

LE CLOS DU GRAVILLAS

Saint-Jean-de-Minervois

This 8-hectare property in the high ground of Saint-Jean-de-Minervois was purchased in 1996 by John and Nicole Bojanowski. John, an itinerant originally from Kentucky, attended Brown and wanted to travel the world, which brought him to meet Nicole, who is from rather closer, in Narbonne. They moved everything into organics with the intent to follow the 1990s model for the Languedoc, of bigger being better, and then realized that their base material was imperfect for that. “Carignan didn’t want to go there,” John says, and they dedicated themselves to that grape—enough that John organized the first Carignan Renaissance tasting in Béziers in 2004—plus local fare such as terret. This resulted in a bounty of nineteen varieties in the vineyards, which has only added complexity and depth to Gravillas’s joyous, mineral-driven wines. The inherent ripeness of the south has been balanced by shorter, lighter macerations, which resulted in **Sous les Cailloux des Grillons**—“our Beaujolais of the south,” as Nicole puts it—a red blend of fifteen varieties from younger vines; it shows juiciness and a bit of syrah pepper to anchor it.

Rendez-Vous Sur La Lune is a red Minervois built around syrah and carignan but leaning to a fruitier side and a limestone ping. The true depth of carignan comes out in **Lo Vièlh Carignan de 100 Ans**, a pure specimen from century-old vines; it shows the grape’s remarkable inner energy and a charcoal and burnt-sage bite. In a similar way, **Emmenez-Moi Au Bout du Terret** (a play on “take me to the ends of the earth,” presumably from the Charles Aznavour song) frames the beauty of terret gris with a sunflower-seed nuttiness, chivey bite, and dried-lemon verve. Indeed, the whites especially show the beauty of the Minervois terroir, like **L’Inattendu**, from grenache blanc, grenache gris, and macabeu; it is energy-filled and flinty and yet has a nearly oily eau-de-vie side. But there is also **Mademoiselle Lily**, a roussanne-and-viognier blend that matches plushness with energy; and **À Fleur de Peau**, a subtle skin-macerated take on the local specialty, muscat, accented with yellow mustard seed in addition to the usual floral loops.

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