

Domaine le Roc



Since the Middle Ages, Fronton, just north of Toulouse, has been the home of the Negrette grape variety, which is nearly exclusive to the area. The region encompasses 2,300 hectares of vines dominated by dry heat and rocky soils and the landscape is marked by hills and valleys, ranging from 300 to 600 ft above sea level. The banks of the Tarn and Garonne rivers have particularly poor gravel soils. Vines grown in this area are forced to struggle and dig deeper for nutrients to establish a stronger root system. This gives the grapes very distinct flavors and they are commonly characterized as having notes of violets and licorice.

It is here that, since 1974, the Ribes family has been dedicated to producing wines with personality and character. Their vineyards are built around Negrette, with Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah each playing a supporting role. With a total of 24 hectares, Domaine Le Roc has a team to tend to all of its needs. Jean-Luc, the eldest of the Ribes, left school to work on the family's estate 25 years ago. Undaunted by his lack of experience, he broke the long-standing rule of letting grass grow in the vineyard, which during the wintertime is grazed by their sheep. Today he is considered a pioneer of enherbement or 'grassing-over.' Younger brother Frédéric studied mathematics, biochemistry and oenology, joining the team in 1988, and as a true vigneron, he gives the land the freedom to express itself. Frédéric's wife, Cathy, runs the business side of things. She is intuitive and passionate, and is actively involved in the blending process, all while working tirelessly to find a place for her wines in the best restaurants and cellars. Last but certainly not least is Pierre Salama. In 1993, he was looking for some land and an adventure, while the Ribes brothers were looking for another partner in crime. From that moment on, Pierre has been an integral part of their team and a loyal friend to the winery.

Through attention to detail and keen observation, Domaine Le Roc is able to create harmony between the soil and vine. They believe that organic viticulture is the best solution to creating this harmony, and now all of the vines are grown this way. Their insistence on strictly controlled yields, while being careful not to over-extract the fruit, and high vine density planting produces wines that release a wonderful perfume. They produce wine in a traditional, almost old-fashioned way that raises the bar for Fronton wines.

