

Week of 08-21-07

Red Bag Clues:

Grape -

Most widely planted red grape in this country since the 1960s.

This grape is gradually being replaced with more distinctive and aromatic varieties.

Hates the damp. Love the sun.

The berries are bluish-black, round and fairly large, with fairly thick, astringent skins.

They hang in large, rather compact clusters that are short-stemmed, difficult to harvest, and susceptible to grape worms.

They also rot easily.

Buds and ripens late.

Aromas: black fruits, black pepper, licorice

An acre of this grape can produce 10 to 12 tons of fruit.

Currently 25 clones of this grape are government recognized.

Produces wines that have high color, acidity, and tannin.

Without proper care and attention wine from this grape is often unexciting.

Region -

After the industrial revolution in the 1950's this regions wine was the stuff you could strip paint with and would stain the glass bottles red. By the 80s care and science, combined with centuries of traditional "know how" changed the scene to what it is today.

Beaches are a 30 minute drive and cater for all tastes (naturist beaches are close by).

The Templars and the Cathars built many magnificent fortresses and fortified towns in this region.

Producer -

50 Year old vines of this grape combined with harsh rocky soils allow them to produce an outstanding wine from this grape.

Received a agriculture certification in 2003 as a result of pioneering efforts to farm sustainably since their inception in 1998.

Your Best Guess???



DOMAINE DE NIZAS

100 % estate grown grapes : 100 % Carignan
Aging :8 months in stainless steel vats with numerous rackings

CARIGNAN Vieilles Vignes 2003

Www : domainedenizas.com contact@domainedenizas.com

Wine Spectator - march 2003 - 87 points
Good density and richness, with a strong aroma of earth and smoke.
Mineral and meat flavors, with dark plum and ripe cherry.

The Austin Chronicle - oct. 2005
Best wine discoveries of the past few months
2003 Domaine de Nizas' Carignan Vieilles Vignes is a neat response to all those winemakers who claim you can't make a good wine from the Carignan grape. This wine is rich, fruity, complex, and exudes aromas that will remind you of the classic cuisine of the southwest part of France. In fact, we recently went to a little dinner for six where the main course was Toulouse-style Cassoulet, and this wine was absolutely ideal

Oz Clarke :
Wine Buying Guide 2006
Ten years ago Carignan was derided as a junk grape, the curse of the Mediterranean. Now old-vines Carignan is being revered for what it is - a provider of absolutely smashing grog, the ultimate drinking red. And one that has thrilling texture - good acidity and tannin - as well as fascinating flavours of rich beef tea, dark stewed red cherries and a mineral streak as bright as glittering quartz.



We believe that a great wine starts in the vineyard. The work undertaken in the vines and the choice of “terroir” guarantee a good quality raw material which is essential in the making of quality wines.

The “Terroir”:

Domaine de Nizas vineyards are planted on gravel and red clay soils and limestone subsoil that provides excellent drainage while retaining freshness and humidity at a deep root level. As a result, the vines do not suffer from drought, and the grapes are able to ripen without water stress.

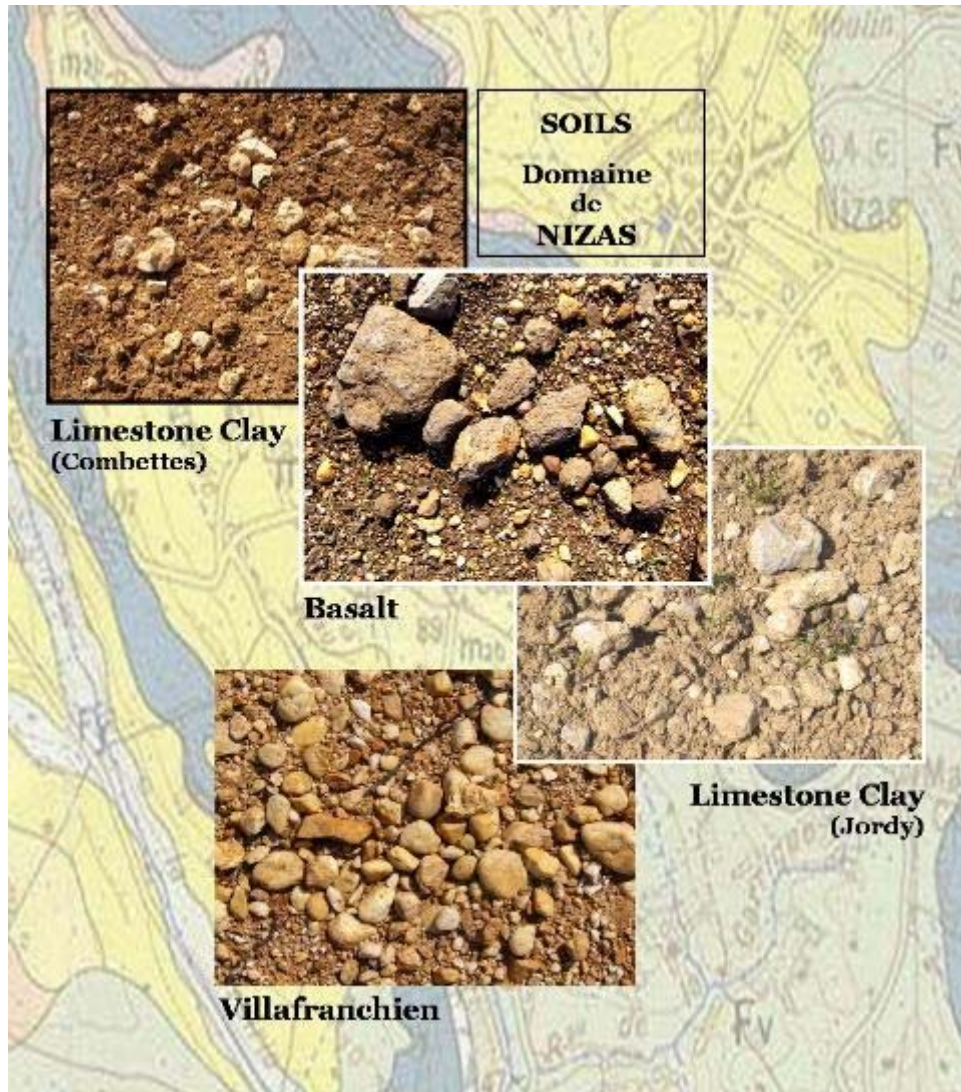
Soil types:

Limestone Clay (Marne Calcaire)—when planted with Syrah, this white soil creates a bouquet of red fruit and violet in the resulting wines.

Villafranchien—a blend of river pebbles and red clay, it is the soil type often found in the Chateauneuf du Pape area of the Southern Rhone Valley. It brings finesse and structure to the wines grown at Nizas, as well as a good acidity that allows the wine to age. It produces

aromas of chocolate and coffee in Syrah.

Basalt—a type of volcanic flow specific to the Pézenas terroir, it is unique within the Languedoc and rare throughout the world. Our Syrah planted on basalt soils often gives sensations of spice and licorice and has a good tannic structure.



Climate:

Located 20 miles from the Mediterranean Sea, Domaine de Nizas experiences a Mediterranean-influenced climate. Rainfall levels are low in autumn and winter, and the summer months bring dry, warm weather. The vineyards benefit from the north wind that blows over the mountains towards the sea. This dry wind protects the grapes from many vine diseases linked to humid conditions and brings blue skies to help them to ripen.

Surface area:

The estate comprises of 65 hectares in total (70% of which are classed as Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée Coteaux du Languedoc), 45 hectares are under vine and 40 of these were in production for the 2005 vintage. Our aim is to have 60 hectares in production by the year 2012.



Grape varieties:

Used in AOC : Syrah, Mourvèdre et Grenache

Used in VDP (Vin de Pays) : Cabernet-sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah, Petit-verdot, Carignan, Sauvignon blanc and Muscat petits grains.



Ages of vines:

The average age for the vines is 15 years, however this includes young vines (planted since 1999) and mature vines (25 years old). We also have some old vines of Carignan and Grenache (over 50 years).

Vineyard management:

- Planting density : 5000 to 6000 plants per hectare
- Selection of low production clones
- Cordon de royat pruning for majority and gobelet for the old vines
- Vines trained on double lifting wires

Yields:

40 hl/ha for our AOC wines

50 hl/ha for our VDP wines (except the Carignan Vieilles Vignes which is 35hl/ha)

Work on soil:

Regularly worked and grassed to enrich the structure, control erosion and growth of the vines.



Cultivation:

The vines are worked manually and a decisive approach is taken towards pruning, bud removal, lifting the wires, and if required, removing excess grapes.

Domaine de Nizas practices sustainable agriculture by:

- ✍ Favoring the biological life of the soils by using ploughing and grass rather than herbicides
- ✍ Minimally using selective fungicides and insecticides to conserve natural predators of vine parasites
- ✍ Tracing each bottle of wine to a specific vineyard plot in order to more effectively control quality and segment any bottle variances to its origin in the vineyard



Domaine de Nizas has been certified by the Bureau Veritas, an independent government bureau, which strives to protect the health of consumers and respect the environment. Domaine de Nizas obtained its sustainable agriculture certification in 2003 as a result of pioneering efforts to farm sustainably since our inception in 1998. Domaine de Nizas operates by these standards and ensures that:

- Products used to treat the vines will not end up in natural water sources, kill or harm inoffensive species (including ladybirds), or end up in the resulting wines
- Agricultural practices respect the natural landscape; Domaine de Nizas employs cover crops and grows grass between the vines
- Winery equipment is certified for use in food processing, e.g. non-toxic paint and stainless steel tanks

Domaine de Nizas vines are planted in high density (2300 plants /acre) and low yield (2-3 tons / acre). This approach enables the Domaine to more fully express the terroir and increase the longevity of its vines.



Harvest:

Machine harvest for the trellised vines, however, hand picking for the young vines and old vines (which are pruned in gobelet – bush vines).

Transport of the grapes in tipping trailers or small crates for the hand picked fruit.