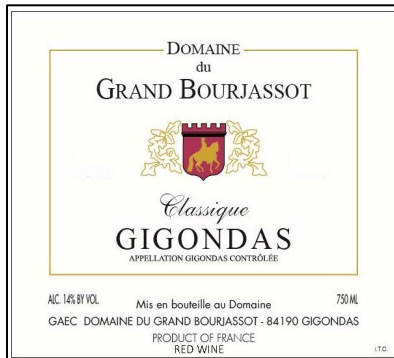


# Domaine du Grand Bourjassot Gigondas



Domaine Grand Bourjassot farms 10 acres of vines on the great western slope of Gigondas, which gently undulates from the old fortified village down to the Ouvèze River on the edge of the Plan de Dieu. The appellation extends well up into the Dentelles behind the village and includes a swath on the high eastern side of the mountains, but the heart and soul of Gigondas is its great slope.

Bourjassot opened its doors in 1993 when Pierre and Marie-Claude Varenne pulled from the cooperative and began to make their own wine. Pierre had inherited vines in Gigondas; Marie-Claude had inherited vines in Sablet, and once the paperwork was completed they started on their way. In 2000 I tasted at the domaine with Pascal Roux, who at the time owned Domaine du Trignon and Domaine des Sénéchaux, and who knew Pierre and Marie-Claude. In 2001 their daughter Cécile finished her enological studies. In the same year, unbeknownst to me, a young Jean-Yves Perez worked the harvest at Michel-Schlumberger—then my employer—as an intern, returned to his family domaine nearby Gigondas, and went on to marry Cécile. In 2005 she took the reins of Grand Bourjassot. In 2018, she contacted us to explore a commercial relationship.

In the years since she took over, Cécile bought additional parcels and today farms 20 acres. Ten of those are in Gigondas, followed by just over seven in neighboring Sablet to the north (with a parcel further north in Séguret), and just over an acre to the south in Vacqueyras.

The domaine's vines in Gigondas are divided into four parcels: two up slope in more calcareous soil near the village, and two down slope in alluvial soils. Notably, there's a good amount of limestone bedrock in Gigondas in contrast to Châteauneuf on the other side of the plain, which is bereft of that blessed rock (CDP is based on ancient glacial and river wash composed of sand, clay, and gravel). Limestone accounts for much of Gigondas' inherent lift and mineral underpinning. Cécile's parcel of Les Bosquets in particular gives her that in spades, providing her wine its spine and verticality, something she prizes a great deal.

Grand Bourjassot's higher parcels have Mourvèdre; the lower ones have Syrah; and both contain Grenache. The average age of the vines is in excess of 65 years, and the overall vineyard composition is 70% Grenache, 22% Syrah, and 8% Mourvèdre. This includes the parcel of centennial Grenache at the domain that has never been subjected to chemical applications.

As for the name, Bourjassot (*bour-jass-so*), it's also the name of the sector in Sablet where Cécile's mother's family had its vines. They farmed two parcels in that zone, one named Bourjassot du Bois and the other Grand Bourjassot. When Pierre and Marie-Claude married and began their venture, they baptized their domain in Gigondas with that name to harken back to their Sablet roots.

In 2012 Cécile received certification for organic production, but subsequently quit because her parcels in Gigondas are fragmented and adjacent to parcels that are farmed conventionally. Testing occasionally picked up traces of chemicals that blew onto her vines, leaving her exposed to a possible accusation of fraud which isn't something anyone wants to deal with. So she pulled from the certifying agency but continues to farm organically. (It's worth noting that her husband's family domaine of L'Obrieu in Visan is certified; its vines are in a largely homogenous block surrounded by forest, thus easily worked organically. Cécile and Jean-Yves make decisions together regarding both L'Obrieu and Grand Bourjassot.)

The logo of a shield emblazoned with a horse comes from Pierre. He has a passion for horses, Spanish ones in particular, and today his granddaughters, Cécile's kids, ride two Spanish mares that are stabled at the domain. The connection extends to the harvesters. Every year Manuel and his family come from Andalusia to pick grapes. They've been doing so going on thirty years now.

[www.grandbourjassot-gigondas.fr/](http://www.grandbourjassot-gigondas.fr/)