

# MAS DE DAUMAS GASSAC

GUIDE  
**PARKER**

*des vins de*  
**France**  
(Avant dernière édition)

This is the most famous *vin de pays* in France. And why shouldn't it be, given the fact that the widely read French magazine *Gault-Milau* called it the "Lafite-Rothschild of the Languedoc-Roussillon" area and the London *Times* claimed it tasted like a "Latour" ! Fame came almost instantly once the first wine was released in 1978. The genius behind this domaine, located 18 miles west of Montpellier, is Aimé Guibert, who, along with his wife, purchased the estate in 1970. Told by the late Professor Henri Enjalbert of the University of Bordeaux that his property was sitting on the very same type of porous soils that made up the best parts of the Médoc, particularly the estates of Lafite-Rothschild and Latour, Guibert began planting his estate with a variety of Bordeaux grapes such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, and Malbec. I recently did a vertical tasting of every Mas de Daumas Gassac red made, and none of them were in danger of falling apart. The earlier vintages were more muscular and have turned out slightly more rustic than I am sure the proprietor would have preferred, but all have stood the test of time admirably. They still remain rich, full-bodied, impressively constituted big wines.

The two recent vintages, 1988 and 1989, have sacrificed none of the splendid ripeness and admirable extraction of the earlier wines, yet they have added a degree of finesse. There is no question that the older age of a vine makes for a potentially finer wine, and the vineyards of Mas de Daumas Gassac are just now reaching full maturity. Both the 1988 and 1989 are black/ruby/purple wines with huge aromas of sweet black fruits, some vanillin from new oak, herbs, and minerals. In the mouth the 1989 is more opulent and the 1988 more structured, but both are full-bodied, intensely concentrated wines that can be drunk in 4-5 years yet should evolve gracefully for 15-20 years. Although prices have risen, this remains one of the most remarkable nonappellation wines of France. The fact that it is better than many appellation wines must be unsettling to the French authorities.

The white wine is also a knockout, but, unlike the red, it must be drunk within 2-3 years of the vintage. It tastes amazingly like a Condrieu, although the percentage of Viognier has rarely exceeded 40%. The 1990 white wine is a blend of 30% Viognier, 30% Chardonnay, 20% Petit Manseng, 5% Muscat, 5% Marsanne, 5% Roussanne, and 5% Bourboulenc. This is an intensely fragrant, seductive wine, with a great deal of fruit, finesse, and complexity. My experience is that it drinks beautifully for about 2 years and begins a rapid decline in its third year. The 1990 spent 40 days in new oak casks. Unfortunately, only 1,000 cases were made, but it is worth a special effort to find.

Much of the great progress enjoyed by the Languedoc-Roussillon wines in the 1980s must certainly be attributable to the immense success and laudatory publicity that Guibert's wines have justifiably received. The public has accepted them and the critics have swooned over them. Moreover, they appear to be improving with each new vintage. Wath else can anyone want?



Tél. 33 (0)467 577 128

Fax 33 (0)467 574 103

Web. [http://www.daumas\\_gassac.com](http://www.daumas_gassac.com)

E-mail : [contact@daumas\\_gassac.com](mailto:contact@daumas_gassac.com)

**one of the most remarkable nonappellation wines of France. The fact that it is better than many appellation wines must be unsettling to the French authorities.**