

Domaine Labranche Laffont

Madiran



The Wines

- *TanNat*: This comes from a small parcel of Tannat Christine obtained in 2019 and immediately converted to organic farming. Vines were planted in the late 1990s. The wine is made in the opposite style of classic Madiran with a very short maceration (and no carbonic; the skins of Tannat are too fragile) followed by a short élevage in concrete. It's bottled as naturally as possible--no yeasting, SO2 or other additions, and bottled without fining or filtration. The CO2 that came about naturally with fermentation was purposefully not entirely voided to help with preservation. This wine is best decanted and served with a slight chill. 775 cases.

Note that vintage 2023 saw a higher production, because all of the domaine's Tannat went into this cuvée. Shatter, frost, hail and mildew pressure wreaked havoc in 2023, the domaine's harvest of red grapes was around 5% of normal, and Christine produced no classic Madiran that year--all the Tannat went into the TanNat cuvée. The quality of the grapes was quite high, the short macerations and élevage in concrete remained the same, but the vineyard sources were obviously greater than normal and consequently the intensity of the wine transcended its typical juicy delightfulness. Indeed, the '23 TanNat stands out for its depth and drive. It benefits from aeration and should be decanted.

- *Madiran Classic*: This comes from 13.5 hectares of Tannat vines averaging 40 years of age--that is, altogether mature! Harvest is manual, fermentation is native, and the élevage takes place over 18 months in concrete vats. Best decanted well in advance. Production averages 3,800 cases.
- *Madiran Vieilles Vignes*: This is 100% Tannat from several parcels that total three hectares, or 7.5 acres. One parcel of roughly two acres is of pre-phylloxera vines that are in the neighborhood of 150 years old; the other parcels support vines that are at least 50 years old. Grapes are destemmed and the wine is raised in Bordeaux barrels, roughly 20% of which are new each year. Given several hours of aeration, this Tannat blossoms.

In exceptional years, Christine will vinify the block of pre-phylloxera vines separately and bottle the wine as her cuvée Préphylloxérique. In all other years, the wine from these ancient vines goes into the vieilles vignes cuvée.

- *Pacherenc du Vic Bilh Sec*: Madiran's answer to Jurançon's whites. But Madiran is further down off the Pyrenees than Jurançon (and Iroulégu), and Madiran's Pacherenc wines tend to have more weight. This is raised on its lees in older barrels. It's a shockingly fresh and vibrant wine with quite a compelling nose. Production averages 1,500 cases.