

Weirdo Blends #3: The Lucky Mistake

Domaine du Tariquet had been, since its inception, largely a producer of grapes for Armagnac. In 1982 they diversified into white table wines and planted grapes not normally emphasized in Gascony: Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Chenin Blanc.

During the 1995 crush, a storm front swept through, forcing the harvest of a parcel of Chardonnay. When the grapes arrived at the winery, there was nowhere to put them. Winemaker Yves Grassa decided on the spot to throw the Chardonnay juice into a partially filled tank of Sauvignon Blanc, creating a 50/50 blend and a problem, since no one really knew what a Chardonnay/Sauvignon Blanc blend might turn out to be.

“It was,” says Julien Ducos, the Export Director for Domaine du Tariquet, “the lucky mistake.”

After the fermentation, Grassa and Tariquet’s American importer, Robert Kacher, tasted the wine — which Grassa referred to as “de Côté,” idiomatic French for “separated.” (A gentle way, in fact, of referring to the wine as a “weirdo blend.”) Kacher loved the wine and wanted to buy the whole tank. Grassa, however, wasn’t selling. He preferred, in Ducos’s delightful wording, to “see if he could repeat more seriously the mistake.”

In subsequent years, Grassa tried blending after vinification, but the effect wasn’t the same. He quickly returned to fermenting the two juices together.

“Thanks to this co-fermentation we have created new, original and unique tastes, the successful alliance between two identities,” says Ducos, channeling his inner wine label writer. “Two opposing characters, Chardonnay and Sauvignon, merge in a wave of astonishing flavours. The mineral character of the Sauvignon is subtly reinforced by the roundness of the Chardonnay.”

I forgive Ducos his soaring rhetoric not only because liking the wine is part of his job description, but also because he’s actually describing the wine pretty well. The 2009 Côté Tariquet has a nice, fresh, tropical nose that promises much. The palate lives up to the promise, tart and soft at the same time, each aromatic present as a flavor as well. Can a wine be simple and complex at the same time? Isn’t that what the early Beatles did, supporting their pop hooks on a complicated foundation easily ignored by screaming bobbysoxers? That’s what this wine does.



[Home](#)
[About](#)
[Links to Wineblogs](#)
[Wine Sample Policy](#)

Categories

[Alt.Packaging](#)
[And Food](#)
[And Sex](#)
[Celebrity Wine](#)
[Cellar Strategy](#)
[Correspondence](#)
[Data](#)
[Events](#)
[Feuds](#)
[From the Web](#)
[Funny](#)
[Glass Cases](#)
[Good Stuff](#)
[Hardware](#)
[health](#)
[Junk](#)
[Marketing](#)
[Mr. Grumpy](#)
[News](#)
[Not Particularly Anything](#)
[Oddities](#)
[Off Topic](#)
[Quotes](#)
[Readings](#)
[Regulation](#)
[Reminders](#)
[Restaurants & Bars](#)
[Retail](#)
[Storage](#)
[Storywines](#)
[Tasting Notes](#)
[Travel](#)
[Uncategorized](#)
[Weirdo Blends](#)
[Wine Writing](#)
[Writings](#)

Ducos notes that it is popular as a by-the-glass offering in trendy French restaurants, and that sounds about right. I'd be as comfortable serving it almost frozen to hipsters with spicy Pacific Rim *hors d'oeuvres* as I would be putting it barely cool on my own table with simply sautéed, caught-it-this-afternoon-fresh fish.

Domaine du Tariquet has developed, over the years, a reputation for innovation. An American journalist — no one remembers which, but one of the hundreds that roam the French outback looking for The Next Big Thing in wine — described Tariquet's wines as "an act of disobedience," a theme that the winery has adopted on its [website](#).

"There are two approaches to wines nowadays : a typically French one, all about AOCs, and you also have the Anglo-Saxon approach, with firstly people and varietals," says Ducos. "Our philosophy is the second one. We believe that wines are always created to one's own image, with or without AOC. Armin and Remy Grassa, the owners and winemakers of Tariquet, love grapes. They like tasting in wine the fruit that can be found in the grapes themselves."

And I love that sometimes the most creative acts are accidental.

Data

[a la Wine Top 100 Wine Blogs](#)
[Decanter Grape Guide](#)
[List of Natural/Biodynamic Wines](#)
[RP Vintage Chart \(PDF\)](#)
[WineRelease.com](#)

Find Me

[Be My Facebook Friend](#)
[Follow Louisville Juice on Twitter](#)
[Sample Policy](#)

Media

[Ville Voice](#)
[Consuming Louisville](#)
[Courier-Journal](#)
[LEO Weekly](#)
[Louisville Magazine](#)
[Louisvillejojo](#)
[Palate Press](#)
[Wine Lover's Page](#)

Restaurants & Bars

[610 Magnolia](#)
[Asiatique](#)
[August Moon](#)
[Avalon](#)
[Baxter Station Bar & Grill](#)
[Bistro 301](#)
[Buck's](#)
[Equus](#)
[Jeff Ruby's Steakhouse](#)
[L&N Wine Bar](#)
[Le Relais](#)
[Lilly's](#)
[Limestone](#)
[Morton's](#)
[Napa River Grill](#)
[North End Cafe](#)
[Porcini](#)
[Proof on Main](#)
[Ruth's Chris Steak House](#)
[Seviche, a Latin Restaurant](#)
[The Bristol](#)
[The English Grill](#)
[The Oak Room](#)
[Uptown Cafe](#)
[Vincenzo's](#)
[Volaré](#)

Retail

[4 Flights Wine Boutique](#)
[Gemelli Wines + Spirits](#)
[Old Mill Wine & Spirits](#)
[Old Town Wine & Spirits](#)
[Prospect Party Center](#)
[Westport Whiskey & Wine](#)
[Wine Market](#)
[Wine Rack](#)

Archives

[July 2010](#)
[June 2010](#)
[May 2010](#)
[April 2010](#)
[March 2010](#)
[February 2010](#)
[January 2010](#)
[December 2009](#)
[November 2009](#)
[October 2009](#)
[September 2009](#)
[August 2009](#)
[July 2009](#)
[June 2009](#)
[May 2009](#)
[April 2009](#)
[March 2009](#)