

JEB DUNNUCK



The Languedoc: 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024



BY **BIRTE JANTZEN** | OCTOBER 2, 2025



A brief note beforehand: Languedoc and Roussillon are usually mentioned together, but for me, the two regions are completely different, whether in terms of size, history, culture, style, or winemaking practices. That's why the Roussillon wines got a separate report ([The Roussillon: 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024 – JebDunnuck.com](#)).

Now to Languedoc: While the region has always been a reliable source of affordable wines, their quality has taken an impressive leap forward over the last thirty years. However, the crescent-shaped region nestled between the sea and mountain ranges is too vast and diverse to be pigeonholed, and each appellation has its very own personality.

Languedoc's 193,000 hectares of vineyards span across three departments (Aude, Gard, and Hérault), from the foothills of the Pyrenees near the Spanish border to the Rhône river delta near Marseille. As France's largest wine-growing region, it is also one of the southernmost. It extends over 200 km from east to west, along the Mediterranean coast, and from the coast northward to a good 40 km inland. Sometimes the vineyards are rooted in a vast, sun-drenched lowland, sometimes on wild mountain slopes with different rock formations and soil structures.

The Mediterranean climate ensures 300 days of sunshine per year and, on average, less than 500 mm of rainfall, although it varies greatly from place to place. Added to that, geographical features such as the proximity to the sea and the mountain ranges of the Massif Central and the Pyrenees ensure a relatively high number of windy days. This is probably one of the reasons why the Languedoc was known throughout the 20th century for its colorful, rustic, mass-produced wines, often characterized by prominent wood notes.

But although the weather conditions are seemingly ideal, for a good twenty years now, it has been slowly getting hotter and drier, with increasingly dramatic consequences for viticulture, and agriculture in general. Severe weather events are becoming more frequent, as are forest fires, such as those in August 2025, which were the largest in France since the late 1940s. Much of the Corbières winegrowing region was affected, with approximately 17,000 hectares burned.

Winegrowing in the Languedoc is therefore facing major challenges, and today winegrowers are discussing sustainability, environmental protection, and water management just as much as they discuss the changing personality and quality of their wines. Over the past decade, they have largely embraced sustainability, and some of the appellations are now over 75% certified organic, a necessary adaptation to a rapidly changing environment.

It can therefore be assumed that, over the next thirty years, viticulture in the Languedoc (as in all French appellations) will undergo fundamental changes. The growing areas will probably shrink, perhaps even shifting to cooler zones, away from the hot and dry lowlands near the Mediterranean Sea. Red wine production is also likely to decline, with more white wines being produced, responding to an increasing demand for lighter wines.

But this is by no means the first crisis to hit the Languedoc. Through the 20th century alone there were quite a few, including the need to replant after phylloxera, the shift from polyculture to monoculture and mass production, and an enduring not-so-great reputation for their wines. But one of the region's strengths is its diversity. For example, there are a large number of grape varieties allowed: there are 27 grape varieties for AOP wines, more than 50 for IGP wines, and those who produce "Vin de France" can and do plant whatever they want anyway. Nowadays, many winegrowers are taking advantage of this to better adapt their vineyards to the climatic challenges. The Languedoc is also home to France's largest vine variety conservatory. The Vassal Wine Estate, run by INRAe (a national public institution with a scientific and technological focus), has vine samples from around 5,000 of the 6,000 grape varieties known worldwide, a real treasure that is important not only in Languedoc but for grape-growing regions around the world.

Unfortunately, this theoretical diversity of grape varieties is not yet really reflected in practice. Three quarters of the vineyards are still dominated by just five grapes: Grenache Noir, Syrah, Merlot, Carignan, and Cabernet Sauvignon. For this reason alone, a good 60% of the wine the Languedoc produces is red, although white wine and rosé are now catching up.

Notably, there's now a revival of old indigenous grape varieties, some of which were almost extinct, such as Lledoner Pelut (also known as "hairy Grenache"), Macabeu, white and gray Carignan, Terret noir, and Ribeyrenc. Although still relatively unknown, they are rightly considered the hope for tomorrow's viticulture. Most significantly, these old grape varieties are perfectly suited to the demanding southern environment, which is also their birthplace.

The good news is that, despite the predominance of those five grape varieties, the wines are far from being uniform. The sheer size of the region, as well as the location of the vineyards and of the appellations, ensure a great diversity of soil types, microclimates, and therefore expressions. Thanks to an increasingly precise classification of the different geographical zones, even within existing appellations, there are now 36 AOPs, with more on the way, offering increasingly refined interpretations. The range of wines now extends from fruity entry-level to absolute top-flight wines, from still to sparkling, from dry to sweet.

The shift toward more precision and “wines of place” began in the 1990s. Alongside the winegrowers’ cooperatives that dominated during the 20th century, there are now a multitude of wineries of all sizes and talents. A new generation of winemakers, including an above-average number of career changers and newcomers, questioned monoculture, grape variety selection, and working methods. Mass-produced wines were joined by the multifaceted diversity of the Languedoc terroirs. Whether red, rosé, or white, there are now irresistibly exciting interpretations in all colors. After more than 2,700 years of winegrowing history, the vintners of the Languedoc have finally found their terroir.

But now for the most important question: where can you find the most exciting wines at the moment? In my opinion, it’s Terrasses du Larzac, La Clape and, surprisingly for many, Limoux, where the still white wines are currently making a name for themselves as simply stunning. Overall, the wines from these three regions show precision, freshness, and elegance, even in the most difficult vintages (and the last five have all been difficult). But please don’t underestimate the other appellations: they are also dotted with wonderful wines.

In any case, the climatic challenges of recent vintages are reshuffling the deck. Some of the traditionally successful wineries are underperforming, while others, smaller or lesser-known, are suddenly standing out from the crowd and bottle absolutely remarkable wines. So there is a lot to discover, and it is worth taking a fresh look at the Languedoc.

Alongside many incredible wines, you'll also find straightforward, affordable ones in this report that may not be top-of-the-range but are ideal for casual enjoyment with friends and family. They won't break the family budget (although it must be said that most wines here offer very good value for the money anyway), and they highlight the traditional heart of the region, so it's no wonder that they enjoy great popularity worldwide.

Conclusion: The Languedoc is almost a "wine country" in its own right, full of nuances and tasty treasures. There's really only one choice left: go on a journey of discovery!

Please note: If you enjoy traveling, keep in mind that late spring and early fall are particularly worthwhile times to visit, when the weather is not so hot and there are no crowds of tourists. Many wineries offer overnight accommodations or have their own restaurants where you can dine overlooking the vineyards.

Final note: The wines listed here were tasted blind. Unfortunately, some producers, including some of the best known, were unable or unwilling to submit wines this year and are therefore not included in this report.

Summary of weather & vineyard conditions for the 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024 vintages

The Languedoc is actually far too large to write about the conditions of individual vintages in general terms. And while the winemakers naturally like to describe them as being of excellent quality, this doesn't reflect reality. The last four vintages have simply been too challenging, too unfamiliar, and too extreme to consistently produce high quality wines. They have been more like "vintner's vintages," which means that talent, know-how, geography, and probably a good dose of luck have contributed significantly to the success of the wines.

In fact, each year there were significant variations from one appellation to another, but detailing them precisely would go beyond the scope of this report. The following should therefore be taken as very general guideline.

VINTAGE 2024

A complicated year with very different conditions depending on the appellation. It started well, with plenty of rain in the spring. Then things got more complicated. While it was too dry and too hot in some areas, it was almost too wet (but still hot) in others. The result was a smaller harvest, down 15% on the two-year average. After several years of rain deficit and intense heat in summer, some grape varieties and vineyards have reached their limit, and the vines are showing a certain degree of fatigue. The coming years will show to what extent, and if this will lead to replanting or abandonment of certain plots.

In the eastern half of the Languedoc (Terrasses du Larzac, Faugères, Pic Saint Loup, Grés de Montpellier), conditions were better, with welcome rain in mid-August and good day-night temperature differences providing freshness and balance.

In the western half of the Languedoc (Saint-Chinian, Cabardès, Limoux, Boutenac, Corbières, Minervois, La Livinière, La Clape, Picpoul de Pinet, Grés de Montpellier, Languedoc), however, it was too dry in some areas, resulting in smaller harvests and, depending on the grape variety, different challenges.

It is not necessarily the best-known winemakers who have mastered this vintage best.

VINTAGE 2023

Also a complicated vintage, with big differences from one AOP to another, but overall it was too dry and too hot, which slowed down growth and grape ripening. Harvests were also smaller than usual this year. Some, such as Pic Saint Loup, received welcome rain at the right time, while thunderstorms with hail destroyed part of the harvest in other areas. There were also problems with mildew, for example in Limoux, which caused further challenges.

Here, too, the wines vary greatly, and it is not necessarily the best-known winemakers who have mastered the vintage best.

VINTAGE 2022

There was no winter, just mild weather until spring. Then there was a late frost, followed by storms with hail in June. From mid-June, there was a prolonged heatwave, and the summer of 2022 was one of the three hottest in the last 30 years. However, some areas benefited from satisfactory rainfall, while others suffered more. It is the year with probably the longest grape harvest in the Languedoc: from July (which is very early) to October.

Here, again, the wines vary greatly, and it is not necessarily the best-known winemakers who have mastered the vintage best.

VINTAGE 2021

In April, late frost caused problems in many vineyards, with the exception of Faugères, and then came a dry, hot summer. Water shortages were particularly severe this year. Most appellations saw a drop in yield, with the Aude department being the worst hit, with up to 40% less. But it wasn't just the weather that was to blame: juicy grapes are a delicacy for thirsty wild boars in late summer, and they ate particularly large quantities of them in Corbières.

There were significant regional and local differences, and as in the other vintages, the wines vary greatly.

2023 Domaine Famille De Lorgeril Languedoc La Nore

About this wine



PRODUCER

Domaine Famille De Lorgeril

LOCATION

France, Languedoc-Roussillon,
Languedoc

COLOR

Red

PRICE

\$68



Print Latest Note

Print Shelf Talker

Tasting Notes

RATING

93

TASTING DATE

10/2/2025

MATURITY

2025 - 2035

REVIEWED BY

Birte Jantzen

SOURCE

The Languedoc: 2021,
2022, 2023, and 2024

REVIEW

Print

Balanced, charming, and rustic, this elegant Syrah was aged for 14 months, partly in barrels. The 2023 Languedoc La Nore is a single-vineyard wine, grown on brown schist soil on the highest plot in La Livinière, at an altitude of 380 meters, at the foot of the Pic de Nore. While not very expressive on the nose, it is terroir-driven on the palate, with a lovely underlying minerality, salty notes, freshness, and a subtle bitterness that brightens the finish. The bouquet opens with notes of cherry, blood orange zest, a hint of garrigue, peony, and violet. A beautiful, classic style, precise, with velvety tannins, lots of allure, and good potential, decant it before serving. Drink 2025-2035.

2022 Domaine Famille De Lorgeril Cabardès Chateau De Pennautier Terroirs D'Altitude

About this wine



PRODUCER

Domaine Famille De Lorgeril

LOCATION

France, Languedoc-Roussillon,
Languedoc, Cabardès

COLOR

Red

PRICE

\$28



Print Latest Note

Print Shelf Talker

Tasting Notes

RATING

90

TASTING DATE

10/2/2025

MATURITY

2025 - 2030

REVIEWED BY

Birte Jantzen

SOURCE

The Languedoc: 2021,
2022, 2023, and 2024

REVIEW

Print

Coming from a high-altitude clay-limestone terroir, south-facing but tempered by the altitude, the 2022 Cabardès Château De Pennautier Terroirs D'Altitude is smooth and supple, with lots of freshness. Grenache Noir, Syrah, and Cinsault are joined by Malbec, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Merlot, aged for 10 months, partly in demi-muids. This red wine expresses notes of blueberry and blackcurrant, as well as a hint of black ink and Havana. Straightforward and supple, with fine tannins and a silky, satiny texture, it is precise without any heaviness. Enjoy now. Drink 2025-2030.

2022 Domaine Famille De Lorgeril Cabardes L'Esprit De Pennautier

About this wine



PRODUCER

Domaine Famille De Lorgeril

LOCATION

France, Languedoc-Roussillon,
Languedoc, Cabardes

COLOR

Red

PRICE

\$48



Print Latest Note

Print Shelf Talker

Tasting Notes

RATING

92

TASTING DATE

10/2/2025

MATURITY

2025 - 2032

REVIEWED BY

Birte Jantzen

SOURCE

The Languedoc: 2021,
2022, 2023, and 2024

REVIEW

Coming from the rocky, clay-limestone slopes of the southern Montagne Noire, at an altitude of 350 meters, Grenache, Syrah, Cabernet Franc, Malbec, and Merlot form a bridge between southern and Bordeaux grape varieties. Partial aging for 10 months in demi-muids barrels has given the 2022 Cabardès L'Esprit De Pennautier a calm character, with plenty of juice and a sense of lightness. The bouquet reveals notes of blackcurrant, clove, aniseed, blueberry, blackberry, wild mint, plum, and even a hint of squid ink. Fresh and full-bodied, with dense, fine tannins and a fairly long finish, the wine tightens up and ends on a note that is both rustic and charming. Drink 2025-2032.

Print

2020 Domaine Famille De Lorgeril Minervois La Liviniere Domaine De La Borie Blanche Grand Vin

About this wine



PRODUCER

Domaine Famille De Lorgeril

LOCATION

France, Languedoc-Roussillon,
Languedoc, Minervois, Minervois la
Liviniere

COLOR

Red

PRICE

\$28



Print Latest Note

Tasting Notes

RATING

93

TASTING DATE

10/2/2025

MATURITY

2025 - 2032

REVIEWED BY

Birte Jantzen

SOURCE

The Languedoc: 2021,
2022, 2023, and 2024

REVIEW

Coming from high-altitude plots of brown and black schist and clay-limestone soils, the 2020 Minervois La Livinière Domaine De La Borie Blanche Grand Vin reveals itself to be a graceful exercise in style. Made from Syrah, Grenache Noir, Mourvèdre, and a little Carignan, aged partially in demi-muids for 10 months, it displays delicate, long-lasting aromas that are present but not overpowering. The ripe, slightly candied fruit is joined by a subtle hint of salt, blood orange, graphite, peony, and cranberry. Fresh, with silky tannins, it is juicy, light, nuanced, and open. It will continue to evolve nicely over the next 5 to 7 years. A graceful red. Drink 2025-2032.

Print

2020 Domaine Famille De Lorgeril Saint-Chinian Chateau De Ciffre Grand Vin

About this wine



PRODUCER

Domaine Famille De Lorgeril

LOCATION

France, Languedoc-Roussillon,
Languedoc, Saint Chinian

COLOR

Red

PRICE

\$60



Print Latest Note

Print Shelf Talker

Tasting Notes

RATING

90

TASTING DATE

10/2/2025

MATURITY

2025 - 2029

REVIEWED BY

Birte Jantzen

SOURCE

The Languedoc: 2021,
2022, 2023, and 2024

REVIEW

The 2020 Saint-Chinian Château De Ciffre Grand Vin, composed of Syrah, Grenache Noir, and Mourvèdre, displays a harmonious evolution towards tertiary aromas and a texture refined by time. Notes of blackcurrant, mocha, caramel, tobacco, prune, date, licorice, candied blueberry, and blood orange settle on fine, supple tannins like silk velvet. Fresh and delightfully drinkable, a hint of mint on the finish adds an extra touch of freshness. Balanced and uncomplicated, this wine is superbly ready to drink, showcasing the work of time without pretension. Charming. Drink 2025-2029.

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