

ROTEM AND MOUNIR SAOUMA

(Above) One of the eight vineyards across five villages of the appellation that Mounir has been able to acquire, allowing for 100% estate fruit.



Inopia Rouge 2018 Côte-du-Rhône Villages, France

ESTATE

Burgundy meets the Rhône. An utter respect for tradition, and in some ways a total break. We've watched as Mounir and Rotem Saouma, of Burgundy producer Lucien Le Moine, slowly developed their estate and wines in the Rhône Valley, and the results today are too extraordinary and distinct to ignore.

WINE

The Saouma's purchased a desolate plot of land in Orange in 2011. A minimal intervention approach combined with the image of the original barren land inspired the name of the wine, INOPIA, which translates to "made from nothing" in Latin.

VINEYARD

Soils: Predominately poor clay soil (3 feet) with little river stones called "Grès" (24 feet deep) which provide both favorable humidity for the dry climate and plenty of mineral elements.

Farming: Seeing potential in the land, 11 grape varieties were planted in 2011 under high density (4,700 plants per hectare versus the normal 3,500) with the objective of quality low-yielding fruit. All vineyard work is done by hand.

WINEMAKING

Grape Varieties: Mostly Grenache Noir, along with a little Mourvèdre, Counoise, Syrah and Cinsault

Fermentation: Whole cluster maceration under cold temperatures for one week followed by fermentation without any pumping or punching down for 15 days. The wine, along with lees, is then pressed and transferred to French oak foudres (2,300 and 3,400 liters,) cement eggs (600 and 1,600 liters,) and 500 liter barrels.

Aging: 18 months without any racking. The wine is similarly bottled without any fining or filtration.

VINTAGE

Spring was very wet, interrupting the flowering and causing significant crop loss (up to 40%). The summer was stable and dry, leading into perfect autumn which allowed even ripening and excellent phenolic development. Harvest took place in late September under clear skies. The reds are classic – with ripe tannins, adequate but fresh acidities, and excellent concentration (due to the low drop). The whites are elegant with great length and nobility. Mounir took perfect advantage of the vintage, producing reds with exceptionally fresh fruit flavors which belie their substantial structure. The whites are elegant and fresh, rich without heaviness.

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Wine Spectator

"Pretty mesquite and red tea aromas lead off, followed by silky red cherry and raspberry fruit. Shows a light garrigue hint through the finish, as the perfume just lingers and lingers. Small in scale, but extremely stylish." - J.M., 8/2021