

**From:** The BrightWines Beacon <lighthouse@brightwines.com>  
**Subject:** **Languedoc: living large (90-93 ratings) at low prices!**  
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**To:** The BrightWines Beacon

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**The BrightWines Beacon for the Week of 7/14 (Bastille Day) of 2014: LANGUEDOC special feature**

I am pleased to announce **one of the most exciting French wine features I think have ever offered** here at BrightWines! In honor of Bastille Day (July 14th) and the Tour de France (ongoing) I traditionally feature French wines prominently in early/mid July each year. This year will possibly go down as one of the most exciting weeklong features of French wines I've ever done. Why? Because we are "living large" in the Languedoc, with **90 - 93 point ratings on fully half a dozen of great reds and white PLUS a special "wood case" offer on very impressive drinkable red Languedoc** too.

And the best part is the prices: **all of the wines in this Languedoc offer are priced between just \$8.99 and \$17.99 per bottle**. See today's BRIGHT LIGHTS section for the complete listing of this impressive, in-stock offer. (while supplies last)

THE VIEW FROM THE TOP: the Languedoc is...

editors note: lately I have found myself reading articles by the famed master of wine and British wine author and wine critic, Jancis Robinson. So in my research on the Languedoc I found an article to use, and what follows is my quick paraphrase/sampling of an article from JancisRobinson.com as edited by Dave@BrightWines.

"The Languedoc is... Provence without the tourists"  
(ok, seriously though)

**"The Languedoc is archetypal Mediterranean wine country**, with wild landscapes, Spain just over the Pyrenees, and vines stretching in every direction. The world's biggest wine region, a swathe of monoculture round France's western Mediterranean coast, is also, at long last, important in the international wine market - not to say vital for the economic future of European wine production. The schists and garrigue-covered hills of the Fitou, Corbieres, Minervois and Languedoc appellations are home to some of France's oldest vines, gnarled stumps of Carignan mainly, which ooze super-concentrated, often super-tannic deep red, suitable for blending with more recent plantings of fashionable Rhone varieties. Although the Languedoc was the first French region to be introduced to vine-growing and wine-making by the Romans, its modern reputation as a wine producer has been for quantity at the expense of quality. By the 1980s the Languedoc was regularly producing 10% of the entire planet's wine output, but as the decade progressed, and French consumption of basic Vin de Table plummeted, it became clear that there was no apparent long-term future for the sort of wine on which the Languedoc rural economy was based. Cooperatives established themselves as the dominant force here, and still the great majority of vine-growers, peasant smallholders mostly, have no experience at all of winemaking. Today one of France's most pressing problems is how to transform the Languedoc (the same question as in southern Italy and many parts of Greece, Spain and Portugal) from a region of thousands of vigneron producing wine noone wants to drink into a much smaller one in which perhaps hundreds of producers concentrate on the medium to high quality wine of which the region is demonstrably capable."

... and DAVE says:

The wine region of the Languedoc, also referred to as the Languedoc-Roussillon, stretches from the French/Spanish border in the southeast Mediterranean France around to the ancient Roman city of Nimes at the edge of the Rhone region. Along that stretch, heading eastward, near the coast are the small cities of Perpignan, Narbonne, Beziers and finally to one of France's most famous cities, Montpellier. The traditional grapes of the region are Carignan, Syrah, Grenache, and Mourvedre, while important traditional whites include Grenache Blanc and Picpoul.

The broadest AOC or appellation controlee is Languedoc, formerly Coteaux Languedoc and also Cotes du Roussillon. Just below AOC level are two famous Vin de Pays (often abbreviated VdP) the vin de pays l'Herault and vin de pay d'Oc, both of which offer a wide array of traditional and modern wines and wine producers and a range of good quality if you know where to look. The five best known appellation controlee in the Languedoc include Languedoc AOC, Corbieres, Faugeres, Minervois, and Saint-Chinian. However, the appellation system in the region is undergoing considerable changes with both new appellations being created and existing ones changing. One recent change is that the Coteaux du Languedoc has changed name to Languedoc and been extended to include also the Roussillon. The boundary of the eastern Languedoc with the Southern Rhône Valley wine region was moved slightly in 2004, with the result that Costieres de Nîmes AOC is now a Rhône appellation rather than a Languedoc one. Within the larger Languedoc AOC appellations are several sub-districts with distinct wine styles of their own. Some of these sub-districts have pending AOC applications to become appellations in their own right and some have been granted sub-appellations to the umbrella appellation Languedoc AOC. This includes Picpoul de Pinet and Pic St. Loup (two perennial favorites, Picpoul de Pinet for white).

I am going to focus my attention on the traditional styles and higher quality region, styles, and varietals of the Languedoc for this feature, although this region (sometimes referred to as the wine lake, or even "the wine cow" of France) is also where plenty of table wine plonk is also grown. Perhaps the best argument for this comes by way of Rosemary George, MW (master of wine):

"Why the Languedoc? Quite simply, it is without doubt the most exciting and innovative wine region of France. Everything is possible; the appellations may lay down ground rules, but the parallel vins de pays allow for unlimited experimentation, creating a host of new and exciting wines. Over the last twenty years or so this vast vineyard, which stretches from the Spanish border round to the delta of the Rhone has undergone a dramatic transformation, so that the wines have improved out of all recognition. And that pace of change continues unabated, with each vintage bringing new wine growers and new wines."

So to reiterate what I said at the top of today's newsletter: I am pleased to announce one of the most exciting French wine features I think have ever offered here at BrightWines! In honor of Bastille Day (July 14th) and the Tour de France (ongoing) I traditionally feature French wines prominently in early/mid July each year. This year will possibly go down as one of the most exciting weeklong features of French wines I've ever done. Why? Because we are "living large" in the Languedoc, with 90 - 93 point ratings on fully half a dozen of great reds and white PLUS a special "wood case" offer on very impressive drinkable red Languedoc too. And the best part is the prices: all of the wines in this Languedoc offer are priced between just \$8.99 and \$17.99 per bottle. Read on to BRIGHT LIGHTS section for the complete listing of this impressive, in-stock offer!

### **BRIGHT LIGHTS: in-stock offer on a great range of LANGUEDOC wines from France**

ALL of the wines in this offer are IN-STOCK in quantities ranging from just a couple of cases on up to 5 or 10 cases total, so there is plenty of good red and white Languedoc wine to go around - especially for folks who like to mix-and-match. Supplies are limited to stock on hand for most of the wines in this special offer - prices valid while supplies last. e-mail orders accepted, subject to confirmation.

**\*\* Dave's Top Picks and Smart Buys \*\***

#### **A range of reds and a couple whites, with ratings from 90 points to 93 points, all priced \$12.99 per bottle (mix/match)**

##### **Lafage "cuvee Nicolas" 2012 old vines GRENACHE @ \$12.99 per bottle (\$155.88/case, mix-match)**

Cotes Catalanes. **93 points!** Robert Parker's Wine Advocate notes: "The 2012 Cotes Catalanes Cuvee Nicolas is an off-the-hook value. Located outside the town of Perpignan, Domaine Lafage is run by the talented Jean-Marc Lafage and covers a number of diverse vineyards spread through the Roussillon. These three cuvees are a joint venture between Jean-Marc and importer Eric Solomon. The all represent fabulous values that warrant attention. Named after Jean-Marc's son and made from 100% Grenache from higher elevation sites in the Aspres region, fermented with 20% stems and aged half in demi-muid, it offers layers of kirsch, underbrush, licorice and serious floral notes in its medium to full-bodied, elegant and seamless profile. Getting a big "wow" in the notes and showing fine tannin and serious length, it should be snatched up by savvy readers and consumed over the coming 3-4 years. 93 points."

##### **Lafage TESSELLAE 2012 old vines GSM (Grenache/Syrah/Mourvedre) @ \$12.99 per bottle (\$155.88/case, mix-match)**

Cotes du Roussillon. **90 points!** Robert Parker's Wine Advocate notes: "The 2012 Tessellae Old Vines Cotes du Roussillon is a blend of 40% Grenache from 60-year-old vines, 40% Syrah and 20% Mourvedre (both from 20-year-old vines). The fruit was all aged 12 months in 1-year-old concrete tanks. A big, barbecue/smoky brisket-like nose intermixed with kirsch liqueur, lavender and pepper scents jumps from the glass of this complex, mid-weight, savory, mouthfilling red with soft, velvety tannins. This bistro-styled red wine should be enjoyed over the next several years. 90 points."

##### **Lafage TESSELLAE 2012 old vines CARIGNAN @ \$12.99 per bottle (\$155.88/case, mix-match)**

Cotes Catalanes. **92 points!** Robert Parker's Wine Advocate notes: "The 2012 VDP Cotes Catalanes Tessellae is 100% old vine Carignan, aged ten months in concrete tank, that comes from vineyards in Maury and Les Aspres (both of which have schist soils). An old-world styled fruit-bomb, with its massive and decadently-styled blackberry fruit, spice, licorice and plum, this full-bodied effort has no hard edges, beautiful purity of fruit and a seamless texture that stays nicely focused and clean. Enjoy this sexy, voluptuous beauty over the coming 4-5 years (although I suspect it will last longer as well).

##### **\*\* Wood Case \*\* DOMAINE LA GRANGE "Classique" rouge @ \$12.99 per bottle (wood-case @ \$150 = \$12.50 per bottle)**

a vin de pays d'Oc red blend of **Syrah and Mourvedre** that has the classic purple/blue dark fruits and peppery garrigue spice of the central Languedoc reds but in a modern screwcapped and gluggable/summery style. Fun wine, and beautiful wood cases! Only 5 wood cases of the

red remain available immediately, in-stock now, with more on order.

ALSO available in Wood Case: **DOMAINE LA GRANGE "Classique" Blanc @ \$12.99 per bottle** (wood-case price \$150 = \$12.50 ea)  
A blend of Sauvignon Blanc and unoaked Chardonnay, current stock is 7 wood cases of the Classique Blanc. Very summery and refreshing, packaged in a very nice wood case.

**Le Jade 2013 PICPOUL de PINET blanc @ \$8.99 per bottle** (\$107.88/case, mix-match)

the "muscadet of the mediterranean" bone-dry white for clams/mussels and seafood of all sorts, signature "neptune bottle"

**"Les Heretiques" 2012 (d'Oupia/Iche) pays Herault rouge @ \$9.99 per bottle** (\$108.99/case, **\$8.99 mix-match**)

**Fun "bistro red" from the famed vin de pays l'Herault.** As I saw online "the Herault countryside is glorious, as you drive away from the coast and into the foothills of the Black Mountains, you get lost in an ocean of vines, reaching as far as the eye can see."

**Chateau d'Oupia 2010 MINERVOIS @ \$12.99 per bottle** (\$155.88/case, mix-match)

**Chateau Helene 2010 CORBIERES @ \$12.99 per bottle** (\$155.88/case, mix-match)

**Lafage BASTIDE-MIRAFLORES 2012 vieilles vignes @ \$12.99 per bottle** (\$155.88/case, mix-match)

Cotes Catalanes. **91 points!** Robert Parker's Wine Advocate notes: "The 2012 Bastide Miraflores is a blend of 70% Syrah and 30% Grenache aged in a combination of concrete tanks (for the Grenache) and demi-muids (for the Syrah). It went through a six week maceration, which no doubt explains the wine's seriously intense fruit. Notes of violets, forest floor, black cherry jam and blackberries make an appearance in this medium-bodied, high-toned, dense, rich, complex, well-delineated red wine. Drink it over the next several years. 91 points."

**Bila Haut (Chapoutier) 2012 Cotes du Roussillon BLANC @ \$12.99 per bottle** (\$155.88/case, mix-match)

Grenache Blanc, Macabeu, Grenache Gris. **92 points!** Robert Parker's Wine Advocate notes: "Michel Chapoutier's Roussillon domaine has garnered well-earned praise as a beacon of Roussillon quality. The 2012 Cotes du Roussillon Les Vignes de Bila-Haut, representing, as usual, tank-raised Grenache Blanc, Macabeu, and Grenache Gris, some from chalky soils around Latour-de-France, but largely from granite heights in Lesquerde, beautifully illustrates not just the ability of Roussillon whites to convey vivacity, juiciness and invigoration at relatively low acidity, but also the ability of the best growers and sites to render gorgeous whites despite the challenges of the 2012 vintage. More than that, it offers incomprehensible value! Peach fuzz, lime zest, mint, fennel white pepper, salt, alkalinity, and an ineffable and uncanny sense of crystalline mineral impingement all keep this juicy cuvee invigorating as well as intriguing, and it manages to at once envelope the palate in luscious pineapple and peach fruit while at the same time broadcasting shimmering, vibratory interactivity into a finish notable not just for its vibrancy and complexity but also its sheer refreshment. 92 points. David Schildknecht, reviewer."

**\*\* AFFORDABLE LUXURY \*\***

note: I have between 3 cases and 10 cases of all three of these fantastic red Languedoc. e-mail orders are accepted

**Chateau Saint Roch "Chimere" 2012 @ \$17.99 per bottle** (\$191.88/case = \$15.99 mix-match)

Cotes du Roussillon Villages. **93 points RP!** "Made from 60% Grenache, 30% Syrah and 10% Carignan, the 2012 Cotes du Roussillon Villages Chimeres is **mind-blowing stuff that comes from 100 to 105 year-old vines** and spent 8-12 months in a combination of 500-liter barrels and concrete vats. From primarily schist soils, it boast knockout aromas of black currants, smoked earth, licorice and wild herbs that give way to a full-bodied, voluptuously textured effort that has a loaded mid-palate, no hard edges and serious length on the finish. Possessing a solid 4-5 years of prime drinking (if not more), it's **a brilliant value that readers need to snatch up.**"

**FORTANT 2011 mountain vines CARIGNAN @ \$17.99 per bottle** (\$191.88/case = \$15.99 mix-match)

Wow. Intense peppercorns and herbs with purple fruit richness; no RP ratings but might be the best red of this entire offer! A two-time customer favorite at tastings. From the impressive 2011 Languedoc vintage (in some respects, better than 2012) and a wine that is impressive now with some breathing and will really knock socks off with prime cut of steak with simple salt/pepper grilling. Drink now through 2018 and beyond. I have a couple cases in-stock for the weekend, with more on order for next week too.

**Chateau Puech Haut 2011 "Prestige" Saint Drezeroy @ \$17.99 per bottle** (\$215.88/case, mix-match)

Coteaux du Languedoc (Saint Drezeroy). 91 points RP. "A **sensational offering** from proprietor Gerard Bru, the 2011 Prestige is the estate's least expensive wine. **Readers may remember the fabulous review the 2010 Prestige received, and the 2011 is just as special.** With Bru's top Reserve wine selling for nearly \$100 a bottle, the Prestige cuvee is an outstanding value. Interestingly, Bru has had three of the greatest winemaking consultants on Planet Earth working for him, first Michel Rolland, followed by Claude Gros and now Philippe Cambie. A blend

of 60-75-year-old vine Grenache (55%) and 40-year old Syrah (45%), all grown on limestone soils dominated by the famous large rocks (galets rous) also found in parts of Chateauneuf du Pape. The wine is aged in concrete tanks prior to being bottled unfiltered. Some of the vineyards are farmed organically and others biodynamically. The wine exhibits a tremendous perfume of sweet raspberries, spring flowers, forest floor, truffles and lavender as well as a beautiful texture, a full-bodied mouthfeel, stunning velvety tannins and purity, and a long finish. **This is the “real deal”.**

That's all for this special offer on wines from the Languedoc - **email orders are accepted** - and ALL of the wines in this offer are IN-STOCK in quantities ranging from a couple of cases on up to 10 cases total, so there is PLENTY of good red and white Languedoc wine to go around - especially for folks who like to mix-and-match.

**\*\* Postscript \*\***

A quick clarification for those interested in **the WOOD CASE offer, the wood cases are \$150 per case and that can be mixed between the RED and the WHITE of Domaine La Grange** - but must be full case orders to get the \$150 price and the wood box. Inquire with Dave for details, or stop in to check out the lovely boxes (and the tasty wine).

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www.brightwines.com 651-748-0793

2420 Margaret Street North Saint Paul, MN 55109

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