

Domaine de l'Hortus,
Grande Cuvée Rouge 2021
Pic Saint-Loup, Languedoc, France



PRODUCER

Located in the heart of the Pic Saint-Loup appellation in the Languedoc, Domaine de l'Hortus was established by Jean Orliac in the late seventies. A keen rock climber and recent agricultural college graduate, Jean recognised the potential of Mount Hortus' abandoned and steep, limestone slopes for growing both red and white grapes successfully. Fortunately, the land was unwanted, and therefore cheap, so Jean managed to purchase 50 hectares. He then spent the next 15 years understanding the complex soil structures and carefully selecting the right parcels for each grape variety, before releasing their first vintage in 1990. Over the years, this unique location has persuaded his four children to return home and take over different parts of the business. Now over forty years later, Domaine de l'Hortus is a flag-bearer for the appellation and with 80 hectares to their name, Francois, Yves, Marie and Martin Orliac continue to drive it forwards.

VINEYARDS

The vineyards stretch across a deep valley in between two mountains: the Pic-Saint-Loup and the Hortus. Jean Orliac planted small plots, depending on the grape variety and exposure, on the slopes of both mountains. The Grand Cuvée is sourced from the higher mid-slopes. The limestone terraces of Mount Hortus reflect the heat and allow Mourvèdre to ripen well. Whereas the cooler north-east facing slopes of Mount Pic suit both Grenache and Syrah. The plots are surrounded by oak and pine tree forests which provide protection from the wind. Jean's children have implemented higher planting densities and follow sustainable practices in the vineyards. For example, no pesticides or insecticides are used and cover crops are planted to boost soil quality and improve biodiversity.

VINTAGE

The Domaine lost 50% of production in 2021 due to a severely damaging frost in April. The weather that followed was very cool and delayed ripening, and the summer was significantly cooler and more humid than usual. These cooler conditions translate into great freshness, aromatic complexity and vibrancy in the wines.

VINIFICATION

Upon arrival at the winery, the grapes were destemmed and crushed. Fermentation took place in temperature-controlled stainless-steel tanks and lasted for 25-30 days. The free-run and press-wine were then blended together and underwent malolactic fermentation. The wines were then kept in stainless-steel tanks for six months then aged for 12 months in used oak barrels (225L and 400L) before the final blend was assembled and bottled.

TASTING NOTES

This wine has an elegant nose of garrigue herbs and bright black cherry fruit. The vibrant palate displays generous red and black fruit with notes of cocoa and spices. Well-balanced with fine-grained tannins and lifted acidity, the persistent finish is long and layered.

Grape Varieties	65% Syrah 30% Mourvèdre 5% Grenache
Winemaker	Martin Orliac
Closure	Natural Cork
ABV	13.5%
Acidity	4.78g/L
Wine pH	3.7
Bottle Sizes	75cl
Notes	Sustainable, Vegetarian, Vegan