

VAL DE L'OURS

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There's a place on the hills bordering the Mediterranean shores where nature has always been so abundant that brown bears had chosen it to settle down, knowing that the rocky hillsides and forest would provide them a safe habitat, and the thick vegetation ample supplies of food and water. Today human activity has reclaimed this fertile valley, pushing the bears further up towards the Pyrenean mountains and allowing us to produce a range of generous wines.

■ VINEYARD ATTRIBUTES

Appellation : IGP Pays d'Oc, France

The estate is nestled in the rugged hills just behind the Mediterranean coastline of Narbonne, in the South of France.

Terroir : The soils are very shallow and rocky on the slopes, and deeper and sandy on the plain. Yields are voluntarily kept very low in order to preserve the vines and ensure the production of high quality grapes.

The grapes come from flatter, lower lying parts of the estate where the deeper soils with underlying sandsilt provide the optimal growing conditions for grape varieties more associated with the Bordeaux region : Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc that contribute to the complexity of this blend.

■ VINTAGE SUMMARY

In the Languedoc, the cold, wet winter, very wet spring, and substantial rain in June, brought the benefit of well-replenished groundwater reserves, and the inconvenience of rampant mildew that affected certain areas in the region.

Thanks to a very hot summer punctuated by regular, short spells of rain, accompanied by generally dry air and favourable temperatures with a marked difference with day and night-time temperatures, the characteristic of this vintage that will be remembered will be the very high quality of the harvest.

This propitious weather enabled the grapes to be picked at optimal ripeness. During the harvests, the Syrah stood out as having particularly flourished in this vintage's slightly unusual weather conditions.

2018 presented all the characteristics of a fine vintage at Aussières and in the Languedoc generally.

■ WINE MAKING SCHEME

The grapes are picked at optimal ripeness, destemmed and then vinified using traditional maceration methods.

The maceration period varies from 10 to 12 days with gentle extraction and fermentation at fairly low temperatures (around 25°C) in stainless steel vats in order to preserve the wine's full aromatic potential. Ageing is then carried out in vats so as to keep all of the fruit's freshness and purity.

■ TASTING NOTES

Beautiful garnet colour with glints of deep purple.

The nose is initially quite discreet, offering fresh almonds and hint of smoke, it then develops aromas of blackberries and star anise with aeration.

Rounded, delicate palate with silky tannins on the finish.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Varietals : Syrah 30%, Marselan 25%, Merlot 15%, Cabernet sauvignon 10%, Cabernet franc 10%, Autres 10%

Yield : 55 hL/ha

pH : 3.60

