



2008 Roc d'Anglade Roc d'Anglade

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

Review by David Schildknecht
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 Rating: 92
 Drink -
 Cost:

A bit of reduction in the smoky nose of the 2008 Roc d'Anglade shook off to reveal copious fresh red raspberry, dark cherry, and blackberry along with haunting, bittersweet iris, violet, and elder flower perfume whose accentuation probably owes something to the Syrah component of this blend having been vinified with whole berries and stems. A mouthwateringly saline savor akin to shrimp shell reduction and deep notes of dark chocolate add allure to the wine's long finish. There is less sense of density here than in the 2010, and instead almost one of delicacy – which fits Pedreno's stated ideals. At only 12.5% alcohol, no wonder this evinces a sense of levity! It will not be the sort of wine that comes to anyone's mind at the mention of "Languedoc red," but taken on its own terms it's compelling, and ought to be worth following for another half dozen years. "I'm sure I caught the 2010 at the right moment, but I ask myself now," says Pedreno, "whether perhaps I harvested the 2008 just a bit too early." I somehow doubt it. Nimes native Remy Pedreno owns 24 acres comprising ten parcels in Langlade, southwest of Nimes. "Wine crazy at 22," as he describes himself, he was eventually convinced by Burgundy's Dominique Laurent that he had tasting talent, and in 1996 tried raising one ("magic" Laurent) barrique of late-harvested Carignan in his parents' garage. His second career in wine growing began just three years later as Renee Rostaing's on-site partner at next-door Domaine Puech Noble (then called Puech Chaud), but Pedreno struck out on his own three years later and founded Roc d'Anglade after realizing that his stylistic ideals had evolved to the point of incompatibility with Rostaing's. And rather extreme ideals these are! Harvest is earlier and at higher acidity and lower sugar than encountered with virtually any other southern French reds, an approach that in addition to suiting his personal taste proclivity, Pedreno is convinced results in wines which at least on paper reflect "finesse" and other terms of approbation applied for at least two centuries before the arrival of phylloxera to the once-prestigious wines grown in Langlade. (For a time after the Second World War, Langlade enjoyed self-standing VDQS status, but that seems never to have kick-started its revival, and even today there are only eight local growers.) "I haven't run an analysis of any musts since 2003," boasts Pedreno, "not of degrees, of acidity, or of polyphenols." In recent years, he has converted his elevage first from barriques to demi-muids and now more than half to foudres and 1,300 liter muids from Austrian barrel-maker Franz Stockinger. "Finesse, freshness, and fruit are my three watchwords," says Pedreno, who typically limits fermentative extraction in reds to 12 days and just two pump-overs and two punch-downs per tank total. (He laughs while I pause to absorb that claim!) Pedreno's wines are all officially vin de pays (for which reason I have re-iterated the domaine name in describing them) and even abstracting from their significant reliance on Carignan, it strikes me as unlikely that any would win approval as Coteaux du Languedoc even if thus-submitted. While I could easily have imagined cooler vintages exaggerating this grower's approach, in fact – perhaps because his aesthetic is attuned

to them – years like 2008 and 2006 proved more expressive and better-balanced than their odd-numbered neighbors; and 2010 – with its significant share of all four cepages from estate fruit (Pedreno had swapped with Rostaing for Grenache before 2007) – offers a very favorable impression of what the future holds for this cuvee. “I love Chenin,” notes Pedreno of the grape that informs his white and manifestly fits his avowed aesthetic preferences, “but in fact I inherited this cepage from a previous owner of my vineyards who had planted it.” Eventually, though, he envisions a blended white analogous to his red and that would incorporate up to half a dozen traditional Languedoc-typical cepages. His first Carignan Blanc and Macabeu will be harvested this year; meantime he blended a bit of Chardonnay into his 2009 and 2010 whites. Importers include Paul M. Young Fine Wines, Los Angeles, CA; tel. (213) 232 5199 and Pas Mal Portfolio, New York, NY; tel. (201) 569 4132
