

LA PÈIRA

TERRASSES DU LARZAC

La Pèira is owned by Robert Dougan and his wife Karine Ahton. The estate, in Karine's native Languedoc, was purchased by the couple in 2004.

As journalist David Schildknecht wrote of Robert's inaugural 2005 vintage, this is a property to which "instinct led him, either with remarkable prescience or remarkable luck."

Whichever it was, the successive decade and a half has seen the estate forge a reputation as one of the most exciting Languedoc newcomers since the arrival of neighbouring Grange des Pères and Mas de Daumas Gassac. Critical praise has been so glowing, we are spoilt for choice.

The Terrasses du Larzac appellation, in which La Pèira sits, is a place of Bordeaux-like gravels. This is a tough Mediterranean land, in whose hilly villages the French of nearby Montpellier gives way to the Occitan language, binding it to that ancient cultural thread which stretches from northern Italy, through southern France and into Catalonia. It is also the home of Roquefort cheese...

There are two reds and two whites – a first and second wine of each. The reds are classic Rhône blends (Syrah, Grenache, Mourvedre...) and the whites combine Viognier, Roussanne, Marsanne and the local Clairette.

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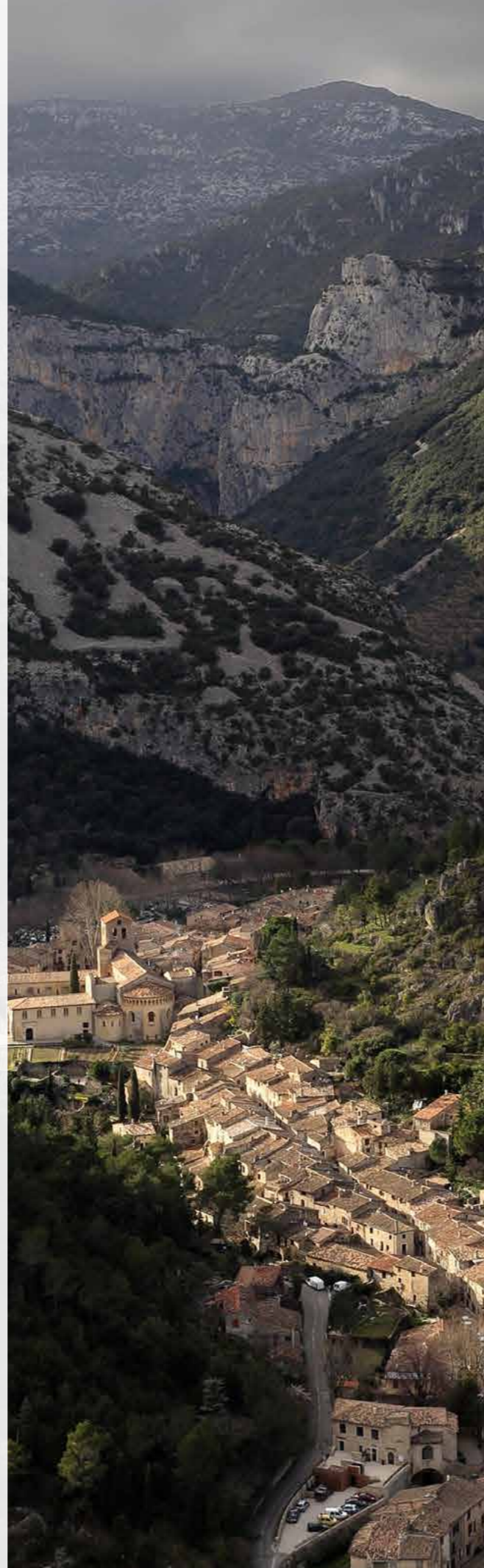


THE VINTAGES AT LA PÈIRA

2022 VINTAGE - LA PÈIRA BLANC:

- Winter and spring rains replenished the water reserves, which the vines could access during the dry summer months
- Budburst occurred early in March
- Flowering was also early, nearly a fortnight in advance
- Warm spring weather was favourable for the vines
- Despite a hot and dry summer, there was not the water stress of typical dry vintages
- Occasional bursts of rain and showers proved helpful
- Beautiful conditions persisted in August and September with no botrytis or other threats to vine health in general
- The harvest started early and yielded healthy and ripe fruit

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2021 VINTAGE - DEUSYLS:

- Water tables were low after a very dry winter
- Spring temperatures (which affected flowering) were lower than normal for the season
- Absence of hot weather during a wetter than usual summer with cool nights
- On 8th April 2021, a severe frost hit La Pèira. It was devastating. At that point, soon after Easter, the young buds had just emerged. By the morning, whole vineyards were stripped of buds. Some vineyards were half-stripped. Almost all of that year's crop had been lost.
- Vineyard work progressed as normal – there was no option to do otherwise. Only the vineyards had no grapes. Or precious little. Much of the vineyard was empty...
- When finally made, Robert describes finding “a wine radiant with grace and gentleness”

2020 VINTAGE - THE REDS:

- Generous autumn rains led into a very mild December (2°C above the long-term average)
- A warm February (the warmest since 2001 in Hérault)
- Early budburst
- Frost risk but no significant damage, unlike 2021
- Warm conditions in April and May, leading to successful flowering
- Unusually heavy rain in May, which caused some downy mildew (less severe than 2018)
- Cool, stormy weather in early June, followed by a hot, dry summer, without heatwaves
- Early harvest with an average-to-good volume of juicy grapes and well-balanced musts
- Dry, hot weather from mid-June

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LA PÈIRA

DEUSYLS DE LA PÈIRA BLANC 2021

Deusyls is the estate's second white wine. In 2021, it is made from Viognier, Roussanne and Marsanne – the blend changes according to the vintage conditions (which were notoriously tricky in the frost-affected 2021). This is a blend of two sites: Belle Fiolle (replanted 2009) and Les Pointes (replanted 2011). Aromas of creamy white peach and pithy nectarine. The palate offers honeyed apricot and caramel, with yellow flower perfume on the finish. A wine of panache and tempered richness. 30% new oak. 14.5% abv.

Corney & Barrow Score 17
Recommended drinking from 2024 - 2026

£175/Case of 6 bottles, in bond UK

LA PÈIRA BLANC 2022

In the frost-stricken 2021 vintage, all of the white grapes were used for the second white, Deusyls (above). This year's release of La Pèira Blanc is therefore of the 2022 vintage. This is a blend of Roussanne and Marsanne, from the usual two sites: Belle Fiolle and Les Points. The Roussanne was planted in 1994, the Marsanne in 2009. If Deusyls is yellow-hued, this is white – white flowers and peaches, with green citrus and apple skin aromas. The palate has a textural slickness, a thick-skinned viscosity, refreshed by upbeat lemon and lime zest. The finish is salty, with a popcorn tang. Characterful and with ageing potential. 14.5% abv.

Corney & Barrow Score 18
Recommended drinking from 2024 - 2029

£395/Case of 6 bottles, in bond UK



LAS FLORS DE LA PÈIRA 2020

Las Flors is the second wine of La Pèira and is a blend of Syrah (30 years old), Mourvèdre (28-35 y.o.) and Grenache (28 y.o.), with Cinsault (42 y.o.) and Carignan (56 y.o.). It comes from a vineyard called Belle Fiolle in Occitan (Bellefeuille in French). Aromas of ripe red berry fruit, with leathery, gamey undertones. The palate is bright and juicy, offering blackberries, *garrigue* and liquorice. A wine of southern French panache that can be enjoyed upon arrival, from a fabulous vintage. 14.5% abv.

Corney & Barrow Score 17.5
Recommended drinking from 2024 - 2029

£235/Case of 6 bottles, in bond UK

LA PÈIRA 2020

La Pèira is predominantly Syrah (from 25-year-old vines), with some Grenache (nearly-30-year-old vines). It comes from a plot called Bois de Pauliau, adjacent to the estate buildings, in the Terrasses du Larzac appellation. Lifted red cherry and berry aromas, with liquorice and what Robert Dougan termed "some classic Syrah qualities". The palate is vibrant and juicy, the sheeny red and black fruit buoyed by lively acids, with bitter chocolate and gamey intensity. Salty minerality persists on the long finish. One of the most character-packed wines you are likely to taste. 14.5% abv.

Corney & Barrow Score 18+
Recommended drinking from 2024 - 2029

£395/Case of 6 bottles, in bond UK

MATISSAT 2020

100% Mourvèdre. Meaning 'nuanced' in the Occitan, Matissat comes from the same plot as La Pèira's Syrah and Grenache, the Bois de Pauliau. Aromas of *garrigue*, bay leaf and bitter chocolate lead into a wonderfully textured, medium-to-full bodied palate on which dark berries vie with gamey meatiness and ferrous minerality. Supple tannins and fresh sustaining acidity. Those anticipating a powerful Bandol-style Mourvèdre may be pleasantly surprised by this wine's tenderness and anticipating. A wine of panache, quite unique. 14.5% abv.

Corney & Barrow Score 18
Recommended drinking from 2024 - 2032

£810/Case of 6 bottles, in bond UK