



## featured wines

### The Wine Advocate #173, October 2007

#### Languedoc & Roussillon

**86 pts**      **2006 Domaine Donjon Domaine la Galiniere Merlot**

Jean Panis's father planted Merlot in the 1970s, and under a separate label, his 2005 Domaine la Galiniere Merlot offers plum and cherry with notes of pleasantly bitter fruit skin, herbs and black pepper, a juicy, sappy, clean and soft-textured palate, and a genuinely ripe and quite vivacious finish. To the extent there are still legions of Americans craving a soft, accessible wine labeled "Merlot," I don't see how they could do better than this!

**86 pts**      **2006 Domaine Donjon Domaine la Galiniere Cabernet Sauvignon**

Yet more amazingly, the 2006 Domaine La Galiniere Cabernet Sauvignon, too, is ripe, soft, and refreshing. Cassis, green peppercorn and maraschino aromas lead to satisfyingly-concentrated counterparts on the palate and the finish is bright and sappy, perfectly encouraging the next sip.

**90 pts**      **2004 Château du Donjon Cuvée Prestige**

Turning to what this team does best (!), their 2004 Minervois Prestige – from barrel-aged Syrah and Grenache – offers the nose an intense herbal elixir blended with black raspberry and cherry liqueur. Chocolate, resinous herbs, walnut oil and beef stock all add to the appeal of the sappy, smooth palate display and this outstanding value finishes with real authority of ripe fruit and resinous Languedoc garrigues.

**88 pts**      **2006 Château de Lancyre Roussanne**

This 2006 Roussanne ought to make its way in the marketplace on the basis of its taste alone. Pungent acacia and pennyroyal in the nose lead to a surprisingly firm, bright palate with peach, peach fuzz, musky florality, and pungent herbs impressively fanning out and hanging on. I would drink it over the next year.

**90 pts**      **2006 Château de Lancyre Coteaux du Languedoc Pic Saint Loup Rosé**

The Lancyre team have come up with a 2006 Coteaux du Languedoc Rosé that is simply one of the finest pinks on the planet, and a wonderful value. Don't dis' rosé around this wine because it has enough grip to reach out of the glass and throttle you! Smoky, resinous, pungently herbal garrigues, raspberry and peach fruit, and Syrah-borne roasted meat aromas pour from the glass. (For the record, the balance is Grenache with a bit of Cinsault.) Cut, clarity, genuinely complex interplay of herbal, carnal, mineral and fruit flavors ... yes, all that's happening on the palate, and the finish, as already mentioned, really grips. This is for thinking as well as reflexively drinking ... and not just in summer.

**91 pts**      **2004 Château de Lancyre Pic St Loup Vieilles Vignes**

Moving up in the Lancyre pecking order, their 2004 Coteaux du Languedoc Vieilles Vignes (from Syrah with 35% Grenache) smells of purple plum and black cherry, pungent, resinous herbs, grenadine, wood smoke and iodine. Dense, deep and sappy on the palate with both the ripeness of fruit and pungency of herbs intensified, this adds a low-toned wet stone and chalk mineral expression in its long finish. I would expect it to gain yet more interest over the next several years, and as such it represents an outstanding value. The team of Bernard Durand and Regis Valentin is talented with

more than just the classic red blends of Pic Saint-Loup. This year, they began labeling their white to call attention to its distinctiveness and perhaps make it seem more familiar to Americans.

**88 pts**      **2006 Domaine Massamier la Mignarde Cuvée des Oliviers Blanc**

How can Frantz Vènes turn out something as good as his mind-boggling value 2006 Cuvée des Oliviers blanc for the price?! First off, Sauvignon this ripe and delicious is not easy to achieve in the Loire or New World. (And this includes 10% Viognier, just as in Araujo's top-class Sauvignon at seven times the price.) Mint, lemon, flowers, and hints of peach and melon in the nose lead to a bright, juicy mouthful of flowers, herbs and citrus, and a pleasant lemon zest and peach fuzz hint of bitterness in the finish. At the table or on its own, this will prove irresistible.

**89 pts**      **2005 Domaine Massamier la Mignarde Carignan Expression VDP**

Vènes applies unorthodox methods to his 2005 Carignan Expression, beginning with maceration carbonique, then moving the must to open, new oak demi-muids to complete fermentation, and bottling early. Ocean breeze- and smoke-tinged black raspberry, mulberry and blueberry aromas lead to an infectiously juicy, walnut oil- and bitter chocolate-inflected mouthful of sweetly ripe berries and finishes with generosity if a hint of bitterness and rusticity that is easily forgiven.

**87 pts**      **2003 Domaine Massamier la Mignarde Cinsault Expression**

Applying the same unusual methods, Vènes' 2003 Cinsault Expression displays subdued toasted nut and black fruit aromas, a lovely, velvety texture and simple, rich fruit on the palate, and a satisfying, herb and salt-seasoned finish.

**88 pts**      **2004 Domaine Massamier la Mignarde Tenement de Garouilhas**

Made in a similar manner to his "Expression" cuvees, but aged longer in barre, Vènes' 2004 Tenement de Garouilhas combines Syrah with around 20% each Carignan and Grenache. A flamboyant nose of cooked black cherry, toasted almond, roasted meats, and coconut shavings leads to a palate of rich, slightly stewed fruit with chocolate covered coconut and almond, and a sweetly-rich, slightly warm and gritty finish.

**89 pts**      **2005 Domaine Massamier la Mignarde Minervois Cuvée Aubin**

From Grenache plus around 20% each Syrah and Carignan, Massamier's 2005 Minervois Cuvée Aubin smells headily of honeysuckle and ripe black raspberries, fills the mouth with salt- and pepper-dusted juicy berry fruit and meat juices, and finishes with a sappy, resinous tank of garrigue.

**88 pts**      **2005 Mourrel Azurat Fitou**

Under a separate label, the proprietors of Massamier la Mignarde have bottled a 2005 Fitou Mourrel Azurat that offers incredible value. Ripe plum and pungent herbs scent the nose, and in the mouth saline and stony mineral notes underlie rich plum and cherry fruit, while resinous, shrubby herbs and hints of leather add further complexity. "Complexity", for this price? Yes indeed! And talk about "sense of place," anyone who has braved the winds of Fitou's cobbled, scrubby, seaside vineyards will be instantly transported by the first sip.

**92 pts**      **2005 Yannick Pelletier Saint Chinian Coccigrues**

Pelletier's demi-muid-aged blend of Carignan with 30% Grenache and 10% Syrah 2005 Saint-Chinian Coccigrues smells complexly of vanilla, licorice, tar, resin, and smoke-tinged black fruits. Plum paste, stewed black cherry, resinous herbs, walnut liqueur and smoked meat fill the mouth and

lead to a fabulous finish of solid grip and abundant, fine tannins. This is sure to give even more pleasure if held for 2-4 years. Yannick Pelletier is meticulously-farming 21 mostly schistic acres at the northern edge of Saint-Chinian, and the results were some of the revelations of my recent tastings: as yet little-known wines that are at the apex of their appellation.

**91 pts**      **2005 Yannick Pelletier Saint Chinian l'Engoulevant**

The 2005 Saint-Chinian l'Engoulevant – with 15% Syrah and the balance Grenache and Carignan – is rendered in a mix of tank and barrique. Its ripe, generous aromas of black cherry and black raspberry are pungently mingled with tangerine rind, resin and wood smoke. Sappy, rich, and mouth-filling, its flavors of cherry and orange liqueur, black licorice and other herbal essences are strikingly underlain in a long finish by distinctly stony, smoky, schiste-licking minerality. This outstanding value should drink well over the next several years.

**87 pts**      **2005 Yannick Pelletier Saint Chinian l'Oiselet**

Pelletier's 2005 Saint-Chinian l'Oiselet – a tank-raised blend of Grenache, Cinsault, Carignan, and Syrah – smells of dried cherries, black raspberries and pungent wood smoke, offers a juicy, bitter-sweet palate impression, and finishes with abundant but reasonably fine tannins.

**95 pts**      **2005 Domaine de l'Edre Cotes du Roussillon Villages l'Edre**

l'Edre's eponymous 2005 Cotes du Roussillon Villages L'Edre is Syrah-dominated (with 25% Grenache and 20% Carignan) and fermented and aged in once-used barriques. A nose of pungent toasted nuts, crushed stone, sea breeze, black fruits, and smoke-tinged roasted meats leads to a palate of amazing grip and concentration, conveying black cherry liqueur, creme de cassis, walnut oil, herbal essences, and an oceanic brininess and depth that is difficult to otherwise describe. Thirty of the 250 cases produced were headed to the U.S. Do what you can to experience any of these l'Edre wines for yourself, and take heart in the knowledge that production is on the increase! Jacques Castany and Pascal Dieunidou are two wine freaks out to turn their hobby into a livelihood as they each inherit old vines around Vingrau. Technique and yields are reported to be minimal. The results, I can confidently report, are nothing short of phenomenal.

**92 pts**      **2004 Domaine de l'Edre Cotes du Roussillon Villages l'Aibre**

The 2004 Cotes du Roussillon Villages L'Aibre – half Syrah and equal parts Carignan and Grenache, all rendered in tank – displays a slight reduction which blows off to reveal an ester-rich, ripe range of aromatics whose intensity will blow you away: cherry liqueur, licorice, mint, and nut oils. Richly concentrated on the palate, with superb bitter-sweet concentration of cherry, herbal essences, and toasted nuts underlain by wet stone minerality, this finishes with major chord reverberation.

**94 pts**      **2005 Domaine de l'Edre Du Roussillon Villages Carrement**

Castany and Dieunidou's 2005 Cotes du Roussillon Villages Carrement is not just among the most concentrated, but more significantly among the most exuberantly juicy and refreshing Roussillon reds I have tasted. A variation on the same mix of grape varieties as their 2004 l'Aibre blend, this offers bitter-sweet black fruits and herbs whose aromatic intensity will make you duck. Explosively juicy and rich on the palate, with black cherry, licorice, plum paste, fruit pits, salt, stone, roasted red meat, and distilled-strength herbal essences, its sheer sappy cling is superseded only by its compulsive appeal to take the next sip! Sadly, only 50 cases – or around 10% of total production of this wine – were destined for the U.S. (There is also an oily-rich, somewhat superficially oaky Carrement blanc from Macabeo.)

**88 pts**      **2006 Château de Peña Cuvée de Peña VDP des Pyrenees Orientales**

For purposes of U.S. labeling at least, the remarkably quality-conscious grower cooperative in tiny Pene is known simply as “Peña.” Landholder-president Jean-Christophe Bourquin and long-time oenologist Joseph Gonzales continue a streak of successes with their 2006 Cuvée de Peña – a tank-raised blend of Syrah, Carignan and Grenache. Resin, smoke, and schiste-typical pungency (absolutely: terroir-under-\$10!) operate on a base of ripe purple plum and blackberries to deliver an intensely aromatic and lip-smackingly juicy wine whose slightly chewy tannins are covered in fruit and will in any event only add appeal when you start applying this sensational bargain to the business of meals. (For those wishing to use Peña as their “house red,” it is available in bag-in-a-box format at considerable savings.)

**88 pts**      **2006 Château de Peña Ninet de Peña Viognier VDP des Cotes Catalanes**

As if to answer the question what one could do for an encore after a performance like Cuvée de Peña, Bourquin and Gonzales came up with a 2006 Viognier Ninet de Peña from seven year old vines that is full of acacia, peach, pear and tropical fruits, juicy and lush on the palate with invigorating saltiness and a faintly peppery nip, and lingers with genuinely wafting florality. This amazing value displays none of the oiliness, bitterness, or heaviness that drag down most inexpensive wines from this variety. Imagine what may result when the vines mature!

**88 pts**      **2006 Ninet de Peña Rosé**

The 2006 Ninet de Peña Rosé is such a tremendous value, that even though it is best consumed by the end of the year, I wanted to convey my enthusiasm. Brimming with strawberries, cherries, herbs, almonds and stones, this roughly 50:50 blend of Grenache and Syrah displays sappy, juicy, lip-smacking palate saturation and length.

## **Southern Rhone**

**93 pts**      **2004 Domaine du Pegau Chateauneuf du Pape Cuvée Laurence**

The dark plum/garnet-tinged 2004 Chateauneuf du Pape Cuvée Laurence boasts sweet lavender, Provencal herb, cassis, and black cherry aromas. In the mouth, it is full-bodied with superb fruit concentration as well as Provencal typicity. In many ways, this cuvee is slightly more evolved (because of longer aging) than the Cuvée Reservee. It also seems more complex and slightly less tannic. Drink it now and over the next 12-15 years.

**92-94 pts**      **2005 Domaine du Pegau Chateauneuf du Pape Cuvée Reservee**

The three lots of 2005 Chateauneuf du Pape Cuvée Reservee (again, no Cuvee da Capo was produced in this vintage) had not yet been blended. Tasting through all of them, they scored between 91 and 94, so I suspect this offering will be similar, qualitatively, to the 2006. But, it is a very different style of wine. It reveals a dark ruby/purple hue along with notes of tar, roasted meats, and Provencal herbs, which give it a certain savage/animal character. The wine is ruggedly constructed, concentrated, full-bodied, tannic, and firm in the finish. For comparison purposes, it comes closest to 1995. The 2005 will need time to come around, and the Ferauds were leaning toward bottling it in late 2007 or early 2008. Anticipated maturity: 2012-2025.

**91-93 pts**      **2006 Domaine du Pegau Chateauneuf du Pape Cuvée Reservee**

Tasting through the different components that will be blended together for the 2006 Chateauneuf du Pape Cuvee Reservee, there is no question that the Ferauds have pulled much more material out of

this vintage than many. It is a deep ruby/purple-hued, up-front, sexy Chateauneuf with sweet, silky tannin, elegant, delicious fruit, and medium to full body. This will be a more evolved, quicker maturing vintage than other recent years. The 2006 is unquestionably more sensual and seductive than most young Pegau wines, and, therefore, has no shortage of charm and appeal. However, it will evolve nicely for 15 or more years. **\*\*Release in Winter 2008.**

**90 pts            2005 Domaine du Pegau Gigondas Selectionne Laurence Feraud**

The 2005 Gigondas is better than 90% of that village's estate wines. Deep ruby/purple-tinged with cool climate red and black currant fruit characteristics intermixed with notions of blueberries and spring flowers, this ripe, medium-bodied effort possesses good acidity as well as a long finish. It should drink beautifully for 10-12 years.

**89 pts            2006 Selection Laurence Feraud Cotes du Rhone Villages Seguret**

The Selection Laurence Feraud offerings include the 2006 Seguret, which looks to be a terrific example from this village. Its dark ruby/purple hue is accompanied by loads of fruit, pepper, and spice as well as good Provencal typicity. It will provide delicious drinking for 7-8 years.

**87 pts            2006 Domaine du Pegau Plume Bleue VDP d'Oc**

The 2006 Plume Bleue VdP d'Oc (a blend of Grenache, Syrah, and a few other varietals) is a classic Provencal wine offering roasted herb, new saddle leather, black cherry, currant, and loamy soil characteristics. A tasty, earthy effort with loads of personality, it should provide plenty of pleasure over the next 2-3 years.

**88 pts            NV Domaine du Pegau Plan Pegau L06**

As for the Domaine du Pegau estate wines from Laurence Feraud and her father, Paul, the non-vintage Plan Pegau L. 06 is the finest vin de table example I have ever tasted in these cellars. A blend of Grenache, Carignan, and Syrah from 2006, it possesses a deep ruby color as well as sweet cassis and cherry notes intermixed with garrigue, lavender, and pepper. Spicy, deep, and richly fruity, it should drink nicely for 2-3 years.



Contact us for more information:

**Hand Picked Selections**  
226 East Lee Street  
Warrenton, VA 20186  
Phone (540) 347-9400  
Fax (540) 349-0967  
[www.handpickedselections.com](http://www.handpickedselections.com)