



PRESS - VINTAGES 2015 through 2020

Grenache de Bek

| | | |
|------|-------------------------------------|-------|
| 2019 | Jeb Dunnuck 2022 | 93-95 |
| 2018 | <i>Not released in vintage 2018</i> | N/A |
| 2017 | Jeb Dunnuck 2020 | 95 |
| 2016 | Bettane & Desseauve 2020 | 17/20 |
| 2016 | Jeb Dunnuck 2020 | 94 |

Syrah de Brousson

| | | |
|------|-------------------------------------|--------|
| 2019 | Jeb Dunnuck 2022 | 91-93+ |
| 2018 | <i>Not released in vintage 2018</i> | N/A |
| 2017 | Jeb Dunnuck 2020 | 94 |

Lou Coucardié Rouge

| | | |
|------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 2019 | Jeb Dunnuck 2022 | 92-94 |
| 2018 | <i>Not released in vintage 2018</i> | N/A |
| 2017 | Jeb Dunnuck 2018 | 94 - Top 100 Wines |
| 2017 | Wine Advocate - Joe Czerwinski 2018 | 91-93 |
| 2016 | Jeb Dunnuck 2019 | 95 |
| 2016 | Bettane & Desseauve 2020 | 16 |
| 2015 | Jeb Dunnuck 2017 | 92 |
| 2015 | Bettane & Desseauve 2019 | 14,5/20 |

Lou Coucardié Blanc

| | | |
|------|-------------------------------------|---------|
| 2020 | Jeb Dunnuck 2022 | 94 |
| 2019 | <i>Not released in vintage 2019</i> | N/A |
| 2018 | Challenge Millésime Bio 2022 | GOLD |
| 2018 | Wine Enthusiast 2022 | 92 |
| 2017 | Jeb Dunnuck 2020 | 94 |
| 2017 | Bettane & Desseauve 2020 | 15,5/20 |
| 2016 | Jeb Dunnuck 2017 | 93 |
| 2016 | Bettane & Desseauve 2019 | 16,5/20 |
| 2015 | The Wine Advocate 2017 | 93 |
| 2015 | Bettane & Desseauve 2019 | 15/20 |



PRESS - VINTAGES 2015 through 2020

Nostre Païs Rouge

| | | |
|------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 2020 | Jeb Dunnuck 2022 | 91-93 |
| 2019 | Jeb Dunnuck 2022 | 93 |
| 2018 | Challenge Millésime Bio 2021 | SILVER |
| 2018 | Decanter 2021 - Matt Walls | 92 |
| 2017 | Jeb Dunnuck 2019 | 93 - Top 100 Wines of 2019 |
| 2017 | Decanter 2020 - Matt Walls | 91 |
| 2016 | Bettane & Desseauve 2020 | 15/20 |
| 2016 | Jeb Dunnuck 2018 | 92 |
| 2015 | La Revue du Vin de France | 16/20 |
| 2015 | Jeb Dunnuck 2017 | 93 |

Nostre Païs Blanc

| | | |
|------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 2020 | Jeb Dunnuck 2020 | 91 |
| 2019 | Challenge Millésime Bio 2021 | SILVER |
| 2019 | Wine Enthusiast 2022 | 91 |
| 2019 | Jeb Dunnuck 2020 | 92 |
| 2018 | Jeb Dunnuck 2019 | 92 |
| 2018 | Wine Enthusiast 2020 | 91 |
| 2017 | Bettane & Desseauve 2020 | 14,5/20 |
| 2017 | Wine Spectator 2019 | 91 - Top 100 Wines of 2019 |
| 2016 | Wine Advocate 2017 | 91 |
| 2016 | Bettane & Desseauve 2019 | 16/20 |
| 2015 | The Wine Advocate 2017 | 91 |
| 2015 | Le Point - Olivier Bompas 2017 | 16/20 |

PRESS - CURRENT VINTAGES

| | | |
|------|---|----------------------------------|
| 2020 | Domaine Gassier Fleur de Syrah | JD 89-92pts |
| 2021 | Domaine Gassier Embruns de Viognier | Challenge Millésime Bio - Silver |
| 2021 | Domaine Gassier Brise de Grenache | Challenge Millésime Bio - Silver |
| 2019 | Michel & Tina Gassier Châteauneuf-du-Pape | JD - 94 pts |
| 2018 | Michel & Tina Gassier Cairanne | WA & WS - 90pts |
| 2020 | Michel & Tina Gassier Côtes-du-Rhone | JD 90-92pts |
| 2019 | Michel & Tina Gassier Côtes-du-Rhone | Vinum - 17,5 & JD - 90pts |



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JEB DUNNUCK

Producer: Domaine Gassier

Article: Southern Rhone's 2019s and 2020s: Part 2

2019 Michel & Tina Gassier Châteauneuf-du-Pape

94

The 2019 Châteauneuf Du Pape is 75% Grenache, 15% Syrah and 10% Mourvèdre that comes from a mix of sandy and pebbly soils and was destemmed and brought up in demi-muids. Beautiful kirsch and dried cherry fruits as well as notes of Provençal garrigue and sandalwood define the nose, and it hits the palate with medium to full-bodied richness, silky tannins, no hard edges, and a great finish. If you see a bottle, buy it.

2019 Domaine Gassier Costieres De Nimes Grenache De Bek

93-95

Tasting like the Nostre País, only richer, the 2019 Costières De Nîmes Grenache De Bek (99% Grenache and 1% Mourvèdre) comes from an estate vineyard of safre and chalky, limestone soils located in the southern part of the appellation. Beautiful blackberry and savory cherry fruits as well as dried herbs and licorice notes emerge from this beauty, and it's medium to full-bodied, with a seamless, layered texture and ultra-fine tannins. It will stand up to any Grenache out there.

2019 Domaine Gassier Costieres De Nimes Lou Coucardie

92-94

The 2019 Costières De Nîmes Lou Coucardié is a bigger, richer wine based on 55% Mourvèdre, 25% Grenache, and 20% Syrah, all from more pebbly soils. It was two-thirds destemmed, saw malolactic fermentation in barrel, and is still resting in used demi-muids. A poor man's Beaucastel Hommage à Jacques Perrin, this medium to full-bodied, meaty, peppery, Provençal red has a concentrated, mouth-filling texture, building tannins, some background oak, and a great finish.

2019 Domaine Gassier Costieres De Nimes Nostre Pais

93

The 2019 Costières De Nîmes Nostre País is largely Grenache yet includes 15% each of Syrah and Mourvèdre as well as a splash of Carignan. As always, it's more about purity and elegance than power and offers medium-bodied aromas and flavors of black raspberries, kirsch, ground pepper, and flowers. While it's not a blockbuster, it has enough structure to warrant a year in bottle and should drink nicely through 2029. It's another incredible value.

2019 Domaine Gassier Costieres De Nimes Syrah De Brousson

91-93+

The 2019 Costières De Nîmes Syrah De Brousson comes from the northern portion of the Costières De Nîmes appellation (which is more Rhône-like in regard to its terroir) and a single parcel of 40-year-old vines. Almost all Syrah, it has a Saint-Joseph-like vibe in its darker, almost blue fruits as well as violet and smoky, meaty nuances. Nicely textured and medium-bodied, it's another beautiful Syrah from this team that has serious potential.

2019 Domaine Gassier Costieres De Nimes Fleur De Syrah

90

The 2019 Costières De Nîmes Fleur De Syrah comes from the southern part of the appellation, which is cooler, as it's closer to the Mediterranean Sea. A blend of 95% Syrah (all Serine) and



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5% Mourvèdre, it has lots of red and blue fruits as well as a liquid violet character, medium to full body, outstanding ripeness, and a seamless texture. As with the 2020, it saw a touch of stems and was brought up all in concrete tank.

2019 Michel & Tina Gassier Cotes Du Rhone

90

What was previously released as the Cercius Cuvée, the 2019 Côtes Du Rhône from the Gassiers is a ripe, round, Provençal, sexy red that's undeniably delicious. Medium to full-bodied on the palate, it has the vintage's round, fruit-filled style while staying impeccably balanced. It will drink nicely for 4-5 years.

2020 Domaine Gassier Costieres De Nimes Nostre Pais

91-93

Violets, framboise, hints of blue fruits, and ground pepper all emerge from the 2020 Costières De Nîmes Nostre Pais, and this perennial over-achiever looks to deliver the goods again in 2020. Already complex and medium to full-bodied, with silky tannins and considerable elegance, it should last for 4-6 years. The 2020 is based on 60% Grenache, 20% Mourvèdre, 15% Syrah, and 5% Carignan that was two-thirds destemmed and is still resting in a mix of used oak and concrete tank.

2020 Michel & Tina Gassier Cotes Du Rhone

90-92

The 2020 Côtes Du Rhône should be stunning stuff and compete with any Côtes Du Rhône out there. Based on 60% Grenache, 20% Mourvèdre, and 20% Syrah, it has lots of ground pepper and sappy flower notes as well as a great core of blackberry and black cherry fruit. It's pleasure bent but still has elegance and complexity.

2020 Domaine Gassier Costieres De Nimes Lou Coucardie Blanc

94

The flagship white from this talented family is the 2020 Costières De Nîmes Lou Coucardié Blanc, a richer, serious, age-worthy white based on 40% each of Roussanne and Viognier and the balance Grenache Blanc. Brought up in 500-liter barrels, it has beautiful white currant and tangerine fruits, a terrific floral character, a touch of background oak, and medium to full-bodied richness on the palate. It's still tight and closed on the palate and needs 6-12 months of bottle age, but it's going to shine on the dinner table over the following 4-6 years.

2020 Domaine Gassier Costieres De Nimes Nostre Pais Blanc

91

Also terrific, the 2020 Costières De Nîmes Nostre Pais Blanc is 65% Grenache Blanc, 20% Clairette, and the rest Viognier and Roussanne. Clean, crisp citrus and stone fruits as well as floral nuances define the bouquet, and it's medium-bodied, balanced, and elegant on the palate, with good acidity. I'd be thrilled to drink a bottle any time over the coming couple of years and certainly wouldn't be surprised to see it evolve nicely for longer.

2020 Domaine Gassier IGP Pays D'Oc Embruns De Viognier

91

Tasting like a mini-Condrieu (at a fraction of the price), the 2020 IGP Pays D'Oc Embruns De Viognier has lots of tangerine and citrus fruit, medium-bodied richness, a beautiful, fresh, yet still rich and classic Viognier texture, and a touch of spice and minerality on the palate. It's well worth seeking out and should be enjoyed over the coming year.

- Jeb Dunnuck (January 26, 2022)

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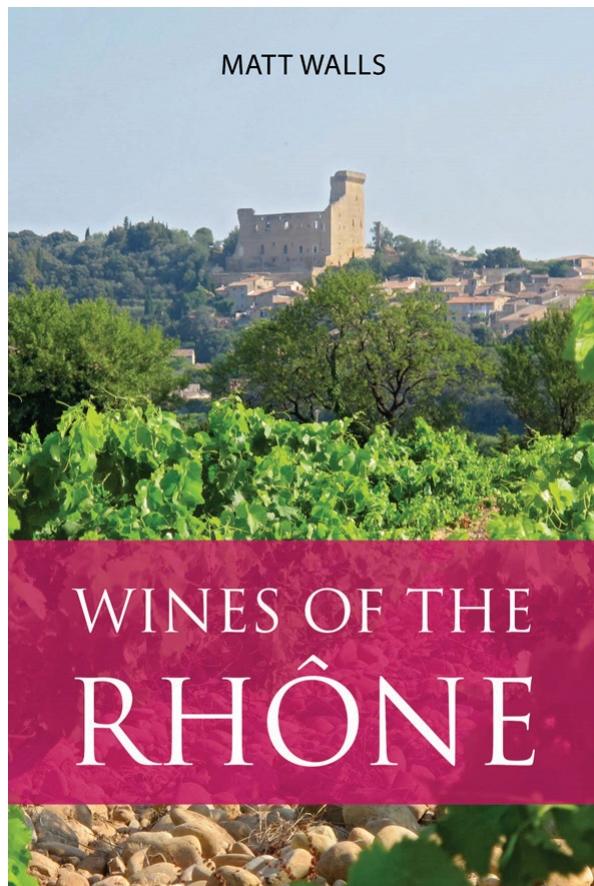


**Château de Nages
and Domaine Gassier**

Caissargues

www.domainegassier.com

www.chateaudenages.com



Publication date : January 25, 2021

A winemaker who has done more than his fair share to raise the profile of Costières de Nîmes, Michel Gassier makes wines under two different estates in the appellation. Château de Nages is the family domaine, in which he represents the fourth generation, and recently he has also established a separate domaine under his own name, Domaine Gassier. Both are farmed organically. He has a particularly sensitive touch both in the vineyard and the winery, and makes authentic, balanced wines that deliver real satisfaction. Unusually, he makes a sparkling wine, and it's one of the best in the Southern Rhône.



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TASTING REPORTS

North and South

Both regions of France's Rhône Valley share in the success of the 2018 vintage

The Rhône Valley covers a large and diverse swath of eastern France, starting just south of Lyon and running down to Avignon, yet it is one of the most consistent winegrowing regions in the world. Save for a very rare rain-plagued harvest, the valley benefits from near-constant sunny and dry conditions in summer that are ideal for growing grapes.



Feb 28, 2021

The 2018 growing season, however, was no walk in the park. Early-season rains led to severe mildew pressures through the start of summer, before the more typical weather pattern finally kicked in, yielding the beneficial conditions vintners needed to ripen their crop.

In the end, producers in both the northern and southern portions of the region delivered another outstanding group of wines. The Syrah-based reds of the north and the Grenache-based reds of the south each offer velvety, low-acid profiles, with ripe, stylish fruit, while the whites are juicy and opulent....

...“The key weather story about the 2018 vintage is the rain pattern,” says **Michel Gassier, whose family domaine in Costières de Nîmes is one of the region's top sources for values.** “Overall, we received more than 1,000 millimeters [39 inches] of rain, with three-fourths of it either before budbreak or after the harvest. And as opposed to previous vintages, hydric stress was very limited.”

...Michel Gassier's Costières de Nîmes... Costières de Nîmes White Nostre Païs 2018 (91, \$23) show the ripe, plump yet detailed profile of the 2018 whites, as well as the type of excellent values that abound in the region. All told, there are 95 wines in this report that rate 88 points or higher while costing \$25 or less per bottle.

James Molesworth's Recommended Wines From the Rhône Valley: *Top Rhône Values*



**MICHEL GASSIER Costières de Nîmes
White Nostre Païs 2018**

91

Ripe and detailed, with a mix of star fruit, green melon, pear and yellow apple flavors laced with a hint of buttered brioche. Long, flattering finish. Grenache Blanc, Roussanne, Clairette, Viognier and Bourboulenc. Drink now through 2022. 3,000 cases made, 1,200 cases imported. — JM



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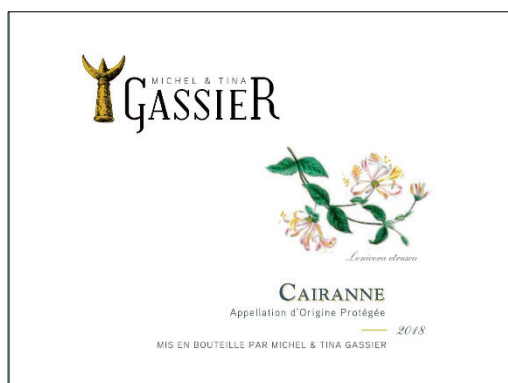


Wine Spectator

www.winespectator.com



May 31, 2021



MICHEL & TINA GASSIER

Cairanne 2018

Score: 90

Alluring, with red tea and incense notes leading off, followed quickly by racy red cherry and raspberry coulis flavors. Late mineral notes add length. Grenache, Mourvèdre and Syrah. Drink now through 2023. - James Molesworth



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Les Vignerons du Castelas

Côtes-du-Rhône AOC Les Mésanges 2020
16,5 Punkte | 2021 bis 2024
Kräuterwürze in der Nase, leichter Honigmelone-Hauch sowie Bittermandeln im Hintergrund. Erstaunlich gesetzt für das junge Alter. Am Gaumen findet sich das Bouquet aus der Nase direkt wieder. Kraft, Frische und gut eingebundene Säure. Spannend.
www.vignerons-castelas.fr

ROTWEIN

Le Clos du Caillou

Côtes-du-Rhône AOC Le Quartz 2018
18 Punkte | 2021 bis 2026
Filigranes Bouquet, Anklänge von schwarzem

Maison Brotte

Côtes-du-Rhône AOC Esprit Barville 2018
18 Punkte | 2021 bis 2026
In der Nase dunkle Würze, Oreg-Keks, Muskatnuss und Rote Johannisbeere. Kraftvoll am Gaumen, schön ausbalanciert, mit präsentem, seidigem Tannin, ausgewogene Säure. Grüner Tee, Rote Johannisbeere, in perfekter Konzentration. Sehr lang.
www.brotte.com

Château des Coccinelles

Côtes-du-Rhône AOC Elytras 2019
17,5 Punkte | 2021 bis 2026
Feinherbe, leicht pflanzliche Aromatik mit knackigen, grünkäutigen Aromen unterlegt - straff und gradlinig. So auch der Gaumen, straffes und noch festes Tanningerüst, kernige Säure und herbe Aromen. Charakter mit viel Lagerpotenzial.
www.chateau-coccinelles.com

Château du Trignon

Côtes-du-Rhône-Villages Plan de Dieu AOC 2016
17,5 Punkte | 2021 bis 2024
Brombeere, grüner Astschnitt, schwarzes Teeblatt und Granatapfel-Kerne. Am Gaumen dezent konzentriert, mit lebendiger Säure und einem seidigen Tannin-Netz. Sehr gut.
www.famillequot.com
11,90 Euro | www.weine-leipzig.de

Domaine de Magalanne

Côtes-du-Rhône-Villages Signargues AOC Lou Blou 2018
17,5 Punkte | 2021 bis 2025
Dunkle Beerenfrucht, Brombeere, etwas Veilchen, Brotkruste und Garrique-Kräuter in der Nase. Am Gaumen frisch, schlank und dezent geprägt von einem sanften, körnigen Tannin. Dezent, elegante Fruchtaromen-Intensität, mit saftiger Säure-Struktur. Gute Länge.
www.magalanne.com

Domaine des Favards

Côtes-du-Rhône AOC Les grandes terres 2018
17,5 Punkte | 2021 bis 2024
Blaubeere und Sauerkirsche, schwarzer Pfeffer und Johannisbeerblüte in der Nase. Am Gaumen straff, mit feinkörnigem Tannin und elegantem Zug. Endlose Frische im Abgang. Sehr gelungen.
www.domainedesfavards.com

Domaine Gassier

Côtes-du-Rhône AOC 2019
17,5 Punkte | 2021 bis 2025
Rhabarber, Rote Bete, im Hintergrund rote Beerenfrucht. Am Gaumen erstaunlich schlank für 15 Vol.-%, saftig, kühl, feines Tannin. Trinkig, auf Top-Niveau. Einfach Klasse.
www.domainegassier.com
9,90 Euro | www.weinkontor-freund.de

Domaine Gassier

Côtes-du-Rhône AOC 2019

17,5 Punkte | 2021 bis 2025

Rhabarber, Rote Bete, im Hintergrund rote Beerenfrucht. Am Gaumen erstaunlich schlank für 15 Vol.-%, saftig, kühl, feines Tannin. Trinkig, auf Top-Niveau. Einfach Klasse.

www.domainegassier.com

9,90 Euro | www.weinkontor-freund.de

English translation: Rhubarb, beetroot, red berries in the background. Amazingly light on the palate for 15% alc. Juicy, cool, fine tannins, drinkable, top level. Simply great.



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JEB DUNNUCK

Producer: Domaine Gassier

Article: Southern Rhône: The Charming, Provençal 2018s and the More Concentrated, Classic 2019s

2017 Domaine Gassier Grenache de Beck Rouge

95

I was also able to taste a number of late-release 2017s from this team. Starting with the 2017 Costières de Nîmes Grenache de Bek, this beauty comes from a single vineyard in the southern, cooler part of the Costières and is all Grenache. It reminds me of a Châteauneuf du Pape from the sandy parts of the La Crau lieu-dit and offers a gorgeous perfume of kirsch liqueur and blackberry-like fruits interwoven with lots of peppery spice, candied violets, new saddle leather, and garrigue. Hitting the palate with medium to full-bodied richness, it has beautiful tannins, no hard edges, and a finish that keeps you coming back to the glass. This unquestionably ranks with the finest wines coming from this appellation and is one of those wines that need to be tasted to be believed. I love it today, and I suspect it has a solid 8-10 years of overall longevity.

2017 Domaine Gassier Syrah de Brousson Rouge

94

A new wine for this team that was first made in 2016, the 2017 Costières de Nîmes Syrah de Brousson comes from a single parcel in the northern part of the appellation, which is warmer and consists of more pebbly, clay soils. Revealing a deep purple color as well as a masculine bouquet of crushed stone, iodine, roasted herbs, black licorice, and smoked black fruits, this beauty hits the palate with medium to full-bodied richness, a meaty, layered, chewy texture, and incredible length on the finish. The texture here is superb, as is the balance. This beautiful wine will benefit from another year or so in bottle and should drink nicely through 2031. It actually reminds me of an old school Hermitage with its rich, powerful, mineral-laced style.

2017 Domaine Gassier Lou Coucardié Rouge

94

The 2017 Costières de Nîmes Lou Coucardié reminds me a little of a classic old school Bandol with its ripe, sexy, incredibly meaty profile. Loaded with fruit and offering lots of spiced meats, garrigue, pepper, and new saddle leather aromas as well as full-bodied richness, sweet tannins, and a great finish, this is one heck of a Costières de Nîmes. It can be drunk today, but it has enough tannins to warrant short-term cellaring and should evolve nicely for upwards of a decade. The blend is 50% Mourvèdre, 30% Grenache, and the rest Syrah, all of which is brought up in a mix of larger French oak barrels.

2018 Domaine Gassier Nostre Païs Rouge

91-93

Surprisingly, the 2018 Costières de Nîmes Nostre Païs had not been bottled at the time of this tasting. Nevertheless, it continues to show beautifully, with a perfumed, medium to full-bodied, finesse-driven, elegant style that I would happily drink today. Giving up lots of both red and black fruits, garrigue, candied violets, and ground pepper, it has both richness and elegance and certainly competes with any number of base Châteauneuf du Papes that sell for quite a bit more.

2019 Domaine Gassier Nostre Païs Rouge

91-93

While the Côtes du Rhône from this team is made in a more Southern Rhône style, the 2019 Costières de Nîmes Nostre Païs comes from a cooler sector of the Costières de Nîmes region and always shines more for its purity and elegance than sheer power. In 2019, it reveals a more ruby/purple color as



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well as a perfumed nose of black raspberries, white pepper, sappy spring flowers, and spice. All this flows to a more medium to full-bodied, seamless red with beautiful balance, no hard edges, and a great finish. This is another beautiful wine that brings plenty of fruit as well as elegance. It will have 4-6 years of prime drinking.

2018 Domaine Gassier Fleur de Syrah Rouge

91

Beautiful Northern Rhône-like aromas of blackberries, smoked game, bacon fat, and candied violets as well as plenty of black pepper emerge from the 2018 Costières de Nîmes Fleur De Syrah. Playing in the more medium-bodied end of the spectrum, it has a layered, elegant texture, nicely integrated acidity, and soft tannins. Enjoy this upfront, charming, beautifully balanced Syrah any time over the coming 5-6 years

2019 Domaine Gassier Fleur de Syrah Rouge

89-91

The dense purple-colored 2019 Costières de Nîmes Fleur De Syrah gives up a classy nose of blue and black fruits intermixed with lots of peppery herbs and crushed rock-like minerality. It hits the palate with medium to full-bodied richness as well as a stacked mid-palate and has loads of fruit and ripe tannins yet stays nicely balanced and even elegant. It's another pleasure-bent, impeccably made wine from this team that will drink well on release and over the following handful of years.

2018 Michel & Tina Gassier Côtes Du Rhône

91

The Côtes du Rhône from this team is always made to have more of a Rhône-like style, and the 2018 Côtes du Rhône succeeds admirably, offering up loads of red and black fruits, roasted garrigue, melted licorice, and mineral-like aromas and flavors. These all carry to a ripe, sexy, full-bodied Côtes du Rhône with sweet tannins, no hard edges, and a great finish. This is a no-brainer purchase that's guaranteed to put a smile on your face any time over the coming 3-5 years.

2019 Michel & Tina Gassier Côtes Du Rhône

90-92

Moving to the reds and starting with the 2019 Côtes du Rhône from tank, it reveals a medium to full-bodied, plush, sexy style as well as loads of blueberry liqueur, ground pepper, violets, and candied orange-like aromas and flavors. With plenty of mid-palate depth, ripe, sweet tannins, and a great finish, this is a pleasure-bent Côtes du Rhône well worth seeking out that will keep for 3-4 years.

2019 Michel & Tina Gassier Cairanne

91-93

First made in 2018, the 2019 Cairanne is in the same ballpark and comes from hillside parcels of Grenache, Mourvèdre, and Syrah. Medium purple, it offers a beautiful perfume of black raspberries and cherries as well as notes of crushed rock-like minerality, ground pepper, and violets. It hits the palate with medium to full-bodied richness, sweet tannins, and a great finish. This is another classy, balanced, incredibly satisfying wine from the Gassier family that I would be happy to drink any time over the coming 5-7 years.

2017 Domaine Gassier Lou Coucardié Blanc

94

Moving to the flagship cuvée, the 2017 Costières de Nîmes Lou Coucardié Blanc is based on 40% Roussanne, 30% Grenache Blanc, 20% Clairette, and the rest Viognier that I believe is brought up in a mix of tank and barrels. It reveals a medium gold color as well as a Hermitage Blanc-like bouquet of white currants, quince, crushed stone, toasted bread, and honeyed minerality. Rich, full-bodied, and expansive on the palate, it stays beautifully balanced and has a layered texture as well as a great finish. Enjoy this soft, sexy, opulent, incredibly impressive white over the coming 2-3 years. It can age longer, if you're so inclined.



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2019 Domaine Gassier Nostre Païs Blanc**92**

Notably richer and deeper, the 2019 Costières de Nîmes Nostre Païs Blanc reveals a vivid gold color as well as a honeyed nose of tangerine, apricot, peach, and white flowers. With medium to full-bodied richness, a beautifully balanced, elegant texture, and a solid spine of acidity, this is another terrific white from this team that has loads to love. It should keep nicely for 2-3 years. Put this in a blend lineup of top Châteauneuf du Pape Blanc and shock your friends.

2019 Domaine Gassier Embruns de Viognier Blanc**90**

Starting with the 2019 Vin De France Viognier from Michel Gassier, this is a real gem of a white that offers loads of Viognier character as well as notable freshness, purity, and elegance. Notes of apricot, ripe peach, spice, and a kiss of flowers all emerge from the glass, and it has an expansive, layered texture (which is classic Viognier) and a clean, crisp, dry finish that will make this shine on the dinner table. It sells for a song and is ideal for drinking over the coming year.

- Jeb Dunnuck (10/06/2020)

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TASTING HIGHLIGHTS

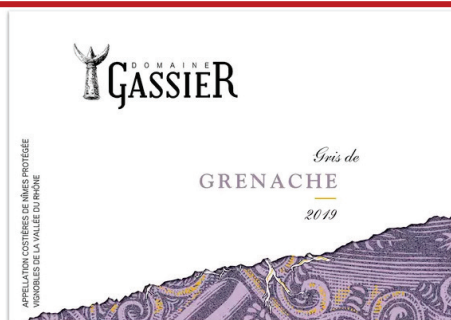
12 French Rosé Discoveries

Pink wines from Provence, Corsica, Languedoc and more for \$25 or less

By Gillian Sciaretta

Jul 16, 2020

In France, rosé is more popular than white wine. So it's no surprise that French winemakers throughout the country are producing high-quality pink wines. In this week's report, we've put together 12 rosés from throughout France, all priced at \$25 or less and perfect for mid-summer sipping.



MICHEL GASSIER

Costières de Nîmes Rosé Gris de Grenache 2019

Score: 89 | \$17

WS review: A fresh, pure style, with a racy edge that lets the range of orange peel, savory, white peach and wet stone notes play out. This shows more range and length than most of its peers. Drink now. 3,000 cases made, 750 cases imported.—James Molesworth

| | | |
|-------------------|--|------------------|
| CHÂTEAU BEAULIEU | Coteaux d'Aix-en-Provence Rosé Cuvée Alexandre 2019 | Score: 88 \$23 |
| JEAN-LUC COLOMBO | Coteaux d'Aix-en-Provence Rosé La Dame du Rouet 2019 | Score: 88 \$22 |
| MINUTY | Côtes de Provence Rosé M 2019 | Score: 88 \$24 |
| DOMAINE DE NIZAS | Languedoc Rosé Le Clos Terroir Basalte 2019 | Score: 88 \$17 |
| DOMAINE PETRONI | Corse Rosé 2019 | Score: 88 \$25 |
| PHILIPPE VIALLET | Vin de Savoie Rosé 2019 | Score: 88 \$15 |
| MARRENON | Lubéron Roséfine 2019 | Score: 87 \$18 |
| TERRA SANTA | Île de Beauté Rosé 2019 | Score: 87 \$13 |
| DOMAINE VETRICCIE | Île de Beauté Rosé 2019 | Score: 87 \$13 |
| M. CHAPOUTIER | Pays d'Oc Rosé Les Vignes de Bila-Haut 2019 | Score: 86 \$15 |
| DOMAINE HOUCHART | Côtes de Provence Rosé 2019 | Score: 86 \$17 |

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Wine Spectator TOP 100

We've revealed the Top 100 of 2019 !

Each year, *Wine Spectator* editors survey the wines reviewed over the previous 12 months and select our Top 100, based on quality, value, availability and excitement. This annual list honors successful wineries, regions and vintages around the world.

Here you'll find every Top 100 list from 2019 back to the debut year, 1988. Since then, new regions, grapes and styles have appeared on the list, but the classics are still going strong. Enjoy browsing more than 30 years of the world's top wines!

For detailed profiles of the 2019 picks, check out the complete Top 100 Wines of 2019 package in the upcoming Dec. 31, 2019, issue of *Wine Spectator*, on newsstands Dec. 3, or buy a back issue or digital edition when they become available.



| | | | |
|----|--|------|----|
| 63 | <p>Michel Gassier Costières de Nîmes White Nostre Païs</p> <p>Fresh, featuring pear, yellow apple, melon and jasmine notes streaming through together, with a flash of lemon shortbread on the enticing finish. Grenache Blanc, Roussanne, Clairette, Viognier and Bourboulenc. Drink now. 3,000 cases made, 1,200 cases imported. — JM</p> | 2017 | 91 |
|----|--|------|----|



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2017 Domaine Gassier Costières de Nîmes Lou Coucardié red

Interim, dec 2019 Joe Czerwinski 90-92 points

The 2017 Costières de Nîmes Lou Coucardie is 55% Mourvèdre, 30% Grenache and 15% Syrah, which will spend a full two years in demi-muids of 500 and 600 liters. Scents of dried spices and cola accent bright berry fruit on the nose of this full-bodied, supple wine, which turns velvety but remains slightly open-knit on the long finish.

2018 Domaine Gassier Costières de Nîmes Lou Coucardié white

Interim, dec 2019 Joe Czerwinski 90-92 points

A barrel-fermented blend of 40% Roussanne, 30% Grenache Blanc, 20% Viognier and 10% Clairette, the 2018 Costières de Nîmes Blanc Lou Coucardie is toasty but balanced, with tropical notes, pineapple and melon flavors framed by the oak. Medium to full-bodied and round in the mouth, it turns zesty on the long, revitalizing finish.

2017 Domaine Gassier Costières de Nîmes Nostre Païs red

Interim, dec 2019 Joe Czerwinski 89-92 points

A blend of 55% Grenache, 25% Syrah, 10% Mourvèdre and 5% each Carignan and Cinsault, the 2017 Costières de Nîmes Nostre Pais comes largely from sandy soils. It offers super ripe notes of black cherries and apricots. Full-bodied, rich and velvety, it finishes with plenty of flavor and length.

2018 Domaine Gassier Costières de Nîmes Nostre Païs white

Interim, dec 2019 Joe Czerwinski 89-91 points

The 2018 Costières de Nîmes Blanc Nostre Pais is a blend of 45% Grenache Blanc, 20% each Roussanne and Clairette, 10% Viognier and 5% Bourboulenc. It's half barrel-fermented in older oak (the other half goes into stainless steel), but it doesn't show any real woodiness. Instead, it's got mandarin and melon notes on the nose, a medium to full-bodied feel on the palate and a zesty-briny finish that picks up hints of anise.

2017 Domaine Gassier Costières de Nîmes Fleur de Syrah red

Interim, dec 2019 Joe Czerwinski 90 points

The 2017 Costières de Nîmes Fleur de Syrah has turned out as well as I thought it might when I tasted it last year. It's 90% or more Syrah, with tiny amounts of Grenache, Carignan and/or Viognier, depending which version of the story you believe. It offers up vaguely floral and stone-fruit notes alongside blueberry and blackberry flavors. Medium to full-bodied and supple, this easy-drinking wine should be consumed over the next several years.

2018 Michel & Tina Gassier Cairanne red

Interim, dec 2019 Joe Czerwinski 89-91 points

A blend of 65% Grenache, 30% Mourvèdre and 5% Syrah, the 2018 Cairanne is already delicious. Lovely floral and herbal notes accent red raspberries on the nose, while the medium to full-bodied palate is rich and supple. The wine finishes long and velvety, picking up attractive hints of green peppercorns.



JEB DUNNUCK

Top 100 Red Wines Of 2019

by JEB DUNNUCK



DECEMBER 3, 2019

The below list is a selection of the top red wines that were tasted over the past year and reviewed at JebDunnuck.com. As in 2018, 2019 has been a wealth of riches for wine lovers with great vintages in the Rhône Valley (both north and south), Bordeaux, Napa, Washington, and the **Central Coast** all hitting the market. The 2016s from **Napa Valley** and **Bordeaux** dominate the Top 100 this year, and this was a brilliant vintage for both regions. In addition, the 2017s from the **Southern Rhône** are terrific, as are the more classic, elegant 2016s from the **Northern Rhône**. The list also includes wines from Argentina, Australia, Bandol, Italy, Roussillon, Spain, **Sonoma**, and **Washington**.

The selection is based on a combination of overall quality, price, availability, and a little bit of Wow Factor, and was made by scrolling through over 10,400 reviews (which is a record number of reviews in 12 months for yours truly) and painstakingly cutting the list to these 100 wines.

20

2017 Domaine Gassier Costières De Nîmes Nostre Pais

+ \$19 93

I loved the 2017 Costières De Nîmes Nostre Pais, and I think it's a step up over the 2018. Based on 55% Grenache, 25% Syrah, and the rest Mourvèdre, Cinsault, and Carignan, from the cooler, southern part of the appellation, it offers complex notes of sweet red and black fruits, ground herbs, incense, and peppery spice. Medium to full-bodied, concentrated, and layered, with sweet tannins, it would easily stand beside wines running 2-3 times the price in a blind tasting. Michel Gassier's Domaine Gassier continues to be the reference point estate in the Costières de Nîmes, and this is a terrific terroir that's been unjustly regulated to larger production, so called "value" wines. Don't believe stunning wines emerge from the Costières de Nîmes? Taste these wines. In addition, they fashion an outstanding Côtes du Rhône!



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Wine Spectator



October 15, 2019

90 - Domaine Gassier Costières de Nimes Lou Coucardié red 2016

Solid, with a core of cherry and plum paste notes, wrapped in licorice snap accents and backed by a singed vanilla detail. Mourvèdre, Grenache and Syrah. Drink now through 2021.

90 - Domaine Gassier Costières de Nimes Lou Coucardié white 2016

Bright yellow apple and melon flavors are kissed with brioche and salted butter notes, ending with a hint of verbena. Flattering wine. Roussanne, Grenache Blanc, Clairette and Viognier.

90 - Domaine Gassier Costières de Nimes Nostre Païs red 2016

Ripe, with a fresh and open feel to the mix of raspberry and red currant coulis flavors, infused with garrigue and tobacco accents on the finish. Features pretty perfume throughout. Grenache, Syrah, Mourvèdre, Carignan and Cinsault.

91 - Domaine Gassier Costières de Nimes Nostre Païs white 2017

Fresh, featuring pear, yellow apple, melon and jasmine notes streaming through together, with a flash of lemon shortbread on the enticing finish. Grenache Blanc, Roussanne, Clairette, Viognier and Bourboulenc. Drink now. 3,000 cases made, 1,200 cases imported.



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JEB DUNNUCK

Michel Gassier's Domaine Gassier continues to be the reference point estate in the Costières de Nîmes, and this is a terrific terroir that's been unjustly regulated to larger production, so called "value" wines. Don't believe stunning wines emerge from the Costières de Nîmes? Taste these wines. In addition, they fashion an outstanding Côtes du Rhône!

2016 Domaine Gassier Grenache de Beck Rouge

94

A new release from the family estate's Bek Vineyard, the 2016 Costières De Nîmes Grenache De Bek is nearly 100% Grenache (there's a splash of Mourvèdre) and has Châteauneuf Du Pape-like aromas and flavors of kirsch liqueur, blackberries, peppery incense, and garrigue. With medium to full-bodied richness, silky tannins, solid mid-palate depth and a great finish, it can be enjoyed today or cellared for upwards of a decade.

2016 Domaine Gassier Lou Coucardié Rouge

95

Bottled earlier this year, the 2016 Costières De Nîmes Lou Coucardié checks in a blend of 50% Mourvèdre, 30% Grenache, and 20% Syrah that was 66% destemmed and aged two years in 500- and 600-liter barrels. This blockbuster beauty boasts a deep purple color as well as a smoking good bouquet of blackberries, cured meats, ground pepper, Asian spices, and flowery incense. Deep, full-bodied, and concentrated, it's still seamless, balanced, and weightless on the palate, and shows why 2016 is such a great vintage in the southern Rhône Valley. This wine just about maxes out the value scale and can be drunk with incredible pleasure today or cellared for a decade.

2017 Domaine Gassier Grenache de Beck Rouge

93-95

In the same ballpark as the 2016, if not slightly better, the 2017 Costières De Nîmes Grenache De Bek (99% Grenache and 1% Mourvèdre) is another magical, Châteauneuf Du Pape look-alike from Gassier that does everything right. Ripe, sexy amounts of black raspberries, cassis, peppery incense, violets, and spicy notes all give way to a medium to full-bodied, layered, and seamless Grenache that has ripe tannins, no hard edges, and a great, great finish.

2017 Domaine Gassier Lou Coucardié Rouge

92-94+

Not yet bottled, the 2017 Costières De Nîmes Lou Coucardié might just match the sensational 2016. Based on 55% Mourvèdre, 30% Grenache and the rest Syrah, it will see the same two years in barrel before bottling. Loads of blackberries, chocolate, spice box, and plenty of meaty notes emerge from the glass, reminding me of a top Bandol from the likes of Tempier. Full-bodied, concentrated, and powerful, with plenty of tannins, it's another remarkable wine from this terrific estate.



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2017 Domaine Gassier Costières de Nîmes Nostre Païs Rouge 93

I loved the 2017 Costières De Nîmes Nostre Païs, and I think it's a step up over the 2018. Based on 55% Grenache, 25% Syrah, and the rest Mourvèdre, Cinsault, and Carignan, from the cooler, southern part of the appellation, it offers complex notes of sweet red and black fruits, ground herbs, incense, and peppery spice. Medium to full-bodied, concentrated, and layered, with sweet tannins, it would easily stand beside wines running 2-3 times the price in a blind tasting.

2017 Michel & Tina Gassier Côtes du Rhône Rouge 90

The 2017 Côtes Du Rhône (70% Grenache, 20% Mourvèdre, and 10% Syrah) has a pretty, medium-bodied style as well as classic notes of cracked pepper, violets, garrigue, and sweet raspberry and blackberry fruit. It sells for a song yet has tons of character and is a balanced, complete Côtes Du Rhône to enjoy over the coming 4-5 years.

2018 Domaine Gassier Costières de Nîmes Nostre Païs Rouge 90-92

As with the 2017, the 2018 Costières De Nîmes Nostre Païs comes from the southern, more marine-influenced part of the Costières (it's primarily from the Gassier estate's Bek Vineyard) and is 50% Grenache, 20% each of Syrah and Mourvèdre, and the rest Cinsault and Carignan, aged in equal parts used barrels and concrete tanks. It offers a pretty, finesse-drive, elegant style as well as perfumed notes of black raspberries, garrigue, and violets. Balanced, lightly textured, and seamless, it's certainly an outstanding wine and will be a great buy.

2018 Domaine Gassier Costières de Nîmes Fleur de Syrah Rouge 89-92

A slightly tweaked blend, the 2018 Costières De Nîmes Fleur De Syrah checks in as 90% Syrah and 10% Grenache that saw a tiny amount of stems followed by aging all in concrete tanks. It's another blue fruited, peppery, violet-scented beauty that's medium to full-bodied, pure, and elegant on the palate. It's going to shine right out of the gate.

2018 Michel & Tina Gassier Côtes du Rhône Rouge 90-92

A similar blend to the 2017, the 2018 Côtes Du Rhône is in the same ballpark and offers loads of dark fruits, ground herbs, and peppery garrigue in its classic Southern Rhône style. Drink this medium-bodied, rich, fleshy, exuberant beauty on release and over the following 4-5 years.

2018 Michel & Tina Gassier Cairanne Rouge 91-93

A new release from this estate, the 2018 Cairanne comes all from hillside parcels and is 65% Grenache, 30% Mourvèdre, and 5% Syrah. It has a terrific, full-bodied, sexy profile as well as loads of blue and black fruits, licorice, and bouquet garni-like aromas and flavors. It's pure, balanced, and a terrific looking barrel sample.



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2018 Domaine Gassier Costières de Nîmes Lou Coucardié Blanc 93

A deeper, richer wine, the 2018 Costières De Nîmes Lou Coucardié Blanc is a barrel fermented blend of 40% Roussanne, 30% Grenache Blanc, 20% Viognier, and the rest Clairette. It would give many a top Châteauneuf Du Pape Blanc a run for its money and boasts loads of ripe peach, tangerine, honeysuckle, spice, and brioche aromas and flavors. Medium to full-bodied, textured, and balanced, it has subtle background oak, a great texture, and a big finish.

2018 Domaine Gassier Costières de Nîmes Nostre Païs Blanc 92

Coming all from the estate Bec Vineyard, located in the cool, southern part of the appellation, the 2018 Costières De Nîmes Nostre Païs Blanc checks in as a mix of 45% Grenache Blanc, 20% Roussanne, 20% Clairette, and the rest Viognier and Bourboulenc, raised in old barrels and concrete tank. Readers looking for a superb white to drink over the coming 2-3 years should snatch this up. It offers terrific notes of white peach, rose petal, crushed citrus, and spice. With a touch of White Burgundy class, medium body, beautiful freshness, and a great finish, it was over-delivers. Don't miss it.

2018 Domaine Gassier IGP Pays d'Oc Embruns de Viognier Blanc 89

The 2018 IGP Pays D'Oc Embruns De Viognier tastes like a baby Condrieu and is well worth a multiple bottle purchase. Lots of apricot, lychee nut, and white peach give way to a medium-bodied, rounded, textured white that has classic Viognier opulence yet stays fresh and lively. Drink it over the coming year or two.

- Jeb Dunnuck (8/16/2019)

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August 8, 2019

9 Southern Rhône Wines for Late-Summer Sipping

From Châteauneuf whites for special occasions to easygoing Côtes du Rhône, these new reviews have you covered to enjoy what's left of the season.

Today's selection of new releases exemplifies the Southern Rhône at its best, covering the region's diversity of both red and white offerings, with ample value to boot. The 2017s are fruit-filled and forward in style, light on structure and ideal for drinking now and in the near-term. The 2016s are another matter altogether, brimming with dark fruit and with ample grip; it's the best vintage in recent memory for the south. A couple of early-release 2018 whites show how fresh and charming the latest vintage is shaping up to be.

There are many familiar names here, such as the Perrin family of Château de Beaucastel fame, Gigondas benchmark Château de St.-Cosme with its Côtes du Rhône bottling, and Julien Bréchet of Domaine des Bosquets with his scrumptious Lirac.

90 - Domaine Gassier Costières de Nîmes Nostre Païs Rouge 2016

Ripe, with a fresh and open feel to the mix of raspberry and red currant coulis flavors, infused with *garrigue* and tobacco accents on the finish. Features pretty perfume throughout. Grenache, Syrah, Mourvèdre, Carignan and Cinsault. Drink now through 2020. 3,000 cases made, 1,200 cases imported.-
JM



Wine Spectator

8 Vins Français to Celebrate Bastille Day

Bonjour, wine lover. July 14 is Bastille Day, France's own national holiday, and there is no better way to celebrate the spirit of the *révolution* than to indulge in some French *vin*. You may be thinking of regal first-growths and the like, but France has plenty of wines for the People made in different styles across several regions. Let's go on a little tour de France.



... Moving south to the Southern Rhône, where Grenache (both red and white) reigns supreme, try [Michel Gassier](#)'s fresh and floral Costières de Nîmes white...

91 - Domaine Gassier Costières de Nîmes Notre País Blanc 2017

Fresh, featuring pear, yellow apple, melon and jasmine notes streaming through together, with a flash of lemon shortbread on the enticing finish. Grenache Blanc, Roussanne, Clairette, Viognier and Bourboulenc. Drink now. 3,000 cases made, 1,200 cases imported. —*J.M.*

■ Jul 11, 2019



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JEB DUNNUCK

| |
|---|
| 2018 Domaine Gassier Costières de Nîmes Gris de Grenache Rosé |
|---|

| |
|--------|
| 91 pts |
|--------|

From Michel Gassier (Chateau de Nages) and based on Grenache Gris, the 2018 Costières de Nîmes Gris De Grenache Rosé is an elegant, seamless effort that's up there with the finest Provençal-styled rosés out there. Beautiful white peach, ripe strawberries, and white flower notes all emerge from this medium-bodied effort that has a silky, rounded texture, good yet integrated acidity, and a great finish. It's another winner from an incredibly talented winemaker. It can certainly stand on its own, but its slightly richer style is going to make it shine on the dinner table.



- Jeb Dunnuck (3/27/2019)

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2017 Michel Gassier Lou Coucardie - Blanc

Interim Oct 31, 2018 Joe Czerwinski 92 points

Showing more of a toasty side (it's all barrel-fermented, in a higher proportion of new oak than the Nostre Pais), the 2017 Costieres de Nimes Blanc Lou Coucardie boasts hints of orange marmalade, pineapple and apricot. A blend of 40% Roussanne, 30% Grenache Blanc, 20% Clairette and 10% Viognier, it's medium to full-bodied with a plush mouthfeel, underscored by just a bit of lime zest on the lingering finish.

2017 Michel Gassier Nostre Pais - Blanc

Interim Oct 31, 2018 Joe Czerwinski 92 points

Michel Gassier's whites continue to impress for their ripe textures, fruit expression and cleanliness. The 2017 Costieres de Nimes Blanc Nostre Pais is a blend of 45% Grenache Blanc, 30% Roussanne, 10% each Clairette and Viognier and 5% Bourboulenc. Half of the blend was barrel-fermented in 500-liter oak. Honeyed tangerines give a plump, fleshy sensation on the palate without being soft or cloying. It's creamy and lush but balanced for immediate enjoyment.

2017 Michel Gassier Viognier - Blanc

Interim Oct 31, 2018 Joe Czerwinski 90 points

Showing genuine varietal expression, the 2017 Vin de France Viognier includes nuances of citrus blossom and ripe apricots. Medium to full-bodied, silky in texture and long on the finish, it's a great introduction to the variety at a bargain price.

2017 Michel Gassier Lou Coucardie - Rouge

Interim Oct 31, 2018 Joe Czerwinski (91-93) points

Still aging in demi-muids, the 2017 Costieres de Nimes Lou Coucardie is full-bodied, rich and firm, with concentrated cherry and blueberry fruit. It might need another year or two to round into form, but it should drink well for nearly a decade.

2017 Michel Gassier Nostre Pais - Rouge

Interim Oct 31, 2018 Joe Czerwinski (89-92) points

The 2017 Costieres de Nimes Nostre Pais possesses a rich, creamy texture that showcases ripe blueberry fruit. It's full-bodied and admirably concentrated, with a long finish.



2016 Michel Gassier Lou Coucardie - Rouge

Interim Oct 31, 2018

Joe Czerwinski

90 points

A Mourvèdre-led blend aged in demi-muids, the 2016 Costieres de Nimes Lou Coucardie features patisserie-like notes of baking spice and vanilla. It's full-bodied, oaky and plush, with forward notes of dark fruit and decent freshness on the long finish.

2016 Michel Gassier Nostre Païs - Rouge

Interim Oct 31, 2018

Joe Czerwinski

91 points

A Grenache-led blend, the 2016 Costieres de Nimes Nostre Pais features compelling aromas of crushed stone, black olive and blueberry. It's medium to full-bodied, with crunchy, fresh fruit and silky but firm tannins. It should drink well through 2025.



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JEB DUNNUCK

LE MILLÉSIME... The 2016s from the Southern Rhône

2016 Michel Gassier Grenache de Beck

94-96

All Grenache aged in demi-muids for a year then blended and moved in vat, the 2016 Costières de Nîmes Grenache de Beck is a mix of the two best parcels in the vineyard, one being denser and richer and the other being more aromatic. It's scheduled to be bottled next week and sports a medium ruby/purple color as well as a perfumed, floral bouquet of black raspberries, crushed flowers, and exotic spices. It's impeccably balanced, has beautiful depth of fruit, full-bodied depth and richness, and serious length. It will be a candidate for one of the greatest wines to come from this appellation.

2016 Michel Gassier Syrah de Brousson

93-95

Also still not in bottle, the 2016 Costières de Nîmes Syrah de Brousson comes from the northern part of the appellation (which is more iron and rolled stone soils). It saw a small amount of stems and was vinified and aged in one-third demi-muids. Its deep purple color is followed by truly beautiful notes of black raspberries, blackberries, incense, blood orange, and peppery spice. It's deep, medium to full-bodied, has remarkable purity, and is beautifully balanced. This brilliant Syrah is going to benefit from a year or two of bottle age and keep for a decade.

2016 Michel Gassier Costières de Nîmes Lou Coucardié

93-95

Still in demi-muids (they're pushing the élevage with this cuvée), the 2016 Costières de Nîmes Lou Coucardié is a blend of 50% Mourvèdre, 30% Grenache, and the rest Syrah. It boasts a rich, full-bodied yet incredibly elegant and seamless profile that's every bit as good as just about anything you can find in the Southern Rhône in 2017. Offering lots of cassis, black raspberries, toasted spices, and cured meat notes, this beauty has solid mid-palate depth and sweet tannins, and while it's going to drink nicely right out of the gate, it's also going to age gracefully for over a decade.

2016 Michel Gassier Costières de Nîmes Nostre Païs

92

Almost all from the estate Bec Vineyard in the southern part of the appellation, the 2016 Costières de Nîmes Nostre Païs is a blend of 55% Grenache, 25% Syrah, and the rest Mourvèdre, Carignan and Cinsault. Orange peel, black raspberries, exotic flowers, spice, and a limestone-like minerality all flow from this elegant, seamless, medium to full-bodied 2016 that has both freshness and richness. It's a no-brainer purchase and will drink nicely for 5-6 years.

2016 Michel Gassier Costières de Nîmes Syrah

91

Incorporating 10% Grenache, the 2016 Costières de Nîmes Syrah saw a small amount of stems and was raised all in concrete tanks. It's a screaming value that reminds me of a St. Joseph with its blue fruits, bay leaf, mint, and subtle minerality. Full-bodied, rich and concentrated, it seemingly has one foot in the Northern Rhône and one in the Southern Rhône. You could do much worse than a case of this, and it should keep nicely for 4-5 years.



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2017 Michel Gassier Costières de Nîmes Lou Coucardié 94-96

Michel commented that the Mourvèdre was wonderful in 2017, and the 2017 Costières de Nîmes Lou Coucardié checks in as 50% Mourvèdre, 30% Grenache and the balance Syrah, all aging in 500- and 600-liter barrels. It's an incredible looking barrel sample that has a deep, rich, opulent bouquet of blueberries, cassis, raspberries, spiced meats, and garrigue. Thick, powerful and concentrated, yet perfectly balanced, with ample tannin, it's a rock star of a wine that's going to benefit from short-term cellaring and shine for over a decade.

2017 Michel Gassier Costières de Nîmes Lou Coucardié White 93-96

Raised all in 500-liter barrels, the medium gold-colored 2017 Costières de Nîmes Lou Coucardié offers a sensational bouquet of white peaches, exotic flowers, honeysuckle, caramelized citrus, and an undeniable minerality. This flows to a deep, rich, full-bodied white that's the equivalent of many a top Châteauneuf-du-Pape Blanc. This puppy goes screaming off the QPR scale and is a thrilling white that readers need to try. As I've written numerous times, when the quality far exceeds the price, just pretend you paid more. The blend is 40% Roussanne, 30% Grenache Blanc, 20% Clairette, and the rest Viognier.

2017 Michel Gassier Costières de Nîmes Nostre Païs 92-94

Almost exclusively from the estate Bec Vineyard in the southern part of the appellation, the 2017 Costières de Nîmes Nostre Païs is a great, great vintage for this cuvée. Black raspberries, crushed flowers, lots of minerality, and hints of incense give way to a deep, rounded, supple, and powerful version of this cuvée that has a great finish. The 2017 is a blend of 60% Grenache, 15% Mourvèdre, 15% Syrah and the rest Carignan and Cinsault, aged in equal parts used French oak and concrete.

2017 Michel Gassier Costières de Nîmes Nostre Païs White 92

As always, the 2017 Costières de Nîmes Nostre Païs shines for its purity and finesse. Made from 45% Grenache Blanc, 30% Roussanne, and the rest Clairette, Viognier, and Bourboulenc, it offers abundant notes of white peaches, orange zest, and honeysuckle. With medium body, a bright, vibrant, balanced texture, and building richness, it's going to be versatile on the dinner table and drink nicely for 3-4 years, possibly longer.

2017 Michel Gassier Côtes du Rhône 90-92

A new wine from this team (or at least the first time I've tasted it), the 2017 Côtes du Rhône Bois de Magnan is a blend of 70% Grenache, 20% Mourvèdre, and 10% Syrah. It's going to be another terrific value from this estate (although this cuvée isn't imported to the US) and has a medium to full-bodied, rich, even opulent profile as well as outstanding notes of black fruits, licorice, spice, and earth. It's a rich, pleasure-bent effort to drink over the coming 4-5 years.

2017 Michel Gassier Costières de Nîmes Syrah 89-91

The 2017 Costières de Nîmes Syrah was fermented with 10% stems and offers classic Syrah notes of meaty dark fruits, chocolate, and violets. It's terrific on the palate as well, with more depth and concentration than its humble price point would have you believe. Readers looking for a great value can't go wrong here.

- Jeb Dunnuck (8/28/2018)

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Wine Spectator

12 Quintessential Southern French Wines for Under \$20

**New reviews of whites and reds from Côtes du Rhône, Costières de Nîmes,
Lubéron and more**

July 26, 2018

Tasting Highlights' wine reviews are fresh out of the tasting room, offering a sneak peek of our editors' most recent scores and notes to WineSpectator.com members.

The Southern Rhône is a melting pot of grapes and styles. With more than a dozen appellations featuring both single-variety wines and blends, there's plenty to choose from. This selection of reds and whites shows the essence of the region: While no two wines are alike, they all exemplify the Southern Rhône's appeal—and all for less than \$20 a bottle.

Our whites are all blends that span the region, but are tied by overarching flavors of orchard fruit and honeysuckle. Starting in the west, Domaine Maby's Lirac is juicy and floral, and **Michel Gassier's** Costières de Nîmes exhibits exotic fruit and great acidity. Moving east, the Domaine de Montine from Grignan Les Adhémar has a distinct nuttiness, while the M. Chapoutier from Lubéron is bright, with bouncy green plum and apple flavors. These wines contain between three and six different local grapes, from Grenache Blanc to Roussanne to Clairette.

The reds come from four different appellations—Côtes du Rhône, Côtes du Rhône-Villages, Ventoux and Costières de Nîmes—and all share berry and stone fruit characteristics. While the wines of the region tend to be blends, it's not unheard of to see the odd single-variety bottling, like Michel Gassier's red Costières de Nîmes, which is 100 percent Syrah. The wine stands out for its savory flavors of pepper and herbs.

91 - Château de Nages Vieilles Vignes White 2016

Yellow apple and star fruit notes are lively, thanks to crunchy acidity underneath, while light honeysuckle and pear hints check in as well. Tasty. Drink now through 2019. 450 cases imported. - JM

91 - Michel Gassier Syrah 2016

Ripe and sleek, showing plum and cassis notes inlaid with flashes of white pepper, sage and leather. Silky but abundant tannins carry the finish. Drink now through 2021. 750 cases imported. - JM

90 - Halos de Jupiter Costières de Nîmes 2016

Tasty, showing plump cherry, plum and blackberry compote flavors underscored with licorice detail and carried by a graphite edge through the finish. Solid. Drink now through 2021. 600 cases imported.- JM



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Decanter

Jefford on Monday: Delta wine

Andrew Jefford discovers Costières de Nîmes...

May 21, 2018

At last: a solution to the vexed identity of the Costières de Nîmes. It was Michel Gassier, for long one of the zone's most dynamic growers, who pointed it out when I travelled to the region recently. It's not Languedoc, and it's not Provence, either. It's the Camargue. Costières de Nîmes is the key wine-growing zone of Western Europe's largest river delta, famed for its semi-wild white horses, its marshy bird life, its ferocious mosquitos and its little black fighting bulls.



Vines in the 'delta' of Costières de Nîmes. Credit: David Z

Identity has long been a key question for growers here. The region began the modern era as VDQS 'Costières de Gard' in 1951. Since Gard counted as a Languedoc regional *département*, that put it in the Languedoc family. In 1989, though, it switched to the Rhône family (and remember that around 30% of Côtes de Rhône in fact comes from the Gard) when it acquired its Costières de Nîmes appellation.

The switch was challenging at first: 'All the Languedoc merchants said "bye-bye",' remembered Gassier, 'and all the Rhône merchants said "We don't need you".' The region turned to export, which still accounts for 40% of production in value terms.

You might be thinking that a gigantic, mosquito-plagued delta doesn't sound like great *terroir*. If that's all it was, you'd be right. This, though, is where the Rhône identity mingles with the Camarguaise. The Rhône reaches the sea via a multitude of ever-changing mouths, as it always has done, and the braided river has, over hundreds of thousands of years, dumped huge terraces and banks of rolled pebbles en route – most famously, the *galets roulés* of Châteauneuf du Pape.

The Costières de Nîmes occupies another such area of raised pebble banks, clearly standing 30 metres or so above the marshy delta itself – indeed this is the biggest single '*terrace villafranchien*' in the whole of the Rhône (the Villafranchian is the geological age, between 3.5 and 1 million years ago, during which most of this action happened).

Viticulture here pre-dates Roman times, beginning with the Greek colonists who founded Marseilles and other southern French cities. The beautiful 18th century maps created for the whole of France by four generations of the Cassini family also reveal around 10,000ha of vines on these terraces. Nowadays



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the vines occupy 4,500ha. The cowboys of the Camargue (called *gardians* here) have always had wine to wash down their steak.

Is it a different *terroir* to Châteauneuf? Certainly. It's much closer to the sea, and much more clearly maritime. 'The sea wind comes in every afternoon in summer,' points out Jérôme Castillon of Château l'Ermitage, 'and the temperature drops from 36°C to 31°C.' These 'maritime entrants', as they are locally called, always bring moist air as well as cooling breezes – and that's something the Mourvèdre loves. This is a very long-established variety here; indeed it was often known in the Southern Rhône as the 'plant de St-Gilles', St Gilles being a village in the middle of the great Costières terrace.

The region's other key variety is Syrah (2,500ha out of the 4,500ha) of fleshy, voluptuous style. Grenache makes up the trilogy, but it is less widely planted here than in Châteauneuf; there is Carignan, too. The mistral, by the way, blows less forcefully here than in Châteauneuf, and Costières de Nîmes has fewer sandy zones.

Most of the wines here are red (55%), but the rosé boom means that 35% are pink; yet the remaining 10% of whites can impress. Indeed Costières de Nîmes encloses the old historical white wine appellation of Clairette de Bellegarde – but only 7ha of that remain in cultivation today, and all of the really exciting Clairette is found up in Châteauneuf. The region has a project to get two internal *crus* (or rather 'complementary geographical denominations', since the word *cru* is a sensitive one in Rhône culture) recognised: St Roman in the north, and Franquevaux in the south, for wines made with stricter production regulations than basic Costières de Nîmes.

The big challenge for the Costières de Nîmes, as for all of the satellite appellations which cluster around the 'core' of the Rhône, is to be taken seriously. Bulk prices for the Costières lag those of the Côtes de Rhône, and you can't make fine wine without being rewarded for the sacrifices it requires. The top wines of the region's leading estates, though, find consumers at a retail price of between 20 and 30 euros, so the quality ladder is in place. The cowboys intend to climb it.

Tasting Costières de Nîmes – *Included in the list of ten of the best...*



Michel Gassier, Costières de Nîmes, Nostre Pais, 2016

Points 90

This complex white blend (40% Grenache Blanc, 30% Roussanne and 20% Clairette, with the balance from Viognier and Bourboulenc) is pale gold in colour, with attractive wild-flower fragrance of hawthorne and almond blossom. Those aromas come through on the palate, too, meshed with succulent, rich flavours of ripe summer fruits. A toothsome southern white.



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MICHEL GASSIER

The energetic Michel Gassier has been a leading ambassador for the Costières de Nîmes for the past decade, traveling the world to promote his home region and his myriad of wines. In addition to the wines under the Michel Gassier label, he's the winemaker for his family estate, Château de Nages, and partners in several joint ventures: Halos de Jupiter (with Philippe Cambie), Le Fervent (with Cambie and Chateau Ste. Michelle) and Cerciis (with Cambie and Eric Solomon). Those are all reviewed under their own headings, although I tasted them during my August visit with Gassier.

2015 Michel Gassier Lou Coucardie - Rouge

| | | |
|----------------------|----------------|-----------|
| Interim Nov 30, 2017 | Joe Czerwinski | 91 points |
|----------------------|----------------|-----------|

The full-bodied, richly tannic 2015 Costieres de Nimes Lou Coucardie is a blend of 50% Mourvèdre, 30% Grenache and 20% Syrah aged in 600-liter demi-muids. At the moment, it's a bit dark and monolithic, resembling black cherry liqueur, but given its makeup, I expect it to develop additional complexity over the next 5 years.

2016 Michel Gassier Lou Coucardie - Blanc

| | | |
|----------------------|----------------|-----------|
| Interim Nov 30, 2017 | Joe Czerwinski | 91 points |
|----------------------|----------------|-----------|

Despite being fully barrel fermented in mainly new oak, the 2016 Costieres de Nimes Blanc Lou Coucardie shows very little overt wood. Instead, this blend of Viognier, Roussanne and Grenache Blanc delivers aromas of crushed shells and fresh flowers, ample stone fruit and pear flavors and a lingering citrus and ginger-spiced finish. It's medium to full-bodied but carries its weight well, never seeming heavy, and finishing fresh and clean.

2016 Michel Gassier Lou Coucardie - Rouge

| | | |
|----------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Interim Nov 30, 2017 | Joe Czerwinski | 90-92 points |
|----------------------|----------------|--------------|

Based on a prospective blend drawn from barrel, the 2016 Costieres de Nimes Lou Coucardie looks to be another highly successful effort. It's plush, velvety and tannic, needing a bit of time to mellow, but will undoubtedly be outstanding when it's released next year.

2015 Michel Gassier Nostre Païs - Rouge

| | | |
|----------------------|----------------|-----------|
| Interim Nov 30, 2017 | Joe Czerwinski | 91 points |
|----------------------|----------------|-----------|

A Grenache-led blend of five grape varieties, the 2015 Costieres de Nimes Nostre Pais features spicy, peppery aromas, ample weight and richness on the palate and attractive notes of cola, blueberries and cracked pepper. Supple and creamy in texture, it can already be enjoyed for its long, silky finish and combined sense of ripeness and balance.



2016 Michel Gassier Nostre Païs - Blanc

Interim Nov 30, 2017 Joe Czerwinski 91 points

The 2016 Costieres de Nimes Blanc Nostre Pais is a mainly (75%) barrel-fermented blend of Grenache Blanc, Roussanne and Clairette, all sourced from the southern sector of the appellation (closer to the Mediterranean Sea). It shows some faint notes of roasted nuts and honeyed citrus as a result but also remains bright, crisp and almost saline in character, with a long, briny finish. Drink it over the next few years.

2016 Michel Gassier Nostre Païs - Rouge

Interim Nov 30, 2017 Joe Czerwinski 89-91 points

A prospective blend of the 2016 Costieres de Nimes Nostre Pais, blended from tank and barrel, showed a touch of warmth on the finish but also compelling spice and black cherry notes and a ripe, creamy texture.



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JEB DUNNUCK

France, Southern Rhône: The Elegant and Lively 2015s and Heavenly 2016s

Vigneron Michel Gassier is knocking it out of the park with his release under his own label. While these releases come mostly from the southern part of the Costières de Nîmes, readers should also read the reviews on his Chateau de Nages cuvees which are more focused on the northern part of the appellation.

2015 Michel Gassier Costières de Nîmes Nostre Païs 93

Coming mostly from the Bec vineyard in the south, the 2015 Costières de Nîmes Nostre Païs checks in as a blend of 45% Grenache, 25% Syrah, 15% Carignan and the balance Mourvèdre and Cinsault. It sports a deep ruby color to go with fabulous Grenache notes of black raspberries, spice, garrigue, and pepper. Hedonistic, opulent and rich, yet also balanced and fresh, it will compete with \$50-dollar Châteauneuf du Papes.

2015 Michel Gassier Costières de Nîmes Lou Coucardié 92

Always a Mourvèdre dominated cuvée, the 2015 Costières de Nîmes Lou Coucardié is a big, sweetly fruited, plum and sexy beast of a wine that offers lots of black raspberries, spiced plums, incense and cured meats. Big, full-bodied, unctuous and sweetly fruited, with a rounded texture, low acidity, and a good finish, Drink it over the coming decade or more. This was made with 50% stems and brought up in once used demi-muids.

2015 Michel Gassier Costières de Nîmes Syrah 90

Coming from a mix of vineyards in the north and southern part of the Costières, the 2015 Costières de Nîmes Syrah incorporates 3% Viognier and is always made with a northern Rhône style in mind. It sports a deep ruby color to go with ripe, full-bodied notes of blackberries, chocolate, smoked herbs and hints of meatiness. Textured, layered and impeccably balanced, with terrific depth, it's a total charmer to enjoy over the coming 3-4 years.

2016 Michel Gassier Costières de Nîmes Lou Coucardié 93-96

A blend of 50% Mourvèdre, 35% Grenache and 15% Syrah, the 2016 Costières de Nîmes Lou Coucardié is truly sensational, and I think one of the finest wines I've tasted from the Costières de Nîmes appellation. Black and blue fruits, violets, chocolate and charred beef notes give way to a rich, full-bodied, beautifully pure red that has integrated acidity and a great, great finish. Like all of the 2016s, it has serious depth, density, fat, and opulence.



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2016 Michel Gassier Costières de Nîmes Nostre Païs 92-94

The Grenache dominated cuvée is the 2016 Costières de Nîmes Nostre Païs, and it includes 20% Syrah, 15% Mourvèdre, and the rest Carignan and Cinsault, brought up in older barrels and concrete tanks. Black raspberries, black licorice, leafy herbs, violets and hints of graphite give way to a rich, full-bodied, yet incredibly sexy 2016 that has sweet tannin and a power-packed profile. Tina Gassier called this a Nostre Païs on steroids and I couldn't disagree with her.

2016 Michel Gassier Costières de Nîmes Syrah 91-93

The 2016 Costières de Nîmes Syrah comes from both the northern and southern portions of the appellation and is concrete tank-aged blend of 97% Syrah and 3% Viognier. Blackberries, olives, violets and bacon fat notions give way to a beautifully pure, elegant, gorgeous wine that's going to pass undetected in a lineup of Côte Rôtie. And that's saying something for a \$17-dollar wine.

2016 Michel Gassier Costières de Nîmes Blanc Lou Coucardié 93

From the Bec vineyard located in the southern part of the appellation, the 2016 Costières de Nîmes Blanc Lou Coucardié is another tour de force from this appellation. Buttered apple, orange blossom, hints of apricot and spice all give way to rich, fleshy, yet fresh and pure white that's going to shine on the dinner table. This cuvée is 40% each of Grenache Blanc and Roussanne, with the balance Viognier, aged on lees in 500-liter barrels.

2016 Michel Gassier Costières de Nîmes Blanc Nostre Païs 92

A blend of 40% Grenache Blanc, 30% Roussanne, 20% Clairette and the rest Viognier and Bourboulenc, aged in barrel and concrete tanks, the 2016 Costières de Nîmes Blanc Nostre Païs comes almost exclusively from the estate Bec Vineyard in the southern part of the Costières de Nîmes. It's a perfumed, pretty, elegant white loaded with notions of citrus blossom, crushed stone, salty, sea breeze like nuances, yet packs ample richness and depth on the palate. Fresh, lively and balanced, drink it over the coming 2-3 years.

2016 Michel Gassier Vin de France Viognier 90

The 2016 Vin de France Viognier offers classic Viognier notes of tangerine and orange blossom, with terrific intensity, and it stays lively and fresh on the palate, with good acidity and a great finish. It's another terrific value from this estate that delivers the goods.

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The Washington Post

A wine lover's trifecta: The right maker, a singular grape, a good price

By Dave McIntyre – Columnist, March 4, 2017



The vinoscenti seek out wines of terroir, those that taste of a place and could come from nowhere else. The great vineyards of the world command exorbitant prices for their wines. Those of us who love to experience this singular expression of the grape but can't always afford the most prestigious cuvées seek out wines from similar but less exalted regions. And when we find a talented winemaker in such a region, we hit the jackpot.

Michel Gassier is such a winemaker. Gassier is a fourth-generation vigneron in the Costières de Nîmes appellation in southern France. Costières de Nîmes, just southwest of Avignon, is the southernmost extension of the Rhone Valley, as though the region was stretching its foot into the Languedoc to try to stick a toe in the Mediterranean. Vineyard soils in Costières de Nîmes resemble the famous terroir of Chateauneuf-du-Pape, but with a significant difference in climate.

We have the same pebbly soil as Chateauneuf," Gassier says, "but we also have the Mediterranean." Chateauneuf is famous for the round stones that absorb the sun's heat and reflect it back on the grapes, helping them ripen. The wines of Chateauneuf-du-Pape have become sought after and expensive over the past 20 years. But they often tend to be heady, with alcohol levels approaching 15 percent or more. Some producers are trying to



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moderate the alcohol in response to market demand for more elegant, restrained wines.

In Costières de Nîmes, Gassier, argues, restraint comes naturally. "We are less than 10 miles from the sea, and the thermal winds cool the temperatures so the fruit is fresher and retains acid better," he says. The maritime breeze deposits dew on the vines in the morning, helping alleviate water stress, but the dew burns off in the midday sun, avoiding disease pressure. Vines were first planted in the region by the Greeks around 600 B.C.

Gassier, 56, has ties to the Washington area. He served his 18-month national service obligation working for the French agricultural attache at the embassy here from 1983 to 1985. He then worked for a wine distributor in New York and New Jersey. While living in the States, he met and married Tina Suszynski, a native of Rockville. In 1993, Gassier's father decided to retire and asked him to return home and take over the family vineyards and winery... I met the Gassiers recently while they were visiting family in Washington.

The wines of Chateau de Nages, the family estate, are available locally at Total Wine & More stores. But Gassier has expanded his brand and reputation with other labels. He also converted his vineyards to organic farming. "When tasting other wines, especially from Chateauneuf-du-Pape, we realized the ones that best balanced the alcohol were either organic or biodynamic," he says. "Yields dropped a bit, but the balance was so much better."

...Michel Gassier features ...Nostre Pais, which has similar blends to Chateauneuf-du-Pape. The 2014 red contains grenache, carignan, syrah, mourvedre and cinsault; it is deep and savory, with a lush texture and an appealing freshness. The 2015 white, a blend of grenache blanc, roussanne, viognier, clairette and bourbelanc, somehow avoids the plodding heaviness that often afflicts white Rhone wines. It is fresh and flowery, combining heft with lively acidity. At about \$20 a bottle, they are tremendous bargains.

Gassier partners with Philippe Cambie, a noted oenologist, and importer Eric Solomon on two other Rhone-style blends called Cercius. Gassier almost giddily describes the 2014 Cercius red "a full-throttle, hedonistic baby Chateauneuf-like Cotes-du-Rhone."

Rhone fans will notice that Syrah, the red grape famous in the northern Rhone appellations of Cornas and Hermitage, plays a prominent role in Gassier's red blends. That's because of the moderating effect of the Mediterranean on the region's temperatures. "It's why Syrah does so well," Tina Gassier says. "Costières de Nîmes has the most Syrah in the southern Rhone." Syrah stars in wines Michel Gassier and Cambie make with Bob Bertheau, head winemaker at Washington state's Chateau Ste. Michelle. The line, called Tenet, includes a 100-percent Syrah (dubbed the Pundit) from Washington's Columbia Valley and another (Le Fervent) from Costières de Nîmes, as well as a Washington blend. These wines are New World in style with their fruit-forward character, yet they show a delicious Old World sensibility.

They are an expression of a winemaker with roots in both worlds, but whose heart is home among the vines and rocks of Costières de Nîmes.



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The Washington Post

4 ways to put some French class in your wineglass

By Dave McIntyre, March 4, 2017

★★★ Exceptional ★★ ★ Excellent ★ ★ ★ Very Good

Here are terrific wines from Michel Gassier in Costières de Nîmes in southern France...

GREAT VALUE

Michel Gassier Nostre Pais White and Red 2014

★★★

Costières de Nîmes, France, \$20

Whether the white or the red, these wines at \$20 offer tremendous value. The white is a blend of Grenache blanc, roussanne, Viognier, clairette and bourbelanc. It combines the honeyed, lanolin character of a Rhone Valley white with the freshness of a cooler climate wine — the influence of the Mediterranean Sea. The red combines Grenache, carignan, syrah, mourvedre and cinsault into a beguiling elixir of earth, stones and fruit, seasoned with an herbal note of sea air. Alcohol by volume: 13.5 percent for the white, 14.5 percent for the red.

GREAT VALUE

Michel Gassier, Cercius Red 2014 & Cercius White 2015

★★★

Cotes-du-Rhone, France, \$16

The red Cercius, a Cotes-du-Rhone, is a blend of Grenache and syrah that soothes the palate and soul with flavors of tobacco leaf, cherry and fruit compote. At 15 percent alcohol, it's a bit heady, but the wine manages to remain balanced without being "hot." The white Cercius 2015 blends Grenache blanc, roussanne and sauvignon blanc, which give the wine a zippy acidity that adds beguiling freshness. The white is labeled as a Vin de France, because the sauvignon blanc is a foreigner to the Rhone Valley.



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Wine Spectator

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stirring the lees with james molesworth

Monsieur Gassier Goes to Washington

Posted: Feb 3, 2017 3:30pm ET

The Rhône vintner's Tenet partnership with Chateau Ste. Michelle is off to a good start. I caught up with Michel Gassier this week, the Rhône vigneron who's quietly turned his family estate in Costières de Nîmes into a powerhouse of excellent values and distinctive wines. He wanted to get me up to speed on his latest efforts with his combined 296-acre estate and négoce operation now producing around 130,000 cases annually. He also has a new joint venture with Washington state's Chateau Ste. Michelle that has released its second vintage.

First, in the Rhône, Gassier is beaming over the 2016 harvest, a vintage that is starting to generate serious buzz. "It was consistently warm, but not hot. Nights were cool. Water was restricted but the ripening kept going and acidities were maintained," says Gassier. "The wines have lots of concentration of fruit and tannins, but ripe tannins and fresh fruit—no cooked notes. It's a lot like '05, but with a little better acidity."

I happen to like that description, a lot. I was a big fan of the 2005s when they came out. They shut down quickly and only now have started to reemerge, but they are "wow" wines today, with terrific spine to match their serious levels of fruit...

Gassier's joint venture with Ste. Michelle is under the Tenet label; my colleague Harvey Steiman introduced the project from the Washington side of the ledger when it debuted in the 2013 vintage... Syrah is the third-most widely planted grape in Washington State (behind Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot) yet Syrah sales have flagged in the U.S. market. Gassier brought a different approach to some of Ste. Michelle's fruit, aiming for more freshness, using a small amount of stems, cofermenting with Viognier and ratcheting back the new oak.

The Tenet Syrah Columbia Valley The Pundit 2014 (\$25, 9,658 cases made) marries a plush texture with smoky black cherry and fig fruit and a lingering echo of white pepper, marrying a sense of power with some finesse and elegance nicely. In contrast, from the French side the Tenet Costières de Nîmes Le Fervent 2014 (\$22, 5,000 cases made) delivers a solid blast of fruit, but with one-third whole cluster, as well as two-thirds aging in concrete, there's a brighter pepper and violet side and a lingering brambly energy on the finish.

I'm sometimes leery of joint ventures—they often wind up being compromise wines, without a true sense of self. There are notable exceptions though, and the Tenet wines are getting off on the right foot. Both bottlings keep a distinct sense of place while neither exaggerates a style just to make a point.



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Wine Spectator

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stirring the lees with james molesworth

Day 6: At the End of the Rhône, Starting Something New

Posted: Nov 11, 2011 11:42am ET

After five days of tasting 2010 Châteauneuf-du-Papes at some of the Southern Rhône's top domaines, I ventured to Costières de Nîmes for something new. On the surface, Costières de Nîmes looks uniform—a mildly undulating plateau covered with the classic rolled-stone, or galets terroir, that is the archetype image of Châteauneuf-du-Pape. But if you look a little closer, there are differences.

Costières de Nîmes was formed not from just the alluvial soils left by the Rhône river, but also by those from the Durance, which left the southern portion of the appellation littered with more variegated stones, smaller and angular in size. The northern side of the appellation has the larger, rounded stones typical of the Rhône.

Similarly, on the surface, Michel Gassier looks the part of any Southern Rhône vigneron, a lightly weathered 51-year-old with purple-stained fingers. But look a little closer and the story isn't quite the same. His perfect English is thanks to a 10-year stint living in America, where he met his wife. France itself isn't Gassier's birthplace, having been born in Algeria, before moving to southern France as a child.

Born into a farming family, Gassier eventually inherited the fruit and vineyard business that his great-grandfather started in the 1940s, when Joseph Torres sensed France might lose its grip on its North African colonies. Today, Château de Nages still has its orchard business, run by Gassier's brother, Bertrand. The vineyards though, are Michel's passion, and he's taken a new approach to winemaking since he connected with consultant Philippe Cambie in 2006.

"I came back here in '93 at age 33, with two kids and a third on the way, because I wanted to make wine," said Gassier. "But after a while, I had to be honest with myself. I didn't like the wines I was making. Since meeting Philippe, my passion for wine took another leap forward. Philippe is a coach. Some things he teaches you, other things he lets you work through himself. But more than anything else, he helps you find the wines you really want to make."

Today, Gassier's operation produces 50,000 cases annually, with a hefty one-third going to the U.S. Gassier has been working organically since 2007. Here, at the end of the Rhône Valley, Gassier is making something new. Costières de Nîmes is a large AOC totaling 25,000 hectares of land, but only 5,000 hectares are currently in production. That number has slipped in recent years as growers who have been unable to survive slowly give up grapegrowing, but it's still larger than Châteauneuf-du-Pape itself. For years, it wavered in a public relations and legal limbo between the Languedoc and the Rhône Valley, until recently it was finally decided it would be considered part of the latter, which makes easy enough sense when you see the vineyards.



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Today, Gassier sees the downward spiral of low prices for the wine turning into cutting corners in the vineyard, which results in low quality and a slow, steady decline. He's determined to avoid the trap, and he's on a bit of a buying spree, having recently added a 50-hectare parcel that includes some old-vine Grenache. Those soils left by the Durance produce a brighter, fresher wine, while the bigger stones in the northern end from the Rhône deliver flesh and power (see the accompanying video as Michel Gassier guides us through the two different sides of Costières).

As we toured his vineyards, Gassier ran down his checklist for acquiring new parcels. "I'm looking for vineyards that contain some limestone, which is less common than you might think here. It's an old sea bed, but the limestone can be rather deep. I'm also looking for some slope. We're not Côte-Rôtie obviously, but any degree of slope is beneficial for when the rains come at the end of the season. And I'm looking for northern exposure, which helps to mitigate the hot sun we have."

Gassier produces 25 percent white wine, a noticeable commitment in an area known for its reds.

While the wines for the Château de Nages lineup are sourced from the 50 hectares of vineyards that comprise the original estate, Gassier's other wines are sourced from the 70 hectares of additional vineyards that he has been purchasing in recent years.

"I want to make a big, rich wine that doesn't tire you. It's hedonistic but should make you want another sip. We are on Rhône soil, but we have more of a coastal influence, so we can make big wines that maintain freshness," he said. It's lush, but very pure, with an almost brisk blanched almond note along with a range of white peach, quinine and jicama notes and a touch of salted butter filling in on the finish.

I've noticed in recent vintages that Gassier's whites have taken on a purer, fresher edge here, and Gassier explained that when he started the barrel fermentation program, he had to buy all new barrels and that marked the wine. "Plus I was afraid of too much new oak, so I was pulling the wine out of barrel quickly, which isn't good because then you don't get integration either. But now I have the mix of new and used barrels I want so I can leave the wine in oak for 10 months and get the integration. I get the right amount of new oak influence and yet still have a freshly styled wine," he said.

"In 2010, I began experimenting with the idea that low yields and overripeness is overkill," said Gassier. "The heavier the crop load, the more you need to push for ripeness to get proper tannin ripeness. So when you drop crop low, there's no need to go hog wild in ripeness, or you lose the freshness. So we aim to pick on the earlier side—we'll still get good tannin ripeness, which is key, but we'll keep that freshness for balance."

It seems like Gassier has a second wind since hooking up with Cambie, and he noted how much his approach has changed in recent years. "The wines have changed a lot in recent years, in terms of vineyards, varietal makeup and winemaking. It's all a work in progress. But since '06, I finally feel like I'm making the wines I want to make. I feel like the idea of what I want to do is clearer, and that correlates in the wine. The wines themselves are telling me where to go as I look for new vineyards, and I can build from there."

"There is a general reference point for us here in Costières, if we look outside—the Rhône Valley. But in terms of inside Costières, we have no benchmarks, no reference. So we can find our way and do our own thing."



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Page 60 – TOP PRODUCTEURS – PRIX PLAISIR

DOMAINE MICHEL GASSIER, COTIERES-DE-NÎMES, ON DIRAIT LE SUD

Michel Gassier, l'homme du Château de Nages (et de sa tenue exemplaire) conduit avec sa femme Tina ce beau vignoble qui surplombe la Camargue, en appellation Costière de Nîmes. Deux terroirs, l'un au nord constitué de galets roulés, l'autre au sud entre craies et safres. Les vins allient une grande concentration à une fraîcheur exemplaire, résultat d'un travail méticuleux sur l'entretien des sols et sur la conduite de la vigne. Ce paysan-chercheur livre une interprétation toute personnelle de ces terroirs méridionaux, pour le meilleur.

MICHEL GASSIER



Michel Gassier, déjà renommé pour sa tenue exemplaire du Château de Nages, conduit également avec sa femme Tina un vignoble plus méridional : sur une terrasse surplombant la Camargue, ils y travaillent en agriculture biologique et y conçoivent des vins alliant une grande concentration en fruit et une fraîcheur exemplaire. C'est le résultat de ce travail méticuleux au niveau des sols, de la sélection des greffons, de la conduite de la vigne, de la récolte, de la vinification et de l'élevage qui se traduit de façon naturelle dans chaque bouteille. La nouveauté de cette année, Le Grenache de Bek, montre le potentiel considérable du terroir. Face au progrès des derniers millésimes, nous n'hésitons pas à lui accorder une troisième étoile.

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Costières de Nîmes Grenache de Bek 2016 Sec 2019 | 17/20 |
| Costières de Nîmes Lou Coucardié Blanc 2017 Sec 2019 | 15,5/20 |
| Costières de Nîmes Lou Coucardié Rouge 2016 Sec 2021 | 16/20 |
| Costières de Nîmes Nostre Païs Blanc 2017 Sec 2019 | 14,5/20 |
| Costières de Nîmes Nostre Païs Rouge 2016 Sec 2019 | 15/20 |

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MILLÉSIME BIO
LES VINS ÉCOLOS
DU SALON DE
MONTPELLIER

LES PENTES
Costières de Nîmes

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Cœur battant
de la Loire
Ses blancs étincelants
Ses rouges frais et élancés

VALLÉE du RHÔNE SUD
70 cuvées enthousiasmantes
à moins de 15 euros

GRANDS PRIX de LA RVF
Vive la femme de l'année !
la Pierre à Feu

DES BLANCS DE MÉDITERRANÉE TRÈS STYLÉS

De la Vallée du Rhône au Languedoc en passant par la Provence, la palette des blancs méditerranéens est vaste. Charmeuses, épurées, délicates, citronnées, ces 16 cuvées bios très typées incarnent l'âme sudiste.

14/20

MICHEL GASSIER
COSTIERES DE NIMES
LOU COUCARDIE 2016

Une réduction grillée séduisante se dégage de ce blanc de Roussanne, grenache et Viognier. Son ampleur sudiste évoque les fruits blancs.

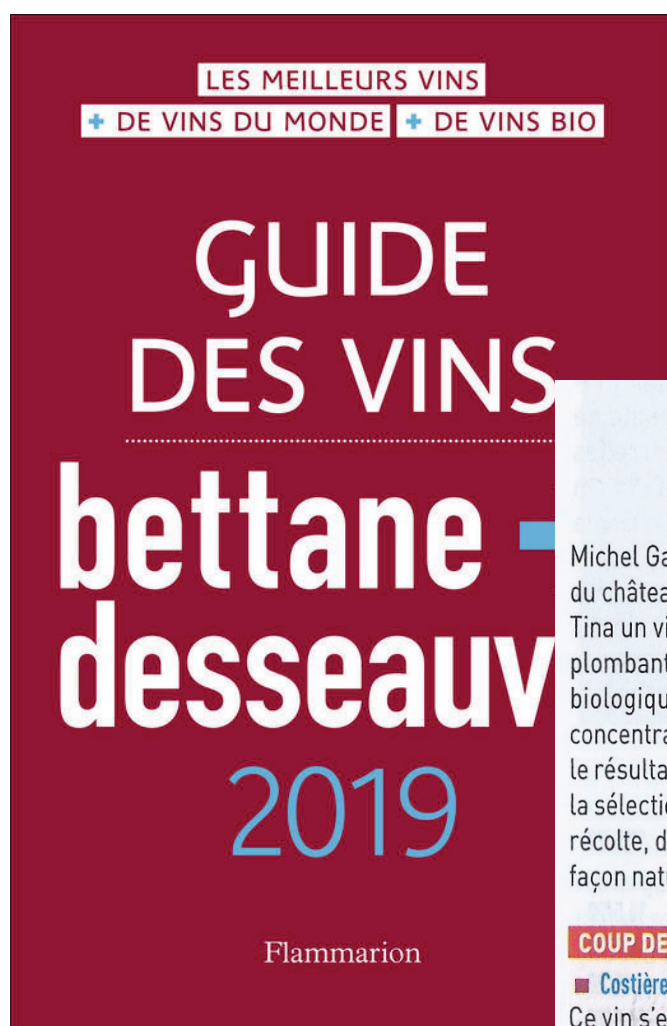
14/20

MICHEL GASSIER COSTIERES DE NIMES NOSTRE PAÏS 2017.
Un parfum intense de garrigue avec une pointe de fenouil. Une bouche savoureuse et équilibrée avec un retour sur le pamplemousse. Beau blanc méridional. 10-15 €



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MICHEL GASSIER



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COUP DE CŒUR

■ **Costières de Nîmes Lou Coucardié 2014** | Sec | 2018>23 | 23,20 € 15/20

Ce vin s'est considérablement ouvert depuis notre précédente dégustation, a gagné en expression et affiche à présent tout son potentiel. Tannins très fins.

■ **Costières de Nîmes Lou Coucardié 2016** | Sec | 2018>24 | 23,20 € 16,5/20

■ **Costières de Nîmes Lou Coucardié 2015** | Sec | 2018>25 | 23,20 € 15/20

■ **Costières de Nîmes Lou Coucardié 2015** | Sec | 2019>25 | 23,20 € 14,5/20

■ **Costières de Nîmes Lou Coucardié 2014** | Sec | 2018>22 | 23,20 € 14/20

■ **Costières de Nîmes Nostre País 2016** | Sec | 2018>24 | 13,40 € 16/20

■ **Costières de Nîmes Nostre País 2015** | Sec | 2018>25 | 13,40 € 14,5/20

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À L'HONNEUR EN 2012

17 COUPS DE CŒUR ET NOUVEAUX TALENTS

Il s'agit de jeunes vignerons, de négociants, de propriétaires récemment installés ou encore de domaines en forte progression. Nous les avons tous sélectionnés après quatre mois intensifs de dégustations menées lors de notre onzième tour de France des vignobles. Au bonheur de chasser les bons rapports qualité/prix, nous ajoutons le plaisir de vous révéler de futurs grands des vignobles de France dont vous découvrirez dans ce guide les cuvées en avant-première.

Gerbelle & Maurange

CHÂTEAU DE NAGES

MICHEL GASSIER

Il n'y a que les imbéciles...

Nous l'avouons, nous avons nos vignobles coup de cœur, et les autres. Les autres, c'est-à-dire des lieux où l'on produit des vins en manque d'identité. Question de terroir, d'héritage ampélographique, de moyens techniques...

En Costières de Nîmes, le terroir le plus méridional de la vallée du Rhône, nous nous habituons aux syrahs mûres, assez massives... ennuyeuses. Mais dans notre métier de Sisyphe de la dégustation, nous savons que rien n'est figé. Tout est entre les mains des hommes. Et cette année, Michel Gassier, au château de Nages, nous place en dégustation aveugle une nouvelle cuvée, Notre Pais, en rouge et en blanc. Révélation ! Oui, les Costières savent faire des vins délicats. Il n'y a que les imbéciles qui ne changent pas... ► Lire page 249.



COSTIÈRES DE NÎMES

21

9,90 € 15,5/20

Château de Nages

Costière de Nîmes Notre Pais 2009

Vin rouge. Production : 2000 Bouteilles/an.

Ce binôme peu répandu de mourvèdre et de cinsault, âgés de 50 ans, livre des notes personnelles et fines de chocolat noir amer. Il se montre aussi doux et plein de relief dans sa finale retenue et mentholée. Nouvelle cuvée à découvrir en priorité dans la gamme du domaine.

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9,90 € 15/20

Château de Nages

Costières de Nîmes Notre Pais 2010

Vin blanc. Production : 3000 Bouteilles/an.

Sur son étiquette, une fresque animée de personnages buvant et dansant, confère un esprit de fête et de joie à ce blanc délicat et parfumé (grenache et viognier), sans être entêtant. La bouche se présente en demi-corps, légère et particulièrement digeste pour un costières. Il passe tout seul à table.

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LE GUIDE
des meilleurs vins
à moins de 20 €
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