Five harvests later, after that of Matissat 2007, we've begun to release the first vintage(s).

The letter to which he refers said:

In 2007, the quality of the Mourvèdre, from the Bois de Pauliau plot (grown metres away from where it's vinified), was excellent. It was destined to go into our first wine (La Pèira) and to join the Syrah and Grenache grown in the very same parcel. It never found its place there. And while we've bottled it each year since, we've never shown it, nor offered it for sale until recently.

We thought it was a fascinating expression of Mourvèdre, grown in the hinterland of the Hérault as opposed to its heartland by the sea, and of the Terrasses du Larzac.

Also, with the vinification, vineyard work, and the single cépage as constant, it offers an interesting insight into the vintages 2007-2011 in this region.

Since the first bottling, over the years, we've struggled (repeatedly and happily, mind you) to comprehend why this pure Mourvèdre was not valid, complete, and complex on its own singular terms.

Harvested in October fogs here, it's about as close we'll come at La Pèira to making a Nebbiolo. And Mourvèdre could, in a way, be considered France's dark cousin to Italy's great Nebbiolo.

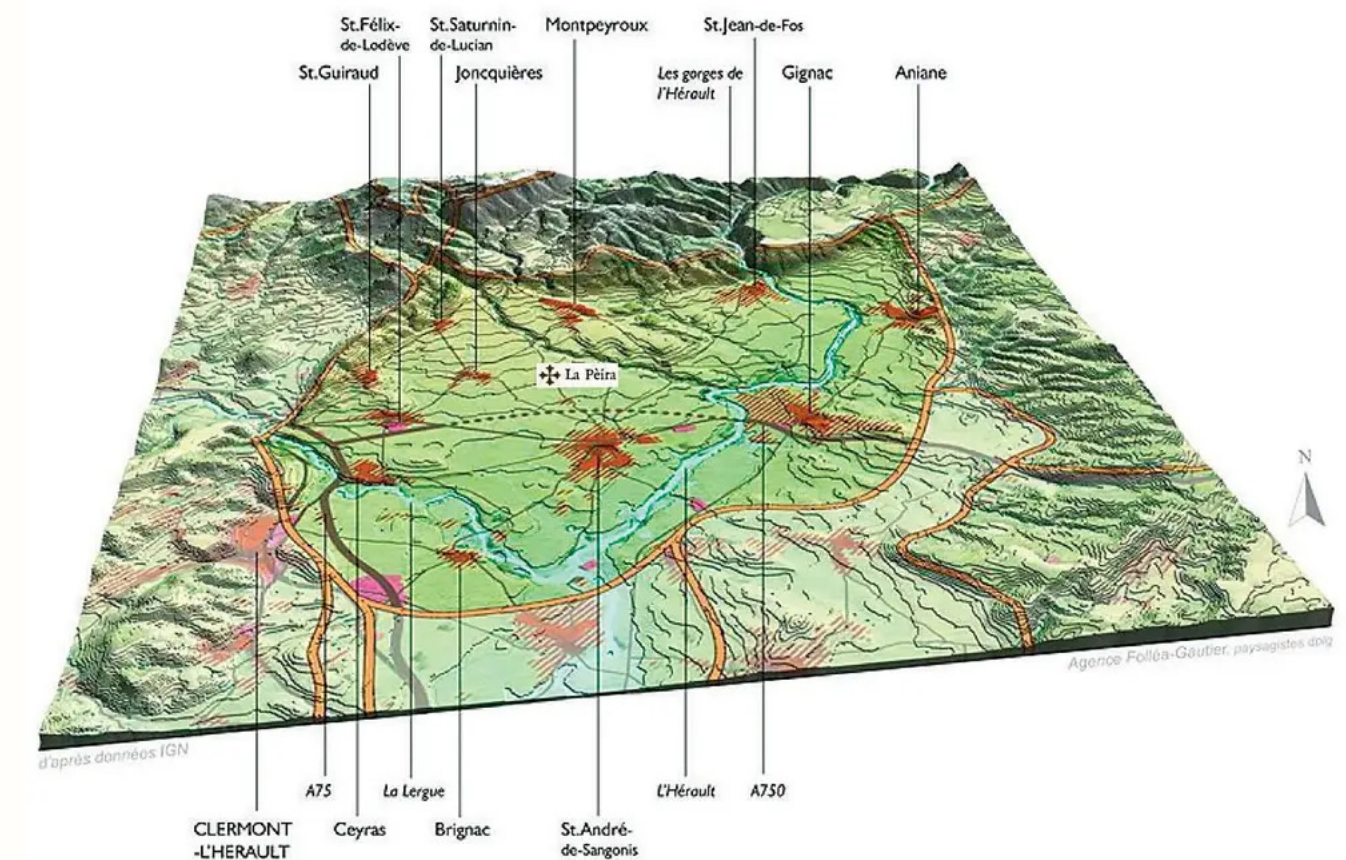
As you can see from my notes, presented from first to most recent vintage, I was impressed. When I tasted the 2007 initially I was blown away by the intensity of the fruit and its super-ripe liquorice character, but I have to confess that when I tried it with food (a particularly delicious but not excessively spiced Ottolenghi chicken dish), the wine became a little bit porty and tired.

What I loved, however, was the gradual lightening up of the wine, the greater energy and refreshment factor - with the possible exception of the 2009 wine. Make no mistake about it, this is a very special wine made on a very special estate.

I asked Rob whether there had been any evolution in winemaking and he replied, on 1 October:

There's been no conscious change. But no doubt many tiny cumulative changes in vineyard work, harvest dates, soil, age of vines...

[Jancis Robinson Oct. 2012 reviews follow]





MATISSAT REVIEWS

2020 Matissat

- Jeb Dunnuck: 93-96 “The 2020 Matissat is a Mourvedre-dominated release that’s closed and backward yet loaded with potential. Darker fruits, peppery herbs, graphite and some meatiness emerge on the nose and it’s medium to full-bodied, has beautiful tannins, a balanced layered mouthfeel, and a great finish. It’s not however for those looking for instant gratification. It needs 3-4 years of bottle age and I suspect see its 20th birthday in fine form.”

2019 Matissat

- Jeb Dunnuck: 95-97 “A step up over the 2020 (at least at this early stage), the 2019 Matissat offers a rich, powerful, full-bodied style carrying ample red and blue fruits as well as peppery herbs and floral notes. Ultra-fine, pure, and polished with both richness and elegance, this thrilling Languedoc will offer pleasure right out of the gate yet keep for 20+ years. I love it.”

2018 Matissat

- Jeb Dunnuck: 96 “Utterly brilliant and my favorite 2018 from this remarkable estate in the Languedoc, the 2018 Matissat reveals a ruby, almost opaque hue to go with a magical perfume of black raspberries, charcuterie, dried spice, bouquet garni, and flowery incense. Rich and medium to full-bodied, this beauty offers silky tannins, no hard edges, and a great finish, and I’d put it up against anything from the South of France in 2018. It needs air to show at its best and is going to evolve for 10-15 years although there’s no need to delay gratification

as it shows the up-front charming style of the vintage beautifully.”

2017 Matissat


- Jeb Dunnuck: 94-96+ “A wine to be sought out by the Mourvèdre lovers out there, the 2017 Matissat (100% Mourvèdre brought up in demi-muids) offers a terrific perfume of black raspberries, spiced meat, pepper, and earth that develops beautifully with time in the glass. As with all these 2017s, it’s slightly more elegant and streamlined than usual yet it gains richness and depth with time in the glass. Medium to full-bodied, beautifully balanced with silky tannins, it’s going to benefit from 3-4 years of bottle age and should keep for 15-20 years.”

- Wine Advocate: 95-97 “The most impressive wine I tasted during my visit to this exemplary estate was the 2017 Matissat, which was still in a single demi-muid. It displays knockout aromas of red raspberries and seductive vanilla. Full-bodied, lush, and creamy, this looks to be even better than the impressive 2016.”

2016 Matissat

- Jeb Dunnuck: 95-97 “The deepest colored of the three wines in this report, the 2016 Matissat is a Mourvèdre-dominated cuvée raised all in barrels. This smoking good barrel sample is absolutely loaded with notions of cured meats, black currants, crushed rocks, game, and graphite. Deep, full-bodied, and powerful, it has no hard edges, a seamless texture, and building tannin. It’s up with the greatest expressions of this variety in France.”





“I challenge anyone to try this and not say
that this is really a Grand Cru of the
Languedoc”

ANDREW JEFFORD



MATISSAT REVIEWS

2016 Matissat (cont)

- Wine Advocate: 94 “The 2016 Matissat aged entirely in new oak. Cedar and vanilla notes accent red fruit on the nose while the medium to full-bodied palate delivers flavors of raspberries and mushroomy-savory notes. Silky, long, and elegant, it’s slightly more quaffable than the La Peira at this young age yet it should be equally long-lived, drinking well for a decade or so.”

2015 Matissat

- Wine Advocate: 93-95 “The 2015 Matissat is Mourvèdre-dominated and will see two years in barrel, some of which are new. Minerals, blackcurrants, smoked earth, and iron all emerge from this thick, rich, mouth-coating 2015 that has ripe tannin and a big finish. There’s enough fruit and depth here to offer some pleasure on release but short-term cellaring should be the name of the game.”
- Andrew Jefford: 18.5 “Deep but not opaque; very leggy, sweet beguiling lifted seductive scents ... how can Mourvèdre be this attractive? Meat but honey too! And there’s thyme in there. Glorious. Thick, detaining, provocative, such a difficult charm but irresistible nonetheless, peaches and Labrador ... deep, spicy, long, rich, subtle, mouth-filling but very finely polished; sumptuous and engaging. Buffed and honed to perfection. Lovely depth, poise, thrust. Super complexity -- that’s really where the Mourvèdre shows through. I challenge anyone to try this and not say that this is really a Grand Cru of the Languedoc ... An awesomely fine Matissat. Every spice is there; every root is there; every herb is there and they’ve all socked

into a lovely meaty-deep frame which is also very sweet, sumptuous, buffed, and long. Totally admirable. Mourvèdre works so well here ... it has to be the future ... Will be interesting to see how the secondary market filters La Peira and Matissat when they are both out there and recognised and traded ... in 30 years ...”

2011 Matissat

- Jancis Robinson: 17.5 (Drink 2016-2026) “Firm, transparent, deep crimson. Showing the mineral side of this wine at the moment. Delicate but sweet and seductive too. Very appealing. Transparent. This doesn’t taste like a 14.5% wine. Very clean, pure, and driven. Great energy.”
- Wine Advocate: 95/100 “A cuvee that was first introduced in 2007 (and I believe will not be produced in 2012 or 2013), the 2011 Matissat is a tiny production 100% Mourvedre effort that’s aged all in barrel. Blockbuster stuff with massive kirsch, licorice, spiced meats, and graphite aromas and flavors, this puppy hits the palate with a massive core of fruit, full-bodied concentration and depth, and a rock star finish. Approachable now given its exuberant personality, I wouldn’t be surprised to see it still drinking beautifully at age 20.”

“In just a few years, La Pèira en Damaisèla has established itself
Created in 2004, the property now ranks alongside

MATISSAT 2010 “A LEGEND IN THE MAKING” (100/100) SCORE

as one of the most groundbreaking properties of the Languedoc-Roussillon.
– and in some eyes even above – the best in Bordeaux and Burgundy”

LAFONT PRESSE - LE CLASSEMENT DES MEILLEURS VINS DE FRANCE





MATISSAT REVIEWS

2010 Matissat

- Jancis Robinson: 17+ (Drink 2016-2024) “Mid crimson. Gosh - so different from the 2007! Transparent and lively and very young and racy. I think this could turn out to be a very fine wine indeed. For the moment it’s still quite chewy but there is impressive energy here.”
- Wine Advocate: 96+ “In the same ballpark yet darker and more savoury, the 2010 Matissat is locked and loaded with copious blackcurrant, kirsch, graphite, dusty soil, and spicy meat characteristics. It is full-bodied, broad, and gorgeously textured with rock solid concentration and length. Give it another 2-3 years and enjoy it over the following 12-15 years.”
- Andrew Jefford: “The 2010 seemed primitive and adolescent at this stage [2013] and still trying to resolve its personality but full of the thorny thrumming blackberry this variety surrenders hereabouts.”

2009 Matissat

- Jancis Robinson: 16 (Drink 2015-2020) “This wine seems to get lighter with every vintage. Mid ruby with some evolution at the rim. Not much aroma. Light spiciness and then both sweet and some chewy dryness. I’m not convinced about the balance of this wine. The flavour seems to have been rather baked out. A bit awkward.”
- Wine Advocate: 92-93/100 “From its two barrels, the pure Mourvedre La Peira 2009 Matissat evinces bitter-sweet iris-like perfume along with scents of purple plum, dark chocolate, beef blood, and sea breeze, all of which reprise on a lush yet finely-tannic palate with

iodine, alkali, and mouthwateringly saline traces dominating the impressively lingering finish. This ought to prove more seductive and no less intriguing than its two predecessors as well as worth a decade’s attention.”

- Andrew Jefford: “The 2009 transforms that black chocolate into gratifyingly milky milk chocolate, softens the tannins, and adds a spoonful of liquorice essence.”

2008 Matissat

- Jancis Robinson: 17 “Paler than the 2007 with some evolution at the rim. Very mineral and tarry on the nose. Racy and transparent. Lots of freshness. Recognisably related to the 2007 but livelier and drier. A little muscular. Not as heavy as the 2007. Very clean. Not too heavy. 14.5%”
- Wine Advocate: 92 “The all-Mourvedre 600 case lot La Peira 2008 Co Matissat is even more maritime in scent and briny in flavor than its 2009 counterpart. Here the chocolate element is dark and bitter and the pit of the plum as prominent as its flesh making or a somewhat somber effect consistent both with its immediate 2008 siblings and with the brooding potential of this cepage. Impressions of crushed stone and bay help extend a palate-staining performance which I would be surprised to witness flagging over the coming decade. As to what further elements will emerge from this bottling’s dark recesses I would count myself fortunate to discover.”
- Andrew Jefford: “The 2008 is (like the La Pèira of that year) a much tighter, more gathered wine with shattering concentration, Valrhona acidity, a herbal macerate.”

2007 Matissat

- Andrew Jefford: “The 2007 pure-Mourvedre Matissat was the greatest of its own short flight [2007-2010]: perhaps the most engagingly baroque example of this variety I have ever tasted (blackberries, mushrooms, blood, white truffle, and viscera: gorgeous) and another wine that seems unlikely to die before I do.”
- Wine Advocate: 93 “300 liters of solo Mourvedre as 2007 Matissat which was so impressive that it was decided to perpetuate a separate bottling from the parcel in question. (The name Matissat is Occitan for “subtle” or “nuanced” – not that this wouldn’t fit any of this estate’s cuvees!) There is an intriguingly maritime scent here as well as intimations of ripe plum and pungent herbs. Rich mocha and chocolate along with confitured purple plum are tinged

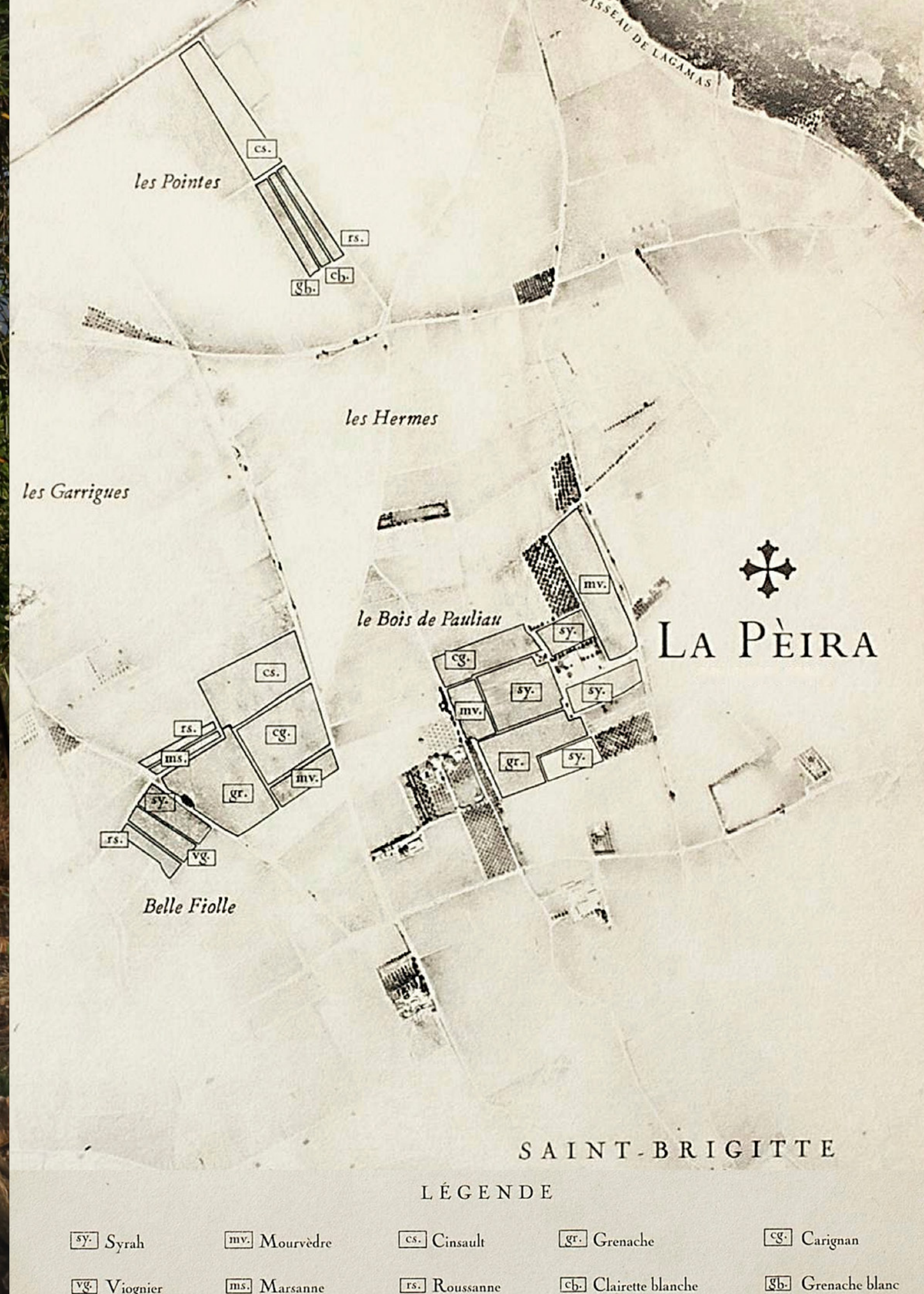
with bay, kelp, iodine, salt, and crushed stone on a dense palate possessed of powder-fine tannins. For sumptuousness and sheer persistence this is hard to top even from within the outstanding La Peira stable though it lacks the dynamism or floral dimension exhibited by its immediate 2007 siblings. Surely this “stealth” bottling – which has yet to be offered for sale – is going to be worth following for at least another half dozen years.”

- Jancis Robinson: 16.5 “Still very dark crimson. Direct blackberry essence on the nose. Sweet and subtle. Smudgy liquorice edge. Flattering and round and with almost melted tannins though there’s a little chew on the end. Very luscious indeed but too low in acidity to refresh. Just a little overripe.”



“Southern France’s First Growth”

ANDREW MCMURRY - ZACKYS





LA PEIRA
EN
DAMAISELA