

The Art of a Fine Wine

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The estate, the vineyard and the art

Trévallon: a unique and magical place where vineyards and art collide.

The Domaine de Trévallon is located in Saint Etienne du Grès, 25 kilometers from Avignon, 15 km from Arles and 7 km from Rémy de Provence.

On arrival, the visitor is struck by the incredible beauty of the place: a bright Provencal farmhouse with pastel blue shutters, nestled in a picturesque beauty spot.

Above the rooftops lie the white tips of the Alpilles mountain range, and below, in the hollows of the hills, the vine grows steadily and with quiet strength in the bright limestone rocks that reflect the light: the famous Greek rocks of Frédéric Mistral.

It is here in this stunningly beautiful landscape that the vines have made their home, among the green oaks, olive and almond trees.



At Trévallon, art is omnipresent, the soul of René Dürbach is palpable in the air. Visitors never fail to notice and enjoy the two blue bronze sculptures that glimmer in the Provencal sunshine of the Alpilles. They watch over the garden at Trévallon, the garden of Eloi Dürbach. Each morning Eloi looks at them, these sculptures belonging to René, his father, a friend of Gleizes the pioneer of cubism, of Picasso, Léger and Delaunay. It is not purely by chance that beauty is ever-present right through to the wines of Trévallon. They are beautiful, deep and joyous like a Matisse canvas.

The story of a creation

Before 1973, scrubland reined supreme, the vine was absent.

In 1950, René Dürbach fell in love with the charm of Provence and bought the Mas Chabert, and then in 1955 he bought the adjacent property, Trévallon.



While strolling through the scrubland he told his son Eloi that the land would produce good wine. Eloi, who had originally set out to study architecture, made his home here in 1973 to escape from the Parisian pollution.

Eloi began clearing the sixty hectares of scrubland and patiently finished three. Rocks had to be lifted, giant limestone boulders that had tumbled down from the Alpilles had to be broken up with dynamite and the splinters of rock mixed with the deeply ploughed ground.

This Herculean task was fuelled by a strong desire to make something beautiful, and 1973 marked the birth of the Trévallon style!

Cabernet, Syrah, and whites (Roussanne and Marsanne) would follow much later! Eloi replanted Roussanne in the late eighties when the grape had all but disappeared from the Baux de Provence. Since 1998, Chardonnay has been a feature of the Trévallon vineyards, making up 10% of the Domaine's famous white wine that remains rare, because Trévallon whites are only made on 2 hectares of land.

Trévallon style

A daring gamble: Cabernet-Sauvignon in the land of Grenache. Trévallon style is to blend grape varieties.

Young vines take three years to grow and produce their first grapes. Three years to think, according to Georges Brunet, the owner of Château de Vignelaure, or to read the writings of Jules Guyot, the 19th century agricultural scientist who noted the presence of Cabernet-Sauvignon in Provence, adding that the blend of this variety with Syrah produces something truly excellent.

Three years to create the Trévallon style, to note that the austerity of Cabernet, its harsh tannins, cinnamon and peppery aromas would soften in the blend with Syrah, especially on this ground, on the colder northern slopes. With its later ripening, it would bring a mellow, silky touch, without the crystallized notes produced by overpowering southern exposure. This marriage of grapes would be happy and balanced.



Of course, Eloi did not study enology, so did not have any preconceived ideas, no arrogant certainty or ready-made theories, he simply showed the desire to make a good, natural wine.

The young winemaker produced his first vintage in 1976. In the August he had married Floriane, a girl from Beaujolais, but their happy honeymoon was quickly cut short. The grapes were ripening and a telephone call from his mother brought the newlyweds back home; it was time to harvest.

The summer and its dry weather conditions had produced beautiful grapes with thick skin. The September rains slid off the black fruit. The grapes were harvested in large wicker baskets and thanks to the sacred solidarity of the wine population, half-hogsheads from Fleurie held the wine. It was very good, as wonderful as in the sweetest dream, the complete and utter joy of the birth of a first child.

The Trévallon style was born.

The winemaker as a philosopher for nature

There's no secret about it, the less you do, the better the wine! Eloi Dürrbach

Today, 20 hectares are planted. Thirty-odd vintages later, the man is still there and the style is the man. The wonder of Eloi in the shadow of his beloved Alpilles is still intact, unaltered: the sounds of the animals, the mineral grandeur, the eternal azure blue and below, 1000 olive trees planted next to the vines, coloring and enhancing the landscape and producing the golden oil and carmine wine.

It is beauty and nature that are in control here. Without them, I would never have done all of this. This respect dictates the winemaker's behavior. We nourish the soil, not the plant. We do not use pesticides nor insecticides, only sheep manure.

Hard work is done to ensure that the roots plunge deep into the ground, feeding from the soil with its silent but swarming microbial life.

Pruning is short, with modest yields the vines live longer and give of their best between thirty and fifty years of age. That's why the grapes are good and healthy.

Making wine means having good fruit. After that it is easy, you have to do as little as possible. Is it still possible to talk about a method of vinification? Time has passed and we have grown in confidence. I do fewer and fewer things; it's minimalist, simple, biblical.

We don't even check the temperatures. The natural yeasts react, they do their job.

We can't really claim responsibility for any great vintage. There is a kind of mystery, something that is out of reach, and we're very glad about that! Eloi recalls three dates from his winemaking history.

One with a shortage, in **2002**, there was no Trévallon, as a result of too much torrid rainfall and floods that spoiled the harvest.

1982 brought magnificent development, a race against time and balance. It was Robert Parker who made the 1982 into a well-known vintage and gave Trévallon an international dimension.

2007, a unique and perfect blend of cardinal qualities, texture, smooth tannins, length, freshness, wonderful fruit: perfect conditions magically descended on the earth.



Class, without classification

The disappointment of a rejection from the international scene. Being declassified from the AOC (Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée) hurt me, says Eloi Dürrbach.

In the wide expanse of blue sky above Trévallon, large heavy clouds began to gather in 1993. Winemakers in the Baux de Provence wanted to create an appellation.

The wine authorities (INAO) ruled that Cabernet-Sauvignon would not be allowed in quantities of more than 20% in a blend from the region, despite the fact that the Baux area had been growing this variety before the phylloxera crisis.



Eloi fought for his choices and the memory of Jules Guyot and his historic work were called to the rescue. But in vain!

He was told to plant Grenache, and the idea of betraying the very philosophy of his wines was unbearable to him, and so Eloi refused.

The declassification to a Vin de Pays was decided by the powers that be.

The fallout left Eloi and Floriane hurt

and disappointed, after all they had done to bring the Baux vineyards back to life. The bureaucracy did not realize the beauty, strength and depth of these wines and in the end, it was the Trévallons who benefitted most from this undeserved declassification.

The Vin de Pays of Eloi Dürrbach are now a benchmark for wine lovers and collectors of fine wines throughout the world.

Trévallon, a signature of Excellence, a legend praised by even the harshest critics.

Wine, the smooth transition of time passing

Young and old, Trévallon bottles are collectors' items.

2008 is already there, with his fine and fruity mouth.

2006, with its typical structure, tension and ruggedness is still on the market. Just like a good bookstore that keeps major titles at the back of its shelves, Eloi keeps vintages that need time to develop in the quiet of his cellar. He tastes them regularly and brings them out when they are ready.

There is **2003**, with its fine, but powerful nose, evoking mixed berries soaked in alcohol, a fresh and aromatic mouth, with a milk chocolate retro-olfaction.

A wine lover may also try a **2001** vintage, a magnificent wine, complex with a nose redolent of garrigue.

2004 and **2005** will come later, only time will decide when.

Beyond **1999**, the bottles are collectors' items, hidden in the cellars of wine enthusiasts, making only fleeting appearances at auctions, all you need is a stroke of luck to come across them.

1998 with its limpidity and aromas of black cherries and forest floor is perfectly balanced.

1995 is a mix of blackcurrant, thyme, truffle, and laurel, the perfect accompaniment for baked truffle.

In **1990**, spices and chocolate were the order of the day, with a silky side of tannins, a truly incredible memory.

Then came the **1983** vintage, one of the winemaker's greatest achievements, with its extreme richness and concentration.



Trévallon's golden oil

In my heart I have the same passion for olive oil as I have for wine! Eloi Dürrbach



Olive trees were found in the hidden nooks and crannies of the Trévallon scrubland; vestiges of a rural tradition connected with the oldest kind of fruit that has always fed humans.

In 1985, Eloi planted a hundred olive trees, today there are 800. Every year, when the wines are finished, around November, in the clear cold of winter, Aglandau, Picholine, Salonenque, Grossanne, Verdale, Bouteillan and Broutignan are harvested.

The olives fall gently into the delicate nets stretched out under the silvery branches. The mill is 500 meters away and the fruit is pressed the same day. 3 months later the yellow bottles are lined up on the table in the farmhouse.

The precious oil from the Baux de Trévallon reveals the flavors of the fruit, some herbal notes and very little bitterness.

But Eloi produces only a small amount and his precious olive oil takes pride of place on the tables of the most prestigious restaurants in the region, and beyond.

Just like the beautiful Trévallon bottles, this golden oil is highly sought-after by enthusiasts.

René Dürrbach's work on the label

Trévallon labels are a tribute to Eloi's father, René Dürrbach.

René Dürrbach was a painter and sculptor who passed away at the age of 89, after long friendships with painters such as Fernand Léger, Robert Delaunay and Pablo Picasso.

At the end of his days, René was very tired and did not work any longer.

One day in 1998, Eloi approached his father with an armful of posters and two boxes of colored pencils. René accepted his very last commission as an artist, with restored vigor and the joy of a creator. He designed and drew fifty works that continue to appear and will appear in the future on Trévallon labels. These original and unique labels have been a major part of the Trévallon story since the 1996 vintage.

Every year, according to the characteristics of the vintage, Eloi chooses the label that will celebrate the release of the new Trévallon vintage.

