

Château Marie Plaisance

Bergerac



This family are doing an awesome job of bridging the gap between traditional and modern Bergerac, and they just make the most delicious wines. -Tamlyn Currin, Jancis Robinson



Thomas, François and Anne Mériller took over the direction of their parents' domaine in the heart of Bergerac. They are the 5th generation to run the family farm, and their commitment was such that they re-christened it Château Marie Plaisance—after their mother, Marie, and the surrounding hillsides where their vineyards grow, *les coteaux de Plaisance*.

Their parents had significantly revamped the winery in the 1990s. The three siblings built upon this by moving the domaine to organic farming, starting the certification process in 2010. They've begun replanting parcels to 5,000 vines per hectare in order to grow more concentrated grapes, as had been done before mechanization led to 3,000 vines per hectare becoming the norm across the appellations of Bordeaux. They established three levels of quality, from the introductory *Le Brin* to *Le Bouquet* to their *Prestige* line, as well as experimenting with a cuvée made without SO2 additions. They hired Béryl in 2017, who married François, to assist Anne in the office. Now it's Thomas in the cellar, François in the vines, and the two women writing the checks and managing the sales.

The domaine lies due east of Bordeaux and Libourne, just south of the Dordogne River. This is the Périgord region, an ancient countryside where much of the 100 Years' War played out and that has supported the vine since the Roman occupation. It retains a remarkable pastoral quality.

It's colder here in winter and warmer in summer than coastal Bordeaux, and harvests normally start earlier. Soils tend to be the classic clay-limestone mix, and those of Marie Plaisance are just that. The domaine's vineyards grow on northwest facing hillsides, which give steadier and cooler temperatures to the vines than south facing hillsides, and they climb to a height of 200 meters. On these hillsides the family farms 136 acres of vines, 54 in red and 82 in white. They have plans to do some of the weed control with a horse to avoid soil compaction, and to employ sheep for the same purpose. The plantations break down as follows:

Red

Merlot (60%)
Cabernet Sauvignon (30%)
Cabernet Franc (10%)

White

Semillon (60%),
Sauvignon (35%)
Muscadelle (5%).

Above all, the wines of Marie Plaisance are about superb winemaking and fruit—a great purity of fruit, full of joy and gulpability.

<http://www.chateau-marie-plaisance.fr/>

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