

# VAL DE L'OURS

## MERLOT 2021

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 sandysilt provide the optimal growing conditions for grape varieties more associated with the Bordeaux region : Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc.

### ■ VINTAGE SUMMARY

The winter of 2021 brought lower temperatures than the previous four vintages. The vines were hit by several successive bursts of frost with a particularly severe one during the night of 7 to 8 April that damaged some of the plots. This was the most severe that Val de l'Ours has experienced. The other significant weather factor was the very low rainfall. The soil's water reserves were only replenished at the very end of the season, after the harvest. These extreme weather conditions delayed the growth and development of the vines and the ripening of the grapes. The harvest started on 13 September, two weeks later than 2020.

The weather was favourable during the harvests. A few days of rain interrupted the picking schedule, but they were welcome to help the late-ripening grape varieties to reach full maturity.

### ■ WINE MAKING SCHEME

Grapes are harvested before daylight when temperatures are at their lowest. After a few hours of cold maceration, they are pressed and fermented at low temperature in stainless steel tanks to preserve their aromatic potential. The wine is aged in tanks in order to retain the purity of the fruit.

### ■ TASTING NOTES

Beautiful dark ruby colour with subtle garnet highlights.

The nose offers a range of black fruit with hints of liquorice, characteristic of Merlot from Languedoc.

The palate offers aromas of liquorice and a touch of peppery notes, complemented by secondary flavours of tea and hay and hints of spices on the finish reminiscent of cloves. The young tannins confer a pleasant roundness and suggest excellent potential for this wine to gain in richness and finesse.



#### TECHNICAL INFORMATION

**Varietals** : Merlot 100%

**pH** : 3.46

**Total acidity** : 3.13 g/l