



## **2008 Le Soula Le Soula**

A Proprietary Blend Dry White Table wine from Languedoc Roussillon, France

Review by David Schildknecht

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Rating: 90

Drink -

Cost:

The 2008 Le Soula is 38% each Sauvignon and Macabeu along with Vermentino and Grenache that grew together, and tiny amounts of several other cepages. Weighing-in at around 14% alcohol but a mere 3.2 pH, this smells effusively of fresh fig, pineapple, and grapefruit, all of which lusciously and juicily flood the palate, accompanied by high-toned inner-mouth profusion of mint, lavender, honeysuckle, and heliotrope. The leesy, barrel-inflected sense of creaminess here manages to compliment the wine's exuberant brightness, and it finishes both soothingly and refreshingly, if with a hint of heat. I suspect this will be best enjoyed over the next 2-3 years. (Tasted alongside, the 2007 - which included 15% each of Roussanne and Marsanne that I either failed to note or was not informed of when I wrote about it before bottling in issue 183 - retained its invigorating zest and sense of mineral impingement, but displayed a hint of finishing bitterness; marginally less refreshment; and considerably less perfumed allure than this 2008.) Gerard Gauby continues to advise 2001 co-originateurs and co-owners Roy Richards and Mark Walford (who also constitute the U.K. import company Richards-Walford), but since 2008, young yet internationally-experienced Gerald Standley has been calling the shots as Soula's vineyard and cellar manager. Blends and élevage continue to vary from year to year, as the numerous cepages - planted in many small parcels in the largely granitic northwestern limits and highest elevations of Roussillon - offer considerable flexibility, particularly in white, and the team here is both humbly and astutely conscious of their efforts being a work in progress. The range of microclimates and grape varieties also accounts for a generally protracted harvest; in 2008, for instance, black grapes were picked all the way from the 22nd of September to the 9th of October. If there has been - and there has - a widespread movement in Roussillon toward wines of enhanced freshness, one has to say that Soula was way out ahead of that curve. Demi-muids are favored over barrique, and the share of new wood employed has steadily diminished. Whole-berry fermentation is pursued for the red, with increasingly minimal attempt to extract polyphenols that are not liberated via infusion. The white 2010 Le Soula - as had been the case with its immediate predecessor - was very slow to finish fermenting, and so it was impossible even to assess its components on the occasion of my visit. Importer: Paul M. Young Fine Wines, Los Angeles, CA: tel. (213) 232-5199