

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 Blanc 2017 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 Blanc, along with a touch of Roussanne, Marsanne, Bourboulenc, Clairette and Viognier.

Fermentation: After a hard pressing of whole cluster grapes into 500 liter barrels and 1,600 liter cement eggs, fermentation takes place, and the wine remains undisturbed for 18 months – no pumping over, no punching down, no fining, no filtration.

VINTAGE

Spring in the South 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 old vines in Mounir's Côte du Rhône-Villages holdings gave concentrated, classic reds – with ripe tannins, adequate but fresh acidities, and excellent concentration (due to the low crop). The whites are elegant with great length and nobility, their elegance and freshness enhanced by the careful élevage.

Wine Spectator

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"A lush and showy white, featuring creamed pear, fig and melon flavors, laced with white ginger and chamomile notes. A subtle quinine echo through the finish keeps this honest. Impressive and outsized for this modest appellation." - JM, 10/2020

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Jeb Dunnuck