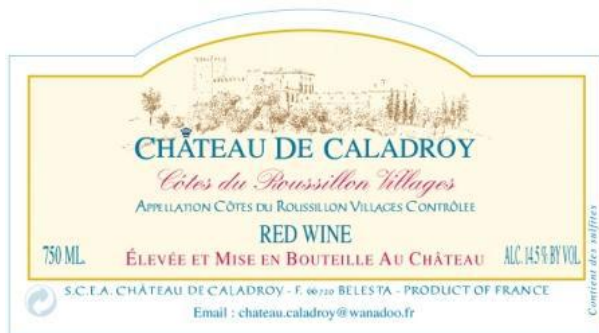


Caladroy

Côtes du Roussillon Villages



In its heyday, Château de Caladroy was a small outpost high on an arid mountaintop behind Perpignan. It had its own school, workers' quarters, stables, an elegant nineteenth-century chapel, a manor house and other dwellings, and an ancient fortress dating from the 12th century—for Caladroy was once a fortress on the Kingdom of Majorca's frontier. In the 13th and 14th centuries, Majorca had a kingdom. Who knew? It controlled a good portion of Catalonia, the Balearic Islands and an enclave around Montpellier.

Today, that fortress and the rest of what became Caladroy can be found perched on a knoll at a mountain pass; below, on a broad saddle of a ridge, grow the vineyards. The school no longer functions, the workers' quarters lie empty except at harvest, and the manor stands majestically unoccupied, as if lost in time. You drive up from Perpignan, a city which has a whole lot more in common with Barcelona just over the border than it does with Paris, and climb winding roads into the hills where the sparsely populated land is rocky and covered with scrub hardwoods and the ever present *garrigue*. At the top of the last rise, the road turns onto the saddle of vineyards; at the far end, beyond a windbreak of cedars, rises the Caladroy knoll with white buildings and red clay-tiled roofs. Looming in the distance are the snow-capped Pyrenees.

This is Roussillon, the sunniest viticultural area in France, forever battered by a dry wind that sweeps off the high Pyrenees known as the *tramontane*. Fully exposed at over 1,000 feet above the nearby Mediterranean, Caladroy and its vineyards occupy the top of the Fenouillèdes hills, isolated between two river valleys. This altitude, combined with the schist terroir, gives Caladroy's wines a measure of acid structure and finesse that nicely balances their darkly concentrated flavors.

At the turn of this century, the cellar was completely revamped and many vineyard parcels were replanted, with Grenache, Syrah, and Mourvèdre dominating. Yields here, because of the meager rainfall and poor soils, average 25hl/ha, far below the permissible 45hl/ha granted *Côte du Roussillon-Villages*, which is the highest appellation designation here.

<http://www.caladroy.com/>