

## Website Wine Word and Video Tape – March 2016



### Mas de Daumas Gassac '04, '01 and '00

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Before I get carried away with [Bordeaux 2015](#), I thought I'd let you in on some mature vintages of Languedoc top-end pioneer Mas de Daumas Gassac I've tasted recently. I last wrote about this property a few years back, then looking at the [2007](#), [2004](#) and [2001](#) vintages. The verdict was that you need to give the reds time in bottle to show their best. Over the past couple of months, I've re-tasted the 2004 and the 2001 and the other night I had the 2000. The

tastings reconfirm that Daumas Gassac is a wonderfully rewarding buy for those with patience and a cellar and who enjoy sturdy reds that are characterful, warm and opinionated.

I'd tasted Daumas Gassac a lot in the 1990s so when I was down in the Languedoc in 2000 making a small quantity of red wine in Faugères, Aniane and the Haute Vallée du Gassac were less than an hour away by car, so I visited the Daumas Gassac cellars several times. The Gassac valley is beautiful and it is easy to see how Aimé and Véronique Guibert fell in love with the place in the early 1970s. But it's not the natural beauty that confers advantage here so much as the soil and underground limestone geology. Still, it was brave to have the courage to plant Cabernet in such a remote spot in 1972, even if your geologist and winemaking friends were telling you the land had all the hallmarks of 'grand cru' terroir. If you happen to be holidaying in the region in the summer, the property is well worth a visit. If you can't visit in person you can get a sense of the beauty and the history of the place on the Daumas Gassac website [here](#).



In their youth the Cabernet blends are somewhat idiosyncratic. From barrel they are all stalky blackcurrant freshness but then they seem to go dumb for a while after bottling and need at least eight to ten years to start showing their wares. I've not had the opportunity of tasting their exclusive Cabernet blend, Emile Peynaud, named after the Bordeaux oenologist who famously consulted for Daumas Gassac in the 1970s. Drop me a comment if you have as I'd be interested to know your thoughts. The regular bottling is usually 70% Cabernet Sauvignon with the remainder a melange of other varieties [Merlot, Tannat, Malbec, Syrah, Pinot, Cab Franc etc]. The wine spends 12-17 months or so in oak, but only a small percentage is new. The regular red is widely available the world over. It's perhaps most cost effective to order it en primeur, either directly from Daumas Gassac or [in the UK] from The Wine Society.



A quick word about the Daumas Gassac Blanc. It is really worth seeking out. It's a wonderful blend of Chardonnay, Viognier, Petit Manseng with a host of other varieties making up the final quarter of the blend. The wine has wonderful depth, length and freshness. I apply the opposite logic to the white than for the red, ie drink it as soon as you can and certainly in its first few years to maximize the fruit and zip. Again I'd be interested to hear if you've enjoyed older vintages of the white and what its characteristics are. Meanwhile, here are my notes from my recent tastings of the 2004, 2001 and 2000 vintages here:



### **Mas de Daumas Gassac, Haut Vallée de Gassac, Vin de Pays de L'Hérault, 2004**

*Mid red; translucent at the centre; some spice, blackcurrants and dust [72%, 6% Syrah]; elegant palate; soft and harmonious; lacks depth relative to the 2000 and 2001 to me. Fine and elegant. May blossom further though... Tasted 1/16. Drink now-2020. 86+*

### **Mas de Daumas Gassac, Haut Vallée de Gassac, Vin de Pays de L'Hérault, 2001**

*Mid red; wonderful bouquet of blackcurrants and black fruits; lovely mature Cab aromatics [65% Cab with 10% Merlot]; depth, warmth; still more development to come here; tannins have some bite but a brilliant combination with roast lamb or beef. Impressive. Drink now-2020. Tasted 3/16. 91+*

### **Mas de Daumas Gassac, Haut Vallée de Gassac, Vin de Pays de L'Hérault, 2000**

*Mid red; depth; roasted mature aromatics; spices; dust; glossy palate; substantial; good depth; ripe and rounded tannins; more than a passing resemblance to very fine St Estèphe [69.5% Cab, 12% Merlot]; but with additional complexity. Still plenty of life for a sixteen year old wine. Drink now-2022. Tasted 3/16. 92+*

BTW I enjoyed this with a degree of voyeuristic jealousy – luckily wine writers [including Richard Hemming MW from [www.jancisrobinson.com](http://www.jancisrobinson.com)] comment on a recent thirty-year vertical tasting of Daumas Gassac at the property:

