

ROTEM AND MOUNIR SAOUMA

(Above) One of the eight vineyards across five villages of the appellation that Mounir has been able to acquire, allowing for 100% estate fruit.



Châteauneuf-du-Pape Arioso 2016

Châteauneuf-du-Pape, France

ESTATE

Burgundy meets the Rhône. An utter respect for tradition, in some ways a total break. We have watch as Mounir and Rotem Saouma, of Burgundy producer Lucien Le Moine, slowly developed their estates and wines in Châteauneuf-du-Pape, and the results today are too extraordinary and distinct to ignore. The wines are stunning: precise, intense, complex, expressive visions of Châteauneuf. They somehow speak to the past, but also to the present (and we would guess, the future), all in their own voice.

WINE

Mounir Saouma's story in the Chateuneuf-du-Pape started with a state sale of a small plot in Pignan, one of the most famous vineyard areas of Chateuneuf-du-Pape. Within this first vineyard acquisition, Mounir has one plot of 100% Grenache planted in the 1930s which yields naturally at a miniscule 1 ton per acre. From these vines he produces Arioso. On the label is aptly explained: "Arioso is a style of opera somewhere between an aria and a recital. We chose this name for our wine because it is evocative of both the ethereal and profound".

VINEYARD

Soils: Unique rocky alluvial vineyards (the famous "galets") and sandy soils of the area.
Yields: Average of 1 tons per acre, average age of the vines is 90 years.

WINEMAKING

Grape Varieties: 100% Grenache
Fermentation: Whole cluster vinification after an 11 day cold maceration.
Aging: 3 years in 229 and 500 liter barrels, never racked or sulfured.
Alcohol: 14.5%

VINTAGE

2016 will go down as one of the greatest vintages the Southern Rhône has experienced. Crop set was large but even, and the summer was hot and dry, with perfectly timed rains preserving freshness in the wines. Harvest occurred with little difficulty from late September through mid-October, and the reds are structured, concentrated, ripe and yet fresh. The whites are successful across the board. Mounir's 2016 Rhône wines are the essence of purity and concentration, with burgeoning aromatics and a structure that promises low, slow development in the cellar. The whites are dazzling.

vinous

97

"Extremely sexy, spice-accented aromas of ripe red berries, incense and potpourri, along with a potent, smoky mineral element that adds vivacious lift. Offers sweet, palate-staining raspberry, cherry pastry, spicecake and floral pastille flavors that show remarkable definition and back-end thrust. Displays a compelling blend of richness and energy and finishes with outstanding clarity and almost undetectable, silky tannins that sneak in slowly." -JR, 1/2020