

DOMAINE DES ESCARAVAILLES

RASTEAU, RHÔNE VALLEY



2009

La Ponce

RASTEAU
CÔTES DU RHÔNE VILLAGES
Appellation Côtes du Rhône Villages Contrôlée

DOMAINE
des
ESCARAVAILLES

In 1953, Jean-Louis Ferran purchased several well-situated hillside parcels above the southern Rhône villages of Rasteau, Roaix and Cairanne. He dubbed his new domaine Escaravailles, the Occitan word for beetles (scarabs). This was a nickname for the black-robed monks of the area's hill-perched Catholic monasteries in centuries past.

Jean-Louis' grandson Gilles assumed control of the domaine in 1999 after working alongside his father, Daniel Ferran, for several vintages. Gilles graduated first in his class from the University of Montpellier's prestigious enology school and now works closely at Escaravailles with his good friend and respected Châteauneuf-du-Pape consultant, Philippe Cambie, who graduated number two in the class the same year.

The Ferran's modern winery is built into a hillside in the heights of Rasteau, surrounded by terraced vineyards. It is the Grenache from these high altitude vineyards (average of 600 feet) that sets Escaravailles' wines apart from many of the overripe and over-extracted reds from this sun-baked part of Provence. Calling them "Overdue Crus", Decanter columnist Andrew Jefford calls for the elevation of Rasteau and Cairanne to independent AC status in his book *The New France*. Escaravailles' Cuvée Heritage 1924 certainly helps make Mr. Jefford's case, as their old-vine Rasteau rivals the best red wines of Châteauneuf-du-Pape and Gigondas. In 2010, the INAO promoted Rasteau, so now vigneronns of this superior commune can omit the clumsy Côte du Rhône-Villages appendage from future labels.

DOMAINE FACTS

VINES & WINES:	160 acres total, 100 of which are on hillsides of the Rasteau appellation Remarkable average vine age of 40 to 50-years-old (30 to 35-years-old for Syrah) Rasteau Cuvée La Ponce: 80% Grenache, 20% Syrah Rasteau Cuvée Heritage 1924: 100% vieilles vignes Grenache (84+ year-old vines) Cairanne Cuvée Ventabren: 70% Grenache, 20% Syrah, 10% Carignan Côtes du Rhône Cuvée Les Sablières: 70% Grenache, 30% Syrah All vines sustainably farmed (lutte raisonnée)
SOILS:	Rasteau, Cairanne and Roaix sites (southern end of Valréas Basin) have moisture-retaining mix of clay and sand with some limestone chalk, and a top soil of large, ancient river-smoothed stones.
HARVEST:	Manual harvest using small bins with strict selection in both vineyard and on sorting table upon arrival at the cellar.
YIELDS:	35 to 38 hectoliters/hectare for Rasteau and Cairanne wines 45 hectoliters/hectare on average for Côtes du Rhône Les Sablières
VINIFICATION & ELEVAGE:	Total destemming. All varieties are fermented separately in temperature-controlled stainless steel tanks. All Grenache remains in temperature-controlled tanks for ageing while élevage for Syrah takes place in oak barrels (one to three-years-old). Wines are not filtered.
ANNUAL PRODUCTION:	300,000 bottles / 25,000 cases

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