

Les Wineries du Rhône

Dauvergne Ranvier



PORTRAIT —

THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

François Dauvergne is the salesman, Jean-François Ranvier the winemaker. Together they make wines that reflect their personalities: down-to-earth, free and ambitious. And both are proud to be négociants. In the last 15 years, their business has graduated from its old, cramped quarters to a new, light and bright winery they have called l'Assemblière ("The Blender"), set in a stunning valley location just outside Tavel. In 2004, after eight years at Maison Louis Bernard, François and Jean-François decided it was time to go it alone and create wines they had hitherto only dreamed of – something they could only do as free agents. That first year, three win growers were happy to trust their supplies to the fledgling winery. "They must have been mad!" smiles François. And perhaps they were; the pair had no money and no customers, and made their first three wines, a Côtes du Rhône, a Côtes du Rhône Villages and a Gigondas, in François' kitchen, using whatever they had to hand

Something for everyone

It was the large-scale retail sector that gave François and Jean-François their break. It was an opportunity to reach a wide audience and connect with like-minded professionals, some of whom may have worked their way up from the bottom themselves. "Their story is a bit like ours," says François. "They were happy to help us, and thanks to them our business got the chance to grow. We are so grateful." And

thanks to supermarket exposure, François and Jean François' wines caught the eye of hospitality sector buyers, who would ring them, explain they had bought some of their wines at a supermarket wine fair, had enjoyed them, and wondered if they could work together..

Fascinating work

"One of the best things about being a négociant is that we can be creative. We can make a Côtes du Rhône with grapes from Drôme and Vaucluse, the Gard and Ardèche. Rather than limiting ourselves to our own vines, we can choose the grapes we want to work with," says Jean-François. "Then there's the connection with our winegrowers. I love visiting them, tasting grapes with them, giving advice and learning from them. It's very rewarding, very diverse work." François and Jean-François work with around 50 producers from across the whole of the Rhône Valley, becoming involved in the winemaking process very early on. They help to choose the parcels, and take an interest in agricultural decisions – including cover-cropping, pruning and disbudding. "If we want the winegrowers to be creative along with us," says Jean-François, "good communication and listening skills are crucial".

Greater than the sum of its parts

François and Jean-François liken their work to that of a great chef: they look for the best ingredients and put them together to transcend the original, to improve it. Being a négociant, they say, means knowing how to select, blend and age wine, but it's also about knowing how to present the product to make it attractive, and to show how working closely with winegrowers can add value in terms of customer appeal.

François Dauvergne (left) and Jean-François Ranvier



Established in 2004
8 employees
2018 turnover:
€10 million, 25% of
which from export.



"By putting our names on the labels, we are creating a brand customers can trust."

Protecting diversity

The two friends see huge potential in the Rhône Valley. The sheer diversity of its terroirs, grape varieties and climate, coupled with the fact that most of its wines are made by a large number of relatively small operations, presents an opportunity to create a vast range of different profiles – the polar opposite of "standardised" wines. With 50% of their grapes already being

grown organically, they firmly believe that organic agriculture will help them achieve their goals, and feel that consumer interest in Rhône wines will continue to increase. Their new winery, which is well worth a visit, gives them the opportunity they need to grow their team and keep moving forward, with passion and respect. "I don't believe traditions should be set in stone," says François. "Tradition is simply innovation that has stood the test of time. I believe in creativity, and in a diversity that reflects the personalities both of the winegrowers and négociants. Wine can be made in so many different styles, and it's our job to give our wines a style that reflects who we are as well as being attractive to our customers."



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