

Château de Gaudou

“A winemaker and craftsman of the 21st century”

Fabrice Durou, aged 36, is the seventh in a long line of winemakers settled near Vire-sur-Lot, referred to as the Beverly Hills of the Cahors appellation by Michel Bettane. In 2000, after completing winemaking training, he returned to the fine family home in the Lot valley. At the time, the world of wine was going through a crisis linked to globalisation. The French market offered fewer opportunities. Demand changed. Few wine-lovers now accept to keep their wines for at least six years before drinking them. He crafted the new destiny of the estate.

In the space of just two vintages, Fabrice Durou made the transition from oaky wines with very long cellaring potential, which built the image of the estate, to wines that were equally concentrated but that could be enjoyed quickly. The change was driven essentially by the vineyard itself: Lower yields, greater ripeness, a pure, concentrated, aromatic grape. In the cellar, the trend was to have as few operations as possible. “We made a transition from the reign of oenologists to that of winemakers”, comments Fabrice Durou. Operations in the cellar are increasingly discreet: Racking was reduced and fining was done away with altogether. The Cahors wines are therefore less extracted and the terroir expresses itself more. The young winemaker then naturally adopted a cru-based logic. The product line increased from three cuvees to seven. The two greatest wines are 100 % Malbec and are grown on specific plots. One, crafted from modern Malbec vines, offers strength and concentration. The other, crafted from older vines planted sixty years ago, is a little capricious and offers small harvests. It boasts great aroma and finesse.



“I want to stay as close as possible to my terroir”, explains Fabrice Durou, “I want to produce the wine of a craftsman which is the fruit of my aspirations and personal development, not only of technical skill.” His new ambition and therefore his new cuvee is a great wine which is not matured in oak. A pure juice without any additives. A wine in which the grape expresses itself and the soil in which it grows. To express this quintessence of the grape, the château is currently installing a new cellar which will allow it to work by punching down the cap only, a gentle extraction method which offers the wine greater depth and finesse.

S.C.E.A DUROU & FILS- 46 700 Vire / Lot France - F.D.A. 18439156176

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Dom. Banc. CRCA PRAYSSAC N°01007268000 .CCP TOULOUSE N°2657 40 P N°TVA : FR 89 348 231 028 .N°

d'ACCISE : FR 93 547 E 3012

Château de Gaudou



Date of the first vineyard : gallo-roman times.
Area of the vineyards before phylloxera : 40 000 hectares
Creation of Cahors appellation : 1971
Present area : 4250 hectares
Approximate number of winemakers: 450
Grape varieties : Malbec, Merlot, Tannat
Density of planting : about 4900 plants/hectares

Geographic situation: along the valley of the river Lot.

Date of the first vineyard : gallo-roman times.

Climate : autumn usually sunny allowing late grape harvest.

The Château de Gaudou

Generations of winemakers : 7

Age of the first cellar : 1733

Age of the vineyard : majority is 33 years with some vines between 60 and 120 years.

Orientation : south-south-west

Land : second and third level of the hill.

Soil : gravel and clay

Grappes : Malbec, merlot, tannat

Situation of vineyards: surrounding the house.

Pruning : Guyot simple

Density of planting : 4200 à 5500 plants/hectare

Management of vineyards : grass, disbudding, thinning out of leaves, green harvest (for unripe grape selection).- « certification agriculture raisonnée et durable. »

Treatment : reasonable treatment

Traditional wine making, according to the vintage : Cold maceration, maceration of 3 to 6 weeks, warm maceration.

Number of employees : 5

Sales management : Brigitte et Fabrice Durou

Product management : René et Fabrice Durou

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The cult of excellence.

Blessed with excellent soils, the Gaudou vineyards spread over 40 hectares of gravel soils surrounding this ancestral estate.

Blessed also with an excellent climate and position, the vines are exposed to the sun (thanks to their south-south-west aspect) throughout the seasons, enjoying a microclimate that promotes ripening only found with the finest wines.

The Gaudou vineyards, whose vines are predominantly 40 years old, hug the gentle slopes of the third terraces of the Lot valley, regarded as an outstanding terroir among the finest of the Cahors appellation.

Being environmentally aware, we have opted for a sustainable approach to wine production. Since the beginning of the 1990s we have grown grass between the rows in the whole of the vineyard to make our vines considerably more vigorous and improve the level of the earth, exactly as things were at Gaudou at the beginning of the 20th Century.

Our total understanding of the terroir, developed over many generations, has led us to use only gravel soils with perfectly controlled care and know-how, adopting as our guiding principle rigorous quality standards at all stages of growing and winemaking.

The most significant factor in vineyard management is the green harvesting carried out in summer to improve the quality of the new crop.

After careful consideration, we decide on the best time to start harvesting, the climax to a year that we hope to be fruitful, creating a wine to meet the rigorous standards of a family that sets quality at the top of its agenda.

To ensure production of an outstanding vintage, the first step in our meticulous quality control process is the sorting of the grapes before winemaking begins.

The wine is then aged, a period during which it is left to the devices of the oak barrels which add to the range of flavours that make Château de Gaudou so distinctive.

Thanks to their two-hundred-year-old winemaking tradition, our wines today are renowned both throughout Europe and in the United States. During this time, we at Vire-sur-Lot have constantly striven to make improvements in winemaking and ageing, which makes our Cahors one of the most highly valued wines of its appellation.

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The Durou family

A noble line of winegrowers

For more than seven generations Château de Gaudou has been unswervingly faithful to its winemaking tradition. In the 18th Century Louis Durou settled in the hamlet of Gaudou on his marriage to Marie-Louisa Buge, whose family owned the property.

Yet it is difficult to know how far back in time the long line of the Durou family goes. Indeed, the parish registers mention a Marguerite Durou in the year 1500. It is recorded that they lived in this valley of the Lot department and worked its land for many generations. The Durou family at Gaudou became involved in the wine trade very early on. The accounts ledgers at that time record business dealings all over France, and especially in Paris. Jean-Charles-Edouard Durou, a great traveller, established many business contacts which promoted the cause of our wine. His wife, Julia Garrigou, who was very good at dealing with people, made a considerable contribution to the estate's reputation.

Her only son, Louis Jean Durou, was forced to cut short his brilliant academic career to take over the reins from his father who had died prematurely. He very quickly mastered the alchemical aspects of wine, bringing improvement to customary local winemaking practices. His know-how, universally acknowledged, was to prove crucial in the development of mechanisation on the Gaudou estate. The two wars which scarred the first half of the 20th Century made life difficult on the property. But he was not discouraged by these ordeals and came to the decision that our precious casks, in which previously our wines had been sold and shipped, would only be used for ageing Cahors. 1966 marked the re-birth of Château de Gaudou: from now on our Cahors would be in bottles!

René-Jean-Jacques Durou built up, modernised and confirmed Château de Gaudou as a great wine. Today he is the lord of his realm. His daily struggle is justly rewarded thanks to the use of methods developed to lavish ever greater care on his vines (growing grass between the rows, leaf removal, green harvesting, the sorting table, etc.). His wife Brigitte, for her part, continues to develop the commercial side of the estate's business.

The beginning of the new millennium marked the arrival on the scene of Fabrice, the latest descendant of the Durou family. As the worthy heir to this long line of wine growers, he embodies the revival of the appellation. While remaining faithful to the know-how of his ancestors, he is today the guarantor of tradition combined with modernity.

His preoccupation is the creation of excellent wines which he ages with passion and love. The quest for quality, crowned by a number of medals at the most prestigious competitions in France, is proof, if proof were needed, that Château de Gaudou is reckoned among the greatest Cahors of its appellation. Aware of the importance of his heritage, but carried aloft by the wings of youth, Fabrice Durou creates a wine worthy of Gaudou's history. Drink this excellent wine to the last drop.

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Cahors

Two millennia of Cahors wine.

Regarded as one of the oldest wines in Europe, the history of Cahors wine goes back to Gallo-Roman times when Julius Caesar's legions planted the Quercy causses with vines. This fame continued to grow during the Middle Ages, from the Court of England to the Tsars of Russia. French King François I was a passionate devotee of Cahors wine, like Pope Jean XXII who, in Avignon, made this beverage the noblest of communion wines. In the 20th Century, French President Georges Pompidou was to help the appellation, eager for further acclaim, receive its A.O.C. classification. Let us not forget that in the 19th Century, before the outbreak of phylloxera, the Cahors vineyards boasted 40,000 hectares (nearly 99,000 acres) of vines, situated on an excellent terroir of gravels and limestone.

Here, the Auxerrois grape has reigned supreme for 2,000 years, having found both the geological and climatic conditions to bring out the very best of its merits. Whilst its scientific name is Cot, the Auxerrois, as it is called locally, is nonetheless an exceptional grape variety, which is also part of the same family as the Tannat.

After fermentation it produces a very dark wine with lush tannins and intense aromas. Blackberry, liquorice and blackcurrant contribute to this symphony of flavours that are revealed time and time again with each vintage.

The Terroir, climate, and grape variety are nature's gifts that, in combination with the work of the wine growers, are the major assets of Cahors, which over time and borders has achieved its place in the pantheon of the finest French wines.

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