



DOMAINE DE SAINT COSME

Les Deux Albion - I.G.P. Principauté d'Orange 2017

Domaine de Saint Cosme – Les Deux Albions – 2017 I.G.P. White Principauté d'Orange
Limestone in a cool micro-climate.

40% Viognier – 30% Marsanne – 30% Piquepoul

Organically certified vines

Whole-cluster, direct-to-press with slow pressing and no crushing

Fermentation and ageing: 20% in demi-muids and second-use casks – 50% in third and fourth-use oak casks – 40% in tanks

The Saint Martin named vineyard in Violès is located right on the boundary with the Gigondas appellation, across the river Ouvèze which marks the border between the two villages. This proximity is of paramount importance.

Firstly, the two villages share historical bonds: Gigondas and Violès have always been part of the Principality of Orange, annexed to France during the French Revolution. The principality has had a deep-rooted influence on our agricultural practices, our culture and our mindset. Hence our strong attachment to the “Principauté d'Orange” appellation which is freighted with significance. Before the French Revolution, a royal prerogative allowed Saint Martin and Saint André to produce white wines from Muscat. I find it quite extraordinary that just a few metres away from Gigondas, now so famous for its top-flight Grenache noir wines, Saint Martin can lay a claim to recognition dating back much further, but for white wines. History always influences agricultural practice. I love this setting bordered by woodland and the river. I have often found it inspirational. I found it incomprehensible that it should be abandoned by wine growers after being a prized location for white wines for so long. When the opportunity arose to buy 14 unbroken hectares, I did not think twice. Being able to shape a new vineyard, exactly the way I imagined it, was an exhilarating challenge. We have kept the four hectares of woodland and planted ten hectares of white varietals using field selections, planting vines in stages from 2014 until now.

The soils at Saint Martin are unique in our region: they are limestone that was swept along by the Ouvèze river 30,000 years ago. Limestone is typically ubiquitous in the soils of Gigondas, but those of Saint Martin have twice as much. In fact, such is the limestone content here that vine growing is very close to its limit. But limestone is also the finest guarantee for growing white wine imbued with finesse, drive and elegance. It was therefore important to introduce a superlative quality plant heritage into the vineyard and roll out my ideas. So I planted field selections of Viognier vines from Condrieu – the canes were taken from Condrieu's oldest vines growing in the extraordinary named vineyard of 'Volan'. In the southern Rhone Valley, it is essential to pair Viognier with a grape variety that adds freshness. Among the many varietals available, my favourite has always been Piquepoul blanc – it is a solid, fresh, aromatic grape variety with a razor-sharp texture. It has the ability to provide “an effective backbone, without drawing attention to itself”. I also produced a field selection of Marsanne on old vines on Hermitage hill. The three grape varieties are blended to produce 2017 Deux Albions.

The 2017 vintage reveals the freshness, aromatic finesse and salinity that are so typical of limestone soils. The team at the estate has worked hard on the soils and the vines over the past few years to give voice to this beautiful terroir. The outcome is beautiful and I am delighted to be able to share it with you today. Dried apricot, marshmallow, heirloom rose and mint.

Dried apricot, marshmallow, heirloom rose and mint.

