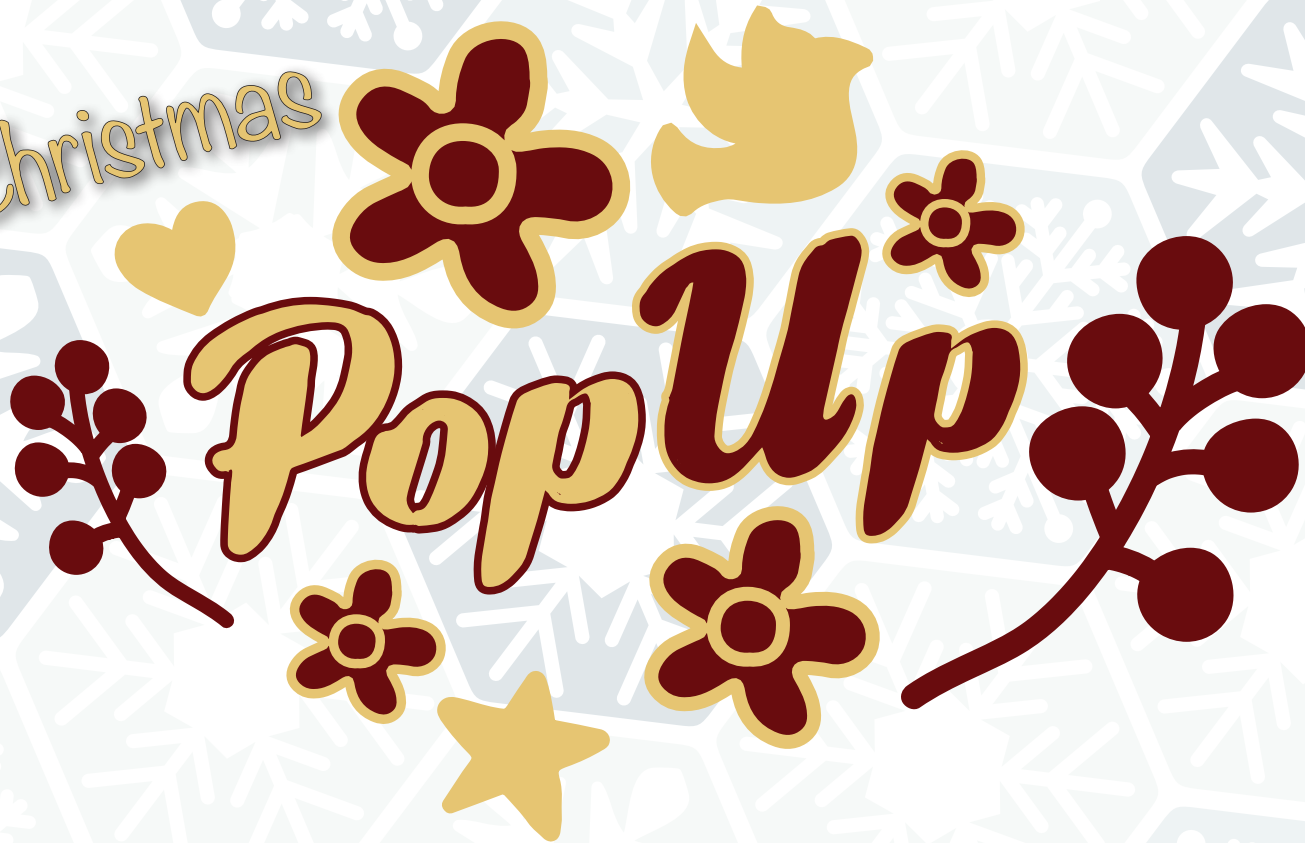


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Vinalu[®]

'Luxembourg's first Online Wine Magazine'

Merry Christmas



*Renault Scénic
Testdrive*

*VINALU SPECIAL REPORTS
FRANCE / LANGUEDOC*

VINALU SPECIAL REPORTS FRANCE / LANGUEDOC

THE 'TERROIRS & MILLÉSIMÉS' IN
LANGUEDOC
EDITION 2024

by Liliane Turmes, Helen Latour and Harry Montagnola

*Welcome to Pézenas,
the city of Molière*



WELCOME TO PÉZENAS

The C.I.V.L. (Conseil Interprofessionnel des Vins du Languedoc) invites every year to the wellknown 'Terroirs & Millésimes' event to discover the heart of the Languedoc, with a complex program around thematic tastings of the AOP Languedoc, masterclasses, immersions into the vineyards and meeting with the new French wine scene. During the week of the presentation, we stayed in the charming boutique hotel 'Distillerie de Pézenas', a former distillery with a delicious cuisine, from where we could easily walk to the morning tastings in the historic center of Pézenas.



... with hidden courtyards



... traditional pastry shops



... homemade nougat



and the famous
Petits pâtés de
Pézenas

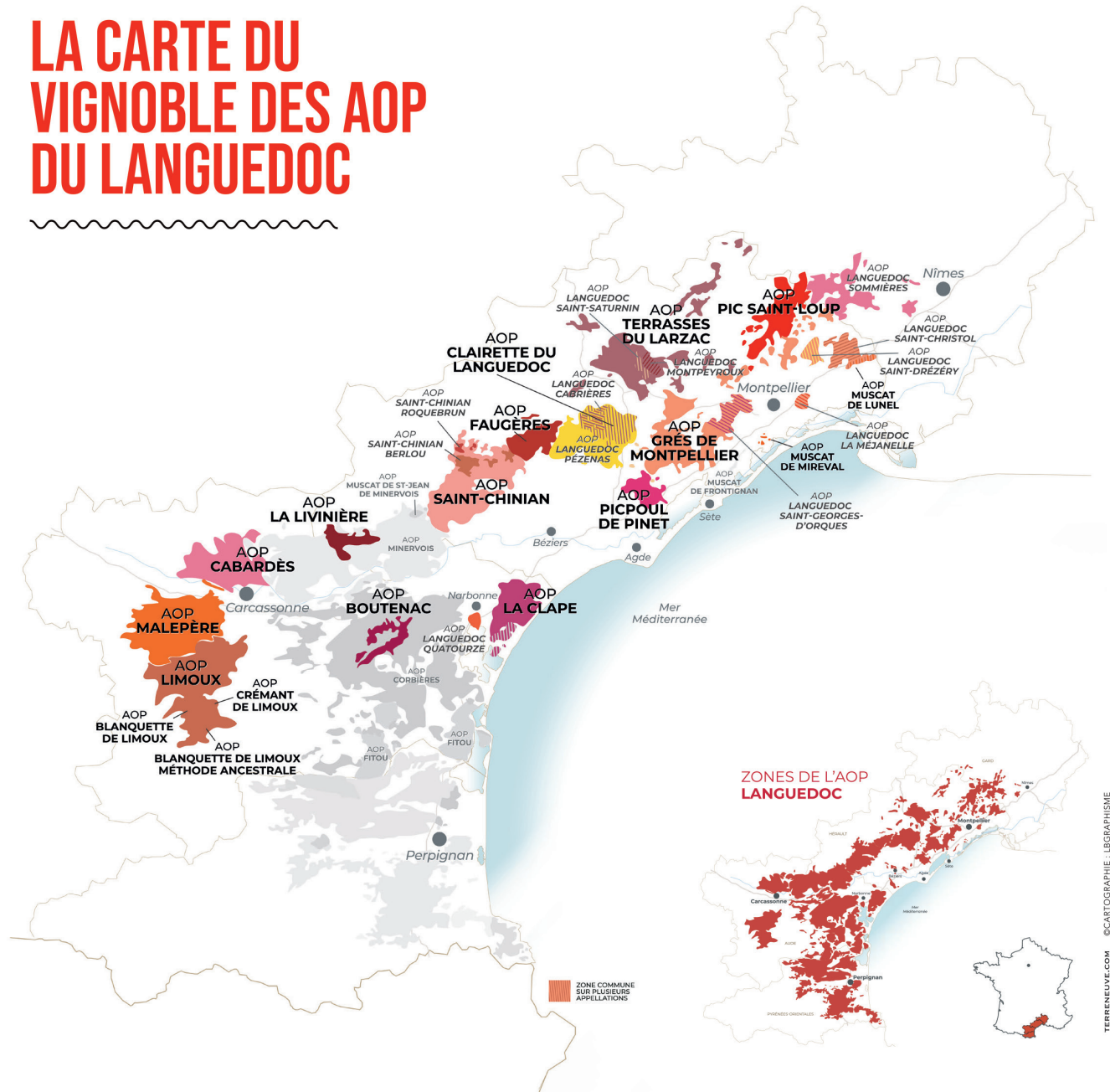
THE AOP LANGUEDOC IN FIGURES

The Languedoc is the southernmost region of France, with Montpellier as its capital. The AOP Languedoc (Appellation of protected origin) was created in 2007, with currently 10000 ha under vines, growing in three climatic zones: the 'Atlantic zone', with dry winds, the warm 'Mediterranean zone' and the cool 'Hills and Mountains zone'. The AOP Languedoc, with 15% of organic wineries, is one of the youngest appellations in the region and works with 15 approved grape varieties, the main varieties being Grenache blanc, Bourboulenc, Piquepoul blanc, Marsanne and Roussanne for the whites and Syrah, Grenache, Mourvèdre, Cinsault and Carignan for the reds. And as they say in the region, the 'tomorrow' grape variety will probably be the Marselan...



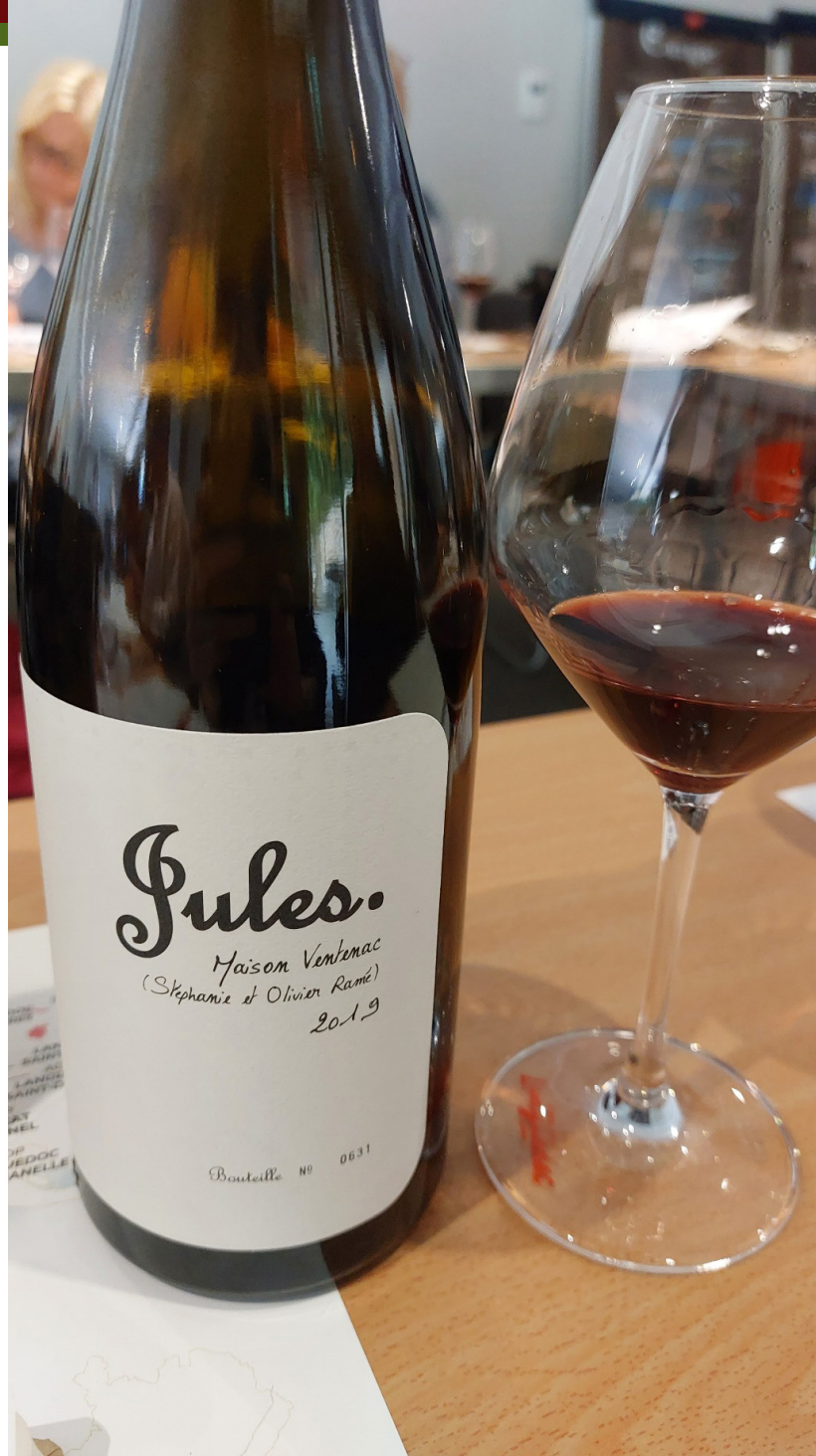
Aop du Languedoc blind tasting

LA CARTE DU VIGNOBLE DES AOP DU LANGUEDOC



MASTERCLASS AOP CABERDÈS

During the masterclass of the AOP Caberdès, an appellation with a production of mainly red and rosé wines and with clay, limestone and rocky terroirs, we meet the avant-garde vintner Fabien Revol of the Domaine de Brau, presenting his Cuvée Château 2020, a blend of Syrah, Grenache, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, with a pleasant acidity and a complex intensity. Another elegant cuvée, the 'Cuvée Jules 2019' of Maison Ventenac, with 40% of Syrah, 35% of Cabernet Sauvignon and 25% of Cabernet Franc impresses us with ripe black and red fruits on the palate, well balanced and with soft tannins, in a long finish.



Cuvée Jules AOP Cabardès



Fabien Revol presenting his wines

IMMERSION IN THE VINEYARDS OF SAINT-CHINIAN

In the afternoon our journey, through a beautiful scenery, takes us to a tasting with exclusively white wines of the AOP Saint-Chinian. We like the 'Château Veyran 2022', with citrus fruits, pears and white flowers in the bouquet, juicy and creamy on the palate, produced with Grenache blanc, Rolle and Roussanne from calcareous soils, the fresh 'Kalliope' from the Domaine de Cambis, the organic cuvée 'Althea', with Grenache, Roussanne and Vermentino, with ripe yellow fruits on the palate and the 'Intuition' of the Domaine Viranel, well structured, vinified in barrique with a long persistence.

The tasting is followed by a barbecue evening in the nature, with a pretty sight into the vineyards of the Saint-Chinian Valley.



*Tasting of St Chinian whites,
Château Veyran*



Domaine De Cambis



Mas de Cynanque



Château Viranel



Pretty view over the St Chinian Valley



Barbecue on top of the St Chinian vineyards



... with nice wines and strong winds



EXPLORING THE VOLCANIC TERROIR OF PÉZENAS

After our daily morning tasting of the AOP Languedoc, we continue our trip with an immersion into the terroir of Pézenas, with a hike on the volcano, a commented walk about the edible plants we discover on our way and with a tasting-break on the plateau, overlooking the vineyards.



Ready for tasting the...



... delicate floral 'La Grange 2023'



...and the excellent Félicité 2021 of the Domaine Montplézy



TASTING OF THE SPARKLING OF AOP LIMOUX

We are curious to compare the three very different sparklings of the AOP Limoux in a tasting of the 'AOP Crémant de Limoux', with notes of citrus fruits, apple and brioche, elaborated always with a blend of three varieties, with mainly Chardonnay, complemented by Chenin, Mauzac blanc or Pinot Noir, the 'AOP Blanquette de Limoux', with hints of green apple and flowers, which has to be produced with at least 90% with Mauzac and the remaining 10% with Chenin or Chardonnay, and of the 'AOP Méthode Ancestrale de Limoux', with fruity & honey flavors and only referring to the single varietal Mauzac.



Blanquette de Limoux



Crémant de Limoux



Crémant rosé de Limoux

„DINNER CHAMPÊTRE“ IN THE TERRASSES DU LARZAC

In a lovely little train ride, through the vineyards of the Domaine l'Alexandrin, we discover the picturesque landscape of the „AOP Terrasses du Larzac“, which covers in total an area of 750 ha, planted with red grapes only. The day ends with a 'dinner champêtre' on the plateau de Larzac.



Oysters à gogo



with wines of Terrasses du Larzac



Château La Sauvageonne





Mas Conscience



Le Clos du Serres



La Jasse Castel

GREAT PICPOUL DE PINET TASTING ON THE BANKS OF THE 'ÉTANG DE THAU'

The AOP Picpoul de Pinet is the largest and only white wine appellation in the Languedoc, with vineyards planted around the Thau lagoon and with a production based on the single grape varietal Piquepoul.

We have the pleasure of tasting the famous, delicately salted oysters of Bouzigue, served à gogo, 'nature' or gratinated with Parmesan cheese, combined with the juicy fresh Picpoul de Pinet wines on the banks of the 'Étang de Thau'.



Delicious gratinated oysters



A paradise for seafood lovers



Domaine Félines Jourdan



Villa Noria Picpoul de Pinet



Terres Rouges Picpoul de Pinet



Tasting on the ship



Time for good music & good wines



Château Paul Mas



Cave Ormarine

After a tasting on board a ship on the salty waters of the lagoon, we prepare for an exclusive, white & rose dress code night 'al fresco' at the 'Mas Neuf Maison Jeanjean'. The rhythmic Latin American music puts us in a good mood for the good wines.



The 'SUMMERTIME AND THE LIVING IS EASY'

Lunch, in the middle of the beauty of the AOP Faugères vineyards, is accompanied by seducing white wines, with a pleasant freshness, creamy rosés, full bodied reds and the 'Fine de Faugères', an artisanal brandy, produced with Carignan, Syrah and Grenache, with a double distillation, aged in oak barrels for 5 to 10 years, with dried fruits on the palate, a light salty finish and with a brilliant golden colour in the glass.



Happy lunch in the nature



... with a Fine de Faugères for digestif

GALA EVENING WITH WINES OF GRÈS DE MONTPELLIER

After a complex week, with many tastings and great discoveries, we prepare for the Gala evening in the Abbaye de Valmagne, a unique place, steeped in a rich viticultural history. The wines from AOP Grès de Montpellier are presented with a tasteful menu, crafted by Jacques and Laurent Pourcel, former three star Michelin star chefs, ending with a delicious chocolate 'crème brûlée' on coconut biscuit, in a perfect marriage with the mineral, fruity and juicy L'Egérie 2019 of the Château-Bas d'Aumelas.

Gala dinner at the Abbaye de Valmagne



*The mineral
Château-Bas
d'Aumelas*



*and the delicious
crème brûlée by
J&L Pourcel*

Renault Scénic E-Tech Electric:

Renaissance with Range

by *Sully Prud'homme*

(all photos: Renault)

Once celebrated as a small spatial wonder in the spirit of the Espace, it vanished from the Renault lineup in 2023. Its renaissance in mid-2024 is noteworthy, as the space specialist has swiftly transformed into a range specialist.





As a purely electric vehicle, the Scénic now enters its second life phase with two battery sizes and power versions, while the traditional combustion engine option has been discontinued in this model line. However, the variability and practicality of the family van remain, which had already resonated well with its target audience during its first combustion engine life.

When we talk about range, we mean it; while other manufacturers equip their electric models with seemingly outrageous horsepower, Renault maintains a more sensible approach, providing the Scénic with adequately sized electric motors offering 170 or 220 horsepower and batteries of 60 or 87 kWh. According to the factory, the larger battery allows for a range of up to 625 kilometers, while the entry-level package still achieves 430 km in the WLTP cycle. These figures are not entirely fanciful but realistic, albeit only under ideal conditions, such as low speeds, a lot of urban and rural road traffic, and mild external temperatures. The sprint from 0 to 100 km/h occurs in 8.6 (7.9) seconds, and the top speed ranges between 150 and 170 km/h, which is reasonable given the achievable range. The onboard computer handles the performance data quite proactively, displaying the expected remaining ranges separately for highways and city driving.

The interior showcases Renault's typical modern and sporty design, although it still features some hard plastics, which seem to be standard in French cars of this class. A highlight is the panoramic glass roof that stretches across the entire ceiling and can be switched between opaque and transparent thanks to a special coating. Family-friendly features include a rear center armrest that provides both cup holders and a holder for phones or tablets. However, the direction lever on the steering column, adorned with the Renault diamond logo, remains a visual nuisance, as it intrudes into the dashboard and can obscure it depending on the driver's seating position.

A standard heat pump manages the thermal management of the battery, motor, and interior climate control. The overly cautious beeping of numerous driver assistance systems is no longer an issue, as Renault has implemented a personal setting to deactivate them, which, although needing to be reactivated with each vehicle restart, ensures peace and quiet afterward. Essential for a family van is ample storage space, and the new Scénic excels here as well: the trunk offers a capacity of 545 to 1670 liters.

The top model we tested, the Renault Scénic E-Tech Electric Esprit Alpine, starts at €47,574 including VAT, although there is already a Renault Scénic Evolution available from €38,629 including VAT, prices in Luxembourg as of November 2024. We thank Renault Belgique-Luxembourg for providing the test vehicle.

Impressum

Based on an idea by Romain Batya



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