

# Mas d'Amile

## Terrasses du Larzac



Amélie d'Hurlaborde started Mas d'Amile with her brother Sébastien in 2007, when they inherited a 2.5-acre parcel of old Carignan from their grandfather. Amélie did graphic arts and writing for producers in the southern Rhône; Sébastien was the main vineyard guy and GM for a local biodynamic domaine, and they had planned for this moment. As soon as the inheritance came through, they took over the parcel and made the wine from that year's crop in their grandfather's garage.

Grandpa was okay with that. He had been a grower all his life, selling the crop to the co-op (plus he was one of the village mailmen; he knew everyone!). His father came from Spain and ended up marrying a local woman whose roots went back to 17<sup>th</sup> century Montpeyroux. When Amélie was born, Grandpa bestowed the nickname of Amile upon her—the masculine version of her name—and in one sense anyway things came full circle when she made her wine under that name in his garage.

While brother Sébastien kept his day job, Amélie never looked back. Montpeyroux's well-known vigneron Sylvain Fadat, along with her father (the village's popular, longtime mayor), helped her gain the trust of growers, which opened the door to her to buy parcels from those taking their retirement. She now farms 10 parcels, doing nearly all of the work herself with some help from her husband Jérôme. These parcels total 21 acres, all in the commune of Montpeyroux within the appellation of Terrasses du Larzac. The vines average 40-years, apart from the 1930s-era Carignan plantation. Since the beginning in 2007 she has worked organically; more recently she's been applying biodynamic treatments. She received official organic certification in 2022. All of Amélie's vines are hand-harvested by the extended family, and all ferments in the cellar are allowed to happen spontaneously.

These parcels lie between 150-400 meters in elevation at the base of the Cevennes Mountains and its plateaux—which is to say, hard up against the Massif Central, a dramatic backdrop at the very end of the Languedoc plain, roughly 25 miles from the Mediterranean.

Terrasses du Larzac gained appellation status in 2014. Its *cru* is the village of Montpeyroux, the old staging area for trade between the interior and the coast. Standing alone between Faugères and Pic St Loup, the appellation is a hotbed of cutting-edge production these days, and it's easy to see why. Its soil is limestone rubble and is wildly infertile (the very name *Montpeyroux* refers to stony or rocky mountain); its elevations are high; and its diurnal shifts are radical—temperatures can drop as much as 68°F at night thanks to the cold air sweeping off the imposing Larzac plateau, making this one of Languedoc's latest ripening appellations. Its best wines distill the essence of Languedoc: soaring aromatics, spice, *garrigue*, and succulent notes of tapenade, with length and elegance in place of extracted power (it's possible to go for power here, and some do, but most have seen the light). The vast majority of producers work organically or biodynamically.

Amélie's brother Sébastien still consults (*He's the best consultant!* she contends), but he's taking more of a backseat role while husband Jérôme is stepping in when time permits (his day job is sales director for Jean-Claude Boisset's group of French domaines).

<http://masdamile.fr/en/home/>