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2021



LES VIGNOBLES
FONCALIEU

L'ÂME VIGNERONNE DEPUIS 1967



2021 PRESS PACK

*Growing our
future together*



*14 July at the Comptoir de la
Cité in Carcassonne*

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One for all and all for the future

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Co-operative values form the cement that binds winegrowers within the Foncalieu group, but they also share a desire to enhance their vineyard sites and aim for excellence and authenticity, all of which is fuelled by sustainability.

Over half a century after its inception in 1967 in Arzens, Aude, Vignobles Foncalieu is still as enterprising as ever and has become a force to be reckoned with on the Southern French wine scene. Finding strength in unity, it now embraces Celliers du Nouveau Monde in Puichéric, Vignerons de la Cité de Carcassonne, Vignerons du Pays d'Ensérune near Béziers, and more recently, the La Redorte & Castelnaud d'Aude winery, and that of the Montagnac winegrowers.

Terroir diversity

Each of these mergers has broadened the group's scope – which now covers three AOPs and an array of four IGPs – allowing winegrowers to tap into a 30-strong varietal range over an outstanding collection of vineyard sites covering 7,850 ha. From the terraces of the Aude, home to the famous due-south-facing hillsides of the Minervois, to the stony limestone soils of Corbières-Boutenac, the distinctive red earth in Cazedarnes, Saint-Chinian and the deep soils lining the Mediterranean, this mosaic of vineyards produces both wines for pleasure and outstanding pours, embracing every consumer taste.

Quality and CSR

Consequently, the 'Les Vignobles Foncalieu' signature is now one of the 50 most recognised brand names in the world. The 1251 wine growers who continue to write the story of this vinous flagship deserve no less. Their ambition now is to ramp up their Corporate Social Responsibility credentials (CSR), rosés, digitalisation and innovations in their vineyards and packaging.

New presidency new ambitions

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Interview with Jean-Marie Cassagnol, chairman of the Vignobles Foncalieu board since December 2020

“Our co-operative dimension is still a major advantage”

How would you describe the progress your company has achieved so far?

Foncalieu’s knowledge of the marketplace and the expectations of its customers is deeply ingrained in its psyche and has allowed it to successfully stay focused despite the ups and downs our wine region has experienced, and develop a differentiation strategy based on premiumisation. This choice wasn’t the easy route but it has now given us a competitive edge where we can provide a distinctively broad-ranging, tiered range of wines that epitomise our variety of vineyard sites and the work achieved over the past fifty years by our staff and members.

You were elected chairman in December 2020, what will your priorities be?

We have many challenges to overcome, particularly the need to respond to social and environmental issues. Ramping up our CSR commitment is therefore one of my priorities and revolves around three objectives: integrating the protection of our environment, our vineyard sites through the organic and HVE schemes; sharing enhanced resources among the group’s various stakeholders; and getting our partners and clients on board as we head towards increasingly sustainable practices. Another ambition drives me

and that is to maintain our capacity for innovation and to continue to listen to our customers so that we can enhance the value of our products and accomplish our primary mission which is to develop our group and consequently, rural life.

How will Foncalieu continue to stay ahead in years to come?

On top of our vision of the marketplace which allows us to constantly evolve our production facilities, our co-operative dimension is still a major advantage. At Foncalieu, decisions are made by the winegrowers and they retain control over their supply base. Given their number, galvanising their attention on issues such as sustainability requires a little time, but once the locomotive is in motion, it goes full pelt, taking with it both partners and suppliers. This powerful capability has always allowed Foncalieu to stay ahead of the curve, experiment and ensure its future, driven by principles. Safeguarding the co-operative model also promotes the transfer of farms down through the generations and the future of winegrowing...





Strategy

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A three-pronged approach to conquering markets
A growing thirst for organic wines, quality rosés and new formats: consumer expectations resonate perfectly with Vignobles Foncalieu

Ethical supplier

The range of ethically produced wines is growing in ever-increasing circles at Vignobles Foncalieu, echoing the group's strategy. So much so that the group was awarded the outstanding score of 13.2 out of 20 for its CSR project following an audit by Coop de France. The much-publicised Corporate Social Responsibility scheme embraces the environmental, social, economic and ethical aspects of businesses. Vignobles Foncalieu has leveraged every part of the company to rise to this challenge: 4,500 hl of organically certified wines will come on-stream in 2021; the amount of SO₂ in the wines is constantly on the decline; and most of the wines are now certified Eve Vegan, meaning that no substance of animal origin is used in the clarification process.

Championing rosé

Vignobles Foncalieu did not jump on the rosé bandwagon, but rather championed its production. With sales up 7% by volume in a year and 37% of production now pink, the group has become a rosé powerhouse and aims to market 10 million bottles of rosé by 2025. The secret to their success is a range of 14 grape varieties vinified as rosé, including the rare varieties Piquepoul noir and Sauvignon gris, along with other quality grapes that are harvested by night and go direct-to-press in a pneumatic press to preserve aroma and freshness. Their success can also be ascribed to anticipating market trends. Consequently, Foncalieu-branded rosés run the gamut, from high-end to aromatic gems.

Thinking inside the box

At Vignobles Foncalieu, innovation also involves packaging formats. Alternative containers, that get increasingly lighter, recyclable and sustainable, are used across the range, and are rapidly gaining traction. Several new releases, like the Ensedune range in 50 cl formats, come in response to changing consumer patterns. In 2020, a new dual-head bag-in-box filling line doubled production capacity to 2 million boxes in order to fulfil clients' needs, capitalise on new markets and develop novel formats like the cubic 3-litre box.



Puichéric

Corporate Social Responsibility

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Unwavering commitment

The Foncalieu group has waged a long-running campaign to protect the planet but also the health of its winegrowers and consumers, and to build a better world. From the supply side through to marketing, there is no shortage of examples of good practice.

Trailblazers

There is no denying that Vignobles Foncalieu has a long-standing commitment to sustainability. It all started in 2001 when the group signed the very first collective Land Use Contract in France, on the initiative of one of its member wineries. Six years later, another milestone was crossed with the creation of vineyards earmarked for experimenting with grape varieties geared to the needs of tomorrow's vineyards. "We waited until the grape varieties were authorised in 2016 before planting them in a bid to drastically reduce use of inputs", recounts the group's head viticulturist Gabriel Ruetsch. Concurrently with this, Vignobles Foncalieu pioneered the use of mating disruption to combat grapevine moths. This alternative control method employs synthetic

pheromones to prevent the moths from mating and has already put an end to spraying in half the vineyards – and counting!

Greener than green

Member growers have their sights clearly set on organic farming and are provided with support, training and enhanced remuneration to do so. 165 hectares of vines have already been certified and a further 180 ha are in the switch-over phase. The medium-term objective is to achieve HVE3 certification (High Environmental Value) for all Foncalieu brands, versus 30% currently. The endorsement certifies that a farm implements practices that protect and use the natural areas within the vineyards and surrounding the farm. How? "By protecting biodiversity, by reducing inputs to ultimately achieve zero pesticide residues in the wines and by using fertilisation and irrigation sustainability", sums up Gabriel Ruetsch.



In the vanguard

Prevention is better than cure is the guiding principle behind the use of plant protection products, thereby keeping them to an absolute minimum. This rationale has led Vignobles Foncalieu to use increasingly innovative solutions including qPCR diagnosis kits which allow early detection of the onset of powdery mildew, use of drones to hunt down flavescence dorée and vineyard surveillance using connected traps fitted with mini cameras. In 2021, software should also provide digital tracking of the active substances used by winegrowers. "Similarly, a network of weather stations connected to ground sensors allows us to measure the rate of humidity in the soil so that we can accurately manage drip irrigation and save water resources", stresses Gabriel Ruetsch.



Winegrowers Foncalieu



Nathalie Etribeau :
Director of winemaking



Gabriel Ruetsch : *Head viticulturist*

Social commitment

No CSR strategy or co-operative model can be run without factoring in people. Hence, developing in-house skills and promoting employees; improving working conditions and giving staff a sense of responsibility; along with equal opportunities and gender equality, are all part of Vignobles Foncalieu's priorities. The group is also mindful to create a virtuous circle with its partners by developing sustainable procurements. 100% of the group's suppliers of capsules and labels are French and listed based on their certifications and standards. On a different level, 82% of waste produced at the company's head office is recycled and reused.



Proud of their Nu release

Vignobles Foncalieu is proud to say that it was the first to market wine (NU.VO.TE) from the new French grape variety Artaban developed by the National Agronomic Research Institute (INRA). Next year, the first wines will be made from Floréal, a grape variety grown alongside Vidoc, Soreli, Sauvignier gris and Monarch rouge over thirty or so hectares – a small area so far but a giant leap for the future of winegrowing. These varieties can not only ward off the main vine diseases but also respond to climate change issues.



Community spirit

In the 1990s, Vignobles Foncalieu established a partnership with the Pennautier rehabilitation centre for disabled workers. The disabled staff is employed to identify closure mistakes on the bottling lines. To make their task easier, Foncalieu even funded the development of an automatic uncorking machine by technical students at the Jules-Fil sixth form college in Carcassonne.





*The Comptoir de la Cité
in Carcassonne*



Château Haut-Gléon
IN THE CORBIÈRES

Regional Outreach

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Increasingly engaging with consumers by offering them a memorable experience is Vignobles Foncalieu's ambition and it is embodied by Château Haut-Gléon and the Comptoir de la Cité in Aude.

Vive la Belle Époque !

With its metal roof and structure, its rock garden and grotto, its mouldings, gilding, stucco and art nouveau murals – and of course, its breath-taking view of Carcassonne's Unesco-listed fortress – welcome to the Comptoir de la Cité, the former palace of Micheline liqueur.

The building, listed as a historical monument, was built in 1885 to distil the namesake liqueur before successively housing a billiards academy, a dance hall and an insurance office. After 18 months' work and a 1.5-million-euro investment, Vignobles Foncalieu have transformed it into a 'temple of good taste'. The basement provides storage for bottled wines; on the ground floor, a shop displays the finest Foncalieu wines and other regional products; while on the first floor, the hall of mirrors welcomes groups for seminars and tasting workshops. But it doesn't end there – on the terrace, which offers panoramic vistas of the mediaeval city of Carcassonne, after-work summer parties create a festive and uber-trendy atmosphere. The Comptoir de la Cité has a wine bar offering a full range of entertainment due to a number of partnerships with, for example, the Carcassonne rugby union club and the prestigious 5-star Hôtel de la Cité for the 14 July celebrations and the Carcassonne Festival, a cultural summer event combining opera, theatre, dance and music.

www.comptoirdelacite.com

Launched in 2020, the online shop offers internet users access to the full range of Foncalieu wines. Digital events include wine festivals, private sales and a click-and-collect option to make life easier for city dwellers in Carcassonne who want to collect their purchases from the Comptoir de la Cité.





No better name...

The aptly-named Vallée du Paradis or Paradise Valley opens onto unspoilt expanses of garrigue and woodland. This haven of peace, where not a single sound breaks the silence, provides an idyllic setting for Château Haut-Gléon in Villesèque-des-Corbières.

With its 6th-century chapel and its mediaeval castle, the wine estate has a rich past whose roots go way back in history. When it took over this outstanding property, Vignobles Foncalieu obviously added another string to its bow in the Corbières appellation and IGP Vallée du Paradis. But more than that, it also gained an exceptional venue for hosting tourists and customers. Visitors can come stay in the chateau, rent the grape pickers' house or the spring house, or alternatively get the whole estate to themselves and enjoy the views out over the wooded hills, the leafy terraces and grounds, the swimming pool and the summer kitchen – a dream come true!



Le Comptoir de la Cité



Foncalieu wines

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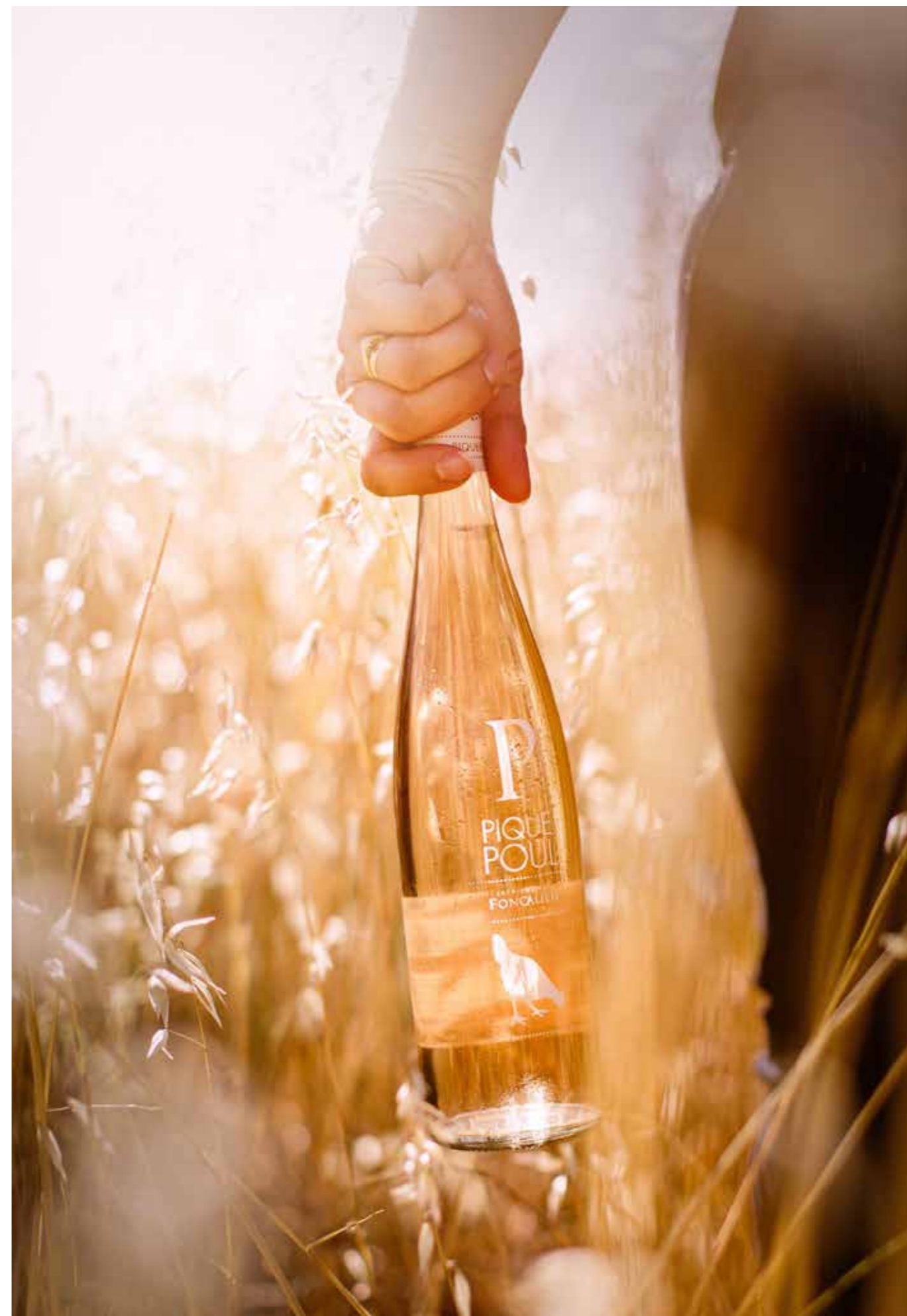


□ An extensive choice means happy customers

Awareness of Vignobles Foncalieu wines is constantly growing and revolves around four ranges: the ethical brands, the chateaux, the terroir-driven offerings and varietal wines. This incredible diversity has one common denominator – quality.

□ Simply the best

Vignobles Foncalieu has achieved the highest international quality standards, the award for the best French co-operative by the Revue du Vin de France magazine in 2012 and German publishers Meininger in 2015, but it has also entered the short list of the world's 50 most famous wine brands (Drinks International 2017).



Sustainable wines

The green revolution

In 2021, Foncalieu pushed the sustainable boundaries even further by launching Green Gang, a range of IGP Pays d'Oc that is both organic and off-beat and comes in the blends Cabernet Franc-Marselan, Sauvignon-Chardonnay and Cinsault-Grenache. The 100% bio-based and recyclable packaging sets the tempo with its aluminium capsule, labels made from natural paper and pigments and organic cork.



Virtuous appellation

Jammy nose of black fruits and spices. Great weight on the palate, halfway between firm tannins and aromatic persistency. Enthusiasts will have recognised the defining features of Les 3 Pointes AOP Minervois. The driving force behind the label is a couple of environmentally-friendly winegrowers keen to maximise the quality of organically-farmed grapes.



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Organic, and good

Two IGP Pays d'Oc labels have switched to organic. The first is Sillages Albariño. Vignobles Foncalieu was looking for a grape variety whose quality would be enhanced by the vineyard sites of Languedoc and it found what it was looking for with Albariño. The Spanish-born one-of-a-kind grape is now permitted under the IGP Pays d'Oc designation but Vignobles Foncalieu was the first to plant it. The premium quality Sauvignon gris, which is brimming over with aromatics, comes in white and organic in the Les Extraordinaires Le Griset range. The Les Cardounettes collection, available as Cabernet-Sauvignon, Chardonnay and Syrah, has been given a whole new design to better encapsulate the bird and the thistle it is named after



A Vin de France oddity

By showcasing the new grape varieties Artaban and Vidoc under the Nu.Vo.Te label, Vignobles Foncalieu has once again proven that it is an inveterate innovator. Made as organic with no added sulphites, the varieties are produced through pollination, i.e. through sexual reproduction, and are the perfect match for Languedoc typicity and tomorrow's climate. Showing respect for the environment and the health of winegrowers and consumers alike, Nu.Vo.Te is a light, fruity wine in a crowd-pleasing style.



Export markey

Two new IGP Pays d'Oc-endorsed organic ranges have been released. With labels that exude Mediterranean sunshine and lifestyle, Instant Sud embraces three blends as a tribute to the authentic nature of Languedoc vineyard sites – Cabernet-Marselan, Sauvignon-Chardonnay and Cinsault-Grenache. The same dual varietals offer an ode to pleasurable, fruit-forward wines in the O Natura range.

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THE CHATEAUX

A little taste of paradise

In a land blessed by the angels, Château Haut-Gléon's AOP Corbières flagships are sure to hit you with their golden arrow. The high-end, age-worthy Notre Dame label, the intense, generous red, refined white and moreish rosé Chateaux labels – and of course Les Sources de Gléon – all offer a perfect introduction to the typicity of the appellation. Under the IGP Vallée du Paradis label, the estate provides fuss-free wines packed with pleasure.



TERROIR-DRIVEN WINES

Hand-crafted boutique offerings

Proud of their expertise, a clutch of winegrowers rolled up their sleeves in 2001 to create a range of stellar wines. Seven years later, the Grands Vins workshop was born, producing wines to extremely strict specifications, including leaf removal, green harvesting, single vineyard selections, individual grape sorting, precision maturation in French oak barrels and slimmed down yields. The result of this haute couture approach is L'Apogée AOP Saint Chinian, Le Lien AOP Minervois, La Lumière AOP Corbières and Les Illustres IGP Coteaux d'Ensérune, each one telling its own story. All of them have been listed as outstanding wines in Robert Parker's The Wine Advocate.





□ A nod to history

The ancient Domitian Way, which acts as a thread linking our three outstanding wine regions, inspired the creation of Via Nostrum. This range of AOP Corbières, Minervois and Saint-Chinian offers a journey to the heart of Languedoc. Its blends of Grenache and Syrah combine balance and character, black fruits and spices, delivering an interpretation of this historic route.



□ The aptly-named Trésor Cathare

Legend has it that the Cathars hid treasure in the outskirts of Carcassonne before disappearing. Could it be this single varietal Cabernet-Sauvignon IGP Cité de Carcassonne? The hillside vineyards bask in the dual influence of the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, drawing their qualities from the limestone vein and clayey soils. The result is an elegant, fruity, balanced wine.



VARIETAL WINES

Original fruit

There is no end of surprises with the four-strong Signatures range that breathes new life into forgotten heritage grapes or varieties with offbeat aromatic profiles. This 'cabinet of curiosities' includes Piquepoul rosé, a Piquepoul noir under the IGP Coteaux d'Enserune designation. The white AOP Saint-Chinian 'Petit Paradis' offers a winning combination of Marsanne, Vermentino and Grenache. Two organic wines complete the line-up – 'Sillages Albariño' and 'Griset', the amazing single varietal Sauvignon gris made as a rosé.



Signature label

Versant Sud for the Mediterranean grape varieties; Versant Nord for the northern grape varieties. Each vine variety needs the ideal exposure, hence the name of these 8 single varietal IGP Pays d'Oc wines that can be defined by their aromatic spectrum, their purity of expression and their elegant style. Choose which one works best depending on the food and the occasion at www.leversant.fr. The range welcomes a limited edition label in 2021 – Versant Grenache rosé. Foncalieu commissioned internationally renowned French street artist Nerone, whose colourful work has adorned walls in Paris, New York, Berlin, Bangkok and Seoul, to design its packaging. Inspired by nature, positive energy and vibrant city atmospheres, he totally resonates with the brand.



Proud to be authentic

People are not something Vignobles Foncalieu takes lightly, as evidenced by its Ensédune range. The labels bear the signature of the co-operative winegrowers who craft them. Proudly differentiated, both in their contents and packaging, the range covers six novel single varietals: Marsanne, Muscat sec, Cabernet Franc, Malbec, Marselan and Petit Verdot wines labelled IGP Coteaux d'Enserune.



VIGNOBLES FONCALIEU FACTS & FIGURES

1967
> THE FOUNDING DATE OF VIGNOBLES FONCALIEU

1251
> CO-OPERATIVE WINEGROWERS

106
> EMPLOYEES

67%
> OF PRODUCTION IS WHITE AND ROSÉ

7850
> OF VINES

47M€
> MILLION IN REVENUE IN 2020

49%
> OF EXPORT SALES FOR PACKAGED WINES

#LIVEYOURMOMENT



BY "Nerone"





LES VIGNOBLES
FONCALIEU

L'ÂME VIGNERONNE DEPUIS 1967

Gaëlle Soriano – Press Officer
+33 (0)4 68 76 21 68
sorianog@foncalieu.com

Sarah Hargreaves • Press Relations Agency
TÉL. +33 (0)4 67 54 70 03 • Mob. +33 (0)6 13 61 17 84
sarah.presse@orange.fr • www.inthemoodpress.com



www.foncalieu.com