



DOMAINE LAFAGE

La Narassa

For twenty years, we have worked with Jean-Marc Lafage at his estate in the Roussillon and across the border in Spain, where he consults on several projects. As good as his wines were when we first met him, they only get better with each vintage.

While his family has been growing grapes and making wine in the Roussillon since 1791, it was Jean-Marc's early insight into the potential for the Roussillon to make a wide range of dry wines at very affordable prices that established his "new" estate. While his grandfather and father made wine for the family, Jean-Marc was the first to break away from selling most of his grapes to the local cooperative. Over the generations, his family had amassed scattered vineyards throughout the region, which now totals over 160 hectares of vines, most of them in excess of 50 years in age.

Another factor in Jean-Marc's success is the diversity of the terroirs in the Roussillon. Squeezed between the far southern edge of the limestone Corbières Massif to the north and the granitic Pyrenees mountains in the south, the Roussillon is an undulating terrain of complex soil types, orientations, and exposures. Three river valleys, the Agly, Têt, and Tech, drain the region generally flowing west to east, where they meet the Mediterranean. Within its borders, Jean-Marc has identified six principal sub-zones in the appellation: the Crest, the Upper Agly Valley, the Uplands of Fenouillet, Les Asprès, the Mediterranean Plain, the Rocky Coast. Each region has its own expression and when you factor in the various varieties Jean-Marc has planted, you can understand why he can make so many riveting wines at such reasonable prices.

A few years ago when a plot of Grenache named La Narassa was accidentally missed at harvest. Despite having reached a level of over-ripeness, Jean-Marc coaxed the fermentation along and discovered that while rich and decadent, the wine also maintained a juicy freshness. Now La Narassa is made intentionally in a semi-ripasso style by harvesting Grenache (70%) from around Maury in several passes choosing only the ripest clusters, and combining it with Syrah (30%) from their highest vineyard site at 540m. Upon arriving at the cellar, the fruit is destemmed and only the best berries are chosen for fermentation after a short pre-fermentation maceration.

ACCOLADES

90 – 2018 La Narassa – Decanter Worldwide Wine

94 – 2017 La Narassa – Jeb Dunnuck

91 – 2016 La Narassa – Wine Advocate

ORIGIN

France

APPELLATION

Côtes Catalanes

SOIL

Black schist

AGE OF VINES

60+

ELEVATION

200–540 meters

VARIETIES

Grenache, Syrah

FARMING

Practicing organic

FERMENTATION

Hand harvested, destemmed, cold pre-fermentation maceration, natural yeast co-fermentation in tank

AGING

12 months in concrete (80%) and French oak demi-muids (20%)