

## More than just wine

Wine, motorcycles, rugby, painting, literature and other things that make life so much worth living

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3 JUN 2011

## Wines of the week: 2 creative wines from southern France



2 wines from Château de Gaure, a white (on the left) and a red

I tend to like wines that stand out from the crowd, and, when this happens both by their external apparel and their essence (in other words their flavours) then I tend to like them even more.

Although the labels of the above wines are undoubtedly daring, I do not actually like them very much. Aesthetics is a very personal field, and I find these labels gaudy with all that gold splashed around. This does not prevent these wines from standing out for what they have to say, namely their balance and the intensity of their flavours and aromas. I suppose it can go that way with beauty: it may need a defect or two to show up, as a contrast, a kind of provocation, the marvels of its qualities. One could talk about a "beauty" spot, which mars an otherwise perfect visage, thus lending it an even greater degree of wonder.

Château de Gaure is an estate that lies in the Pyrenean foothills, above the town of Limoux. It has vineyards in two separate appellations: Limoux, which is in the Languedoc region, and another in neighbouring Roussillon. If you want to know more about it, here is the link to their website, unfortunately only in French: <http://www.chateaudegaure.com/>

Both the wines I tasted can be placed in what I would call the mid-price bracket, as they retail for around 15 euros a bottle in France. Naturally if you usually buy wines which are priced at 30 euros or above, this will seem quite inexpensive. On the other hand, if you never spend more than 10 euros on a bottle, then this price may seem to be the height of wasteful folly. Mid-price is an abstract concept that needs to be linked to your own frame of reference, so I am being a little ego-centric here.

Neither of these wines has a regional appellation. They are both simply designated "Vin de France". Geographically speaking the white seemingly comes from the Limoux region, and the red from the Roussillon, but the producer is not allowed to mention this fact on the labels as he has not obtained the regional seal of approval for some technical reason. Administration, including wine administration, can be ridiculously rigid in France and here is another example of the "tall poppy syndrome", whereby wines that are far superior to most others from a particular appellation are refused their "agrément" (in other words the authorization to call themselves by their geographical appellation) because they stand out above the crowd. In this case it would seem to be due to a little excess residual sugar in the wines, yet this in no way mars what to me appear as well-balanced and quite delicious wines. Gaure is not the only estate to have had their wines rejected by officialdom in this way, as they have many illustrious colleagues. Isn't it about time that local potentates stopped meddling and allowed winemakers to produce the wines they see fit to produce, letting markets decide whether the wines are "good" or not?

What impressed me about both the wines I tasted was their intensity and balance. The white (which is called *Oppidum* on the hard-to-read back label) is made from a blend of chardonnay, chenin blanc and mauzac. Even served a little too warm it feels deeply crisp and fresh through its strong acidity that gives it great backbone. The fruit flavours are luscious with just a tad of sweetness on the palate, but totally free from any heaviness. In fact the finish is dry in a slightly chalky way, just surrounded by the sensation of ripe fruit.

The red, named *Pour mon Père* (meaning "For my Father"), uses a blend of Carignan, Syrah, Grenache and Mourvèdre. It is very vibrant with intense flavours of berry fruit that have a spicy, stony edge to

mixture of wine, cricket and travel. In English

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should keep well, provided that this wine remains stable. I say this because both the white and the red seemed a little gassy, causing their corks to come out with a pop when the bottles were re-opened after a couple of days in the fridge for a second tasting.

I expect that the white should be drunk young for the sheer pleasure it provides now. The red has the capacity to keep well for a few years, with the reserve mentioned above about its stability in time.

Posted by David Cobbold at 10:59 

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Labels: [wine vin and vino](#)

#### 4 comments:

##### Luc Charlier said...

Congratulation, David. You come up with a new trend in wine : the « CREATIVE » type. After "natural" wines, "orange" wines, here comes a new reading of Genesis. Always knew you were of creationist confession, but in hiding. I guess it's a remnant of your first encounter with Marc Parcé.

4 June 2011 13:30

##### David Cobbold said...

Oh dear, I'm not sure that I should be proud of this. So I have come out of the cupboard! And tell me about "orange" wines please.

4 June 2011 14:47

##### Luc Charlier said...

Orange wines : read all about it !  
<http://winemadenaturally.blogspot.com/2011/02/whats-orange-wine.html>  
Incidentally, I made one, without me knowing. If ever you want to taste it, we will find a way to ship a bottle.

4 June 2011 20:25

##### David Cobbold said...

Oh, you mean the oxidized stuff? I usually love that, being brought up on sherry. I need to order some wines of yours Luc.

5 June 2011 02:06

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