

9 June 2010: NEW AOC RASTEAU

On 9 June, the INAO promoted Rasteau dry red wines from Côtes du Rhône Village to the status of Cru and backdated it to cover the 2009 vintage.

The application was a lengthy process: AOC status was first requested for Rasteau dry red wines in 2002 by the winegrower's syndicate and its chairman Daniel Ferran. It was a great task and included:

- Delimitation of the AOC Rasteau area: a board of inquiry had to be set up and experts brought in, as is the usual procedure. In the end, about 100 hectares were excluded from the current 1300.
- Consistent specifications common to VDN and dry wine were laid down, as was attachment to a single terroir.

For ORTAS CAVE DE RASTEAU, leading producer and marketer of the new AOC Rasteau (it sells nearly 2.5 million bottles of it) and a force to be reckoned with on the world market – in particular No. 1 for Rhone Valley wines in Quebec for several years now with “Ortas Rasteau Tradition” and also No. 1 in Ireland, “*this decision is a natural acknowledgment of the quality of the Rasteau terroir, a point that had to be made clear to consumers, and a definite message to the market*” (Jean-Jacques Dost, GM).

Indeed, though the AOC Rasteau label has applied solely to Vin Doux Naturel since 1944, the name of Rasteau has long since been known for dry red wines whereas VDN now accounts for just 5% of production.

Rasteau is now a member of the inner circle of South Rhone crus: Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Tavel, Lirac, Gigondas, Vacqueyras, Beaumes de Venise and Vinsobres.

More news later, when the approval decree is published.

THE GREAT DATES OF RASTEAU FROM 30BC TO 2010

30 BC.: first vineyards apparently planted in Rasteau.

1st century: vineyards develop with the proximity of Vaison (Roman spa) and the problem of transporting the popular Cretan sweet wines

3rd century: closure of southern amphora workshops, overtaken by northern Gaul

Winegrowing revived in the Middle Ages under the impetus of ecclesiastics

1817: first harvests declared (300hl from 60ha)

1870: vineyards destroyed by phylloxera; arrival of American stocks

1914: 396ha were given over to the vine; 150 families wanted to make wine

1925: 60 growers founded the cooperative winery

1935: first trials of Vin Doux Naturel in Rasteau

1937: award of the AOC Côtes du Rhône label

1944: AOC Rasteau status granted for Vin Doux Naturel

1966: AOC Rasteau status granted for Côtes du Rhône Villages

2010: AOC Rasteau status granted for dry red wines



AOC RASTEAU: clayey limestone terraces covered with smooth stones, a terroir noted for low yields (38hl maximum); 75% of the vineyards on hillsides at a height of 500 to 1000 feet.

ORTAS

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