

Domaine de Font-Sane

Gigondas

Domaine de Font-Sane is one of the most rewarding stops in the lovely village of Gigondas, due in no small part to the enormous talent and gracious manner of the Veronique Peysson-Cunty.

A Female Legacy

Passed down from father to daughter, Veronique is the 4th generation of the Peysson family to practice viticulture and wine making at this outstanding Gigondas estate. In many respects the story at Domaine de Font-Sane is not unusual in the southern Rhone Valley; the family has cultivated vines in the village for generations but always sold all or most of their wine in bulk to *negociants* until Veronique's father, Gilbert, decided to estate bottle wine at the Domaine.

The Estate

Font-Sane is a typically small estate, comprising about 35 acres (25 of which are in Gigondas, the remainder in nearby Cotes de Ventoux). All the parcels used for the Gigondas are in sight of this small winery, where the view of the rugged *Dentelles de Montmirail* (the splendid

outcropping of rock and heather that constitutes the final vestiges of the Alps as they descend into the Vaucluse plain) is nothing short of spectacular.

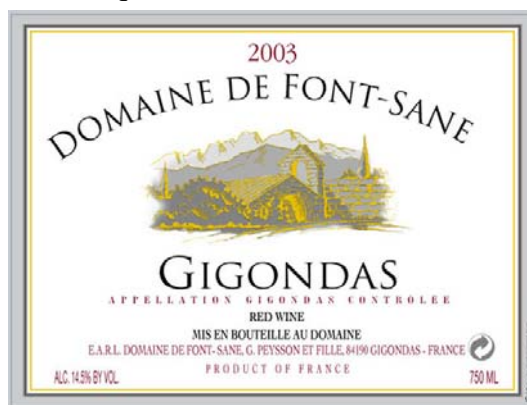
The Vineyards

The average age of the vines at Font-Sane are nearly 40 years old. The youngest 20 year old vines are planted hundreds of meters up the foot of the *Dentelles de Montmirail*. Important parcels of 50+ year old vines are on the middle slopes. A small plot of 100 year old vines sits adjacent to the house and cellars on more level ground. The yields are low. The mix of grape varieties is weighted towards Grenache, but Veronique also puts fully 25% Syrah into its blend for Syrah's elegant aromas of dark fruit and fresh wild green herbs and its firm structure. Lesser amounts of Cinsault and Mourvèdre are used. Both the complexity

and the balance in Font-Sane's Gigondas comes from the mix of 4 different grape varieties planted on 5 five soils with every conceivable exposure and at various elevations from 150 to 350 meters. This creates an exceptionally diverse array of aromatics and structural characteristics.

The Wines

The harvest is done by hand. The whole bunches, never de-stemmed, are pushed up into closed cement vats. The vatting lasts from 8-15 days, and the wine is drawn off as soon as the alcoholic fermentation is finished. Not only is the relatively short vatting noteworthy, but so is the very cool temperature of the fermentation. These two factors, along with a very short time in wood (aging is done, as is traditional in the south, in large, old oak foudres), go a very long way to explaining the "House Style" here: exceptionally fresh, cool aromatics; great conservation of fruit; and great finesse from the fine balance of acidity with the very fine, "sweet" tannins.



Masculine Wine With Strong Feminine Side

In blind tastings among the growers of Gigondas, Font-Sane is often chosen as the best of the appellation. Her male counterparts contend that her wine exhibits a certain feminine charm which is both easily identifiable and immediately ingratiating because it provides a counterpoint to the typically more rustic, macho wines of the Gigondas appellation. In a wine that is known for its power and vigor, she has infused a soul. Veronique contends that her wine is merely the result of her desire to produce balanced wines that check the often aggressive tannins of other Gigondas. Clearly, she has succeeded in imbuing her powerful, virile Gigondas with a healthy, feminine side.