

Mas d'Amile

Terrasses du Larzac



The Wines

- *Le Petitou*: Roughly 60% Grenache with Syrah and Carignan. Originally, this was to be a rosé, but Amélie didn't like the result, so she decided to make a lighter, more elegant and refreshing red. The base of Grenache comes from an old hillside vineyard just behind their house and winery, which in turn is immediately south of the village of Montpeyrroux, while the Syrah and Carignan come from nearby sites. The wine sings of its Mediterranean heritage, rich with licorice and tapenade in a long, lean, tension-filled profile. And check out its refreshingly low alcohol!

The grapes are de-stemmed and raised entirely in tank. The SO₂ additions are minimal and done following de-stemming, then again during *élevage*, and a third time after blending. Typically the total amounts to 25 mg/l, which is less than Demeter's threshold for natural wines (Demeter's thresholds are 100 mg/l for organic wines; 70 mg/l for biodynamic wines; and 30 mg/l for natural wines).

The label was designed by her daughter Gabrielle and son Paul (then six and four respectively) with help from friends. That, plus the fact that the *cuvée* is the most recent in the domaine's range, accounts for the name *Petitou*--in spirit, the little one. Production averages 7,500 bottles.

- *Vieux Carignan*: A traditional variety of Languedoc, Carignan fell out of favor during the wine revival late in the last century as authorities focused on "ameliorating" grapes such as Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre. But as it has over the centuries, Carignan persisted--because it tolerates arid conditions, maintaining dark color and good acidity despite heat and drought; and because experienced growers understood that well-sited, old vine Carignan is something to treasure. The key is age above all.

This wine can come from two plots totaling less than four acres planted in the 1930s in the commune of Montpeyrroux (although normally for this *cuvée*, the source is confined to the larger plot of just over two acres). Fermentation is spontaneous and traditional (not carbonic), and the *élevage* goes for 18 months in neutral Burgundian barrels. Production averages 400/six-pack cases.

- *Montpeyrroux*: Based on about 60% Grenache with roughly equal parts Carignan, Mourvèdre, and Syrah. The grapes are de-stemmed with a light pressing. The *élevage* is in neutral oak barrels, 600L *demi-muids* and one *foudre* for 12 months. Minimal SO₂ additions. An elegant, long and savory wine that is best decanted. Production averages 3,500-4,000 bottles.

- *Le Clos*: Le Clos is an isolated 2.22 acre parcel of vines on a south-facing slope surrounded by forest. It's in the commune of Montpeyrroux but Amélie labels the wine under the Terrasses du Larzac appellation to keep it separate from her Montpeyrroux bottling, which comes from a number of different sites scattered about the commune and is given a different élevage.

Le Clos was planted in 2001 to 40% Grenache, 30% Mourvèdre and 30% Syrah. That reflects more or less the blend in the bottle. All of the varieties are hand-harvested, but the Syrah inevitably is harvested and vinified first, while the Grenache and Mourvèdre are normally harvested later and together and are co-fermented. All ferments are native, and the wine is aged for ~18 months in 600L *demi-muids*, 20% of which are new. A normal year sees 300 cases.