

AOP FAUGÈRES

An open-air  
laboratory  
rooted in the  
schist of the  
Haut-Languedoc



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# A pioneering, committed and dynamic region.

**B**etween the Mediterranean and the Haut-Languedoc, Faugères has been charting a distinctive path within the landscape of French appellations for over forty years. Here, tradition has never meant being passive - quite the opposite.

For its winegrowers, Faugères has become a true open-air laboratory: a place where people dare, experiment, and learn together.

Within the demanding framework of a protected designation of origin, everyone enjoys the freedom to craft wines that reflect who they are, to explore new viticultural practices, and to rethink the relationship between people, the vine and the soil.

Precise, vibrant, elegant, the wines of Faugères express the maturity of a terroir that has reinvented itself without ever betraying its essence.

# THE APPELLATION'S IDENTITY CARD

Awarded in 1982 with the AOC status, the Faugères PDO brings together 55 estates across 1,600 hectares of vineyards planted on a terroir of 100% schist - unique in the Languedoc. A pioneer in environmental commitment, the appellation positions itself as a laboratory for sustainable viticulture in France. Its "Fine Wines by Nature" express the singular character of a terroir at the heart of the Haut-Languedoc.

## Territory

**"Nature lies at the heart of the terroir: these are not vines planted in the middle of nowhere. In Faugères, the vineyards are nestled within garrigue landscapes that strongly influence the typicity of our great wines. It is unique and impossible to transplant elsewhere - the very essence of appellations of origin."** Nathalie Caumette, President of the Faugères PDO

In the midst of a garrigue landscape, draped across hills rising up to 400 metres in altitude, the vineyards of Faugères form a natural balcony overlooking the Béziers plain, stretching towards the Mediterranean, the Pyrenees and the Caroux.

Spread across the villages of Autignac, Cabrerolles, Caussiniojouls, Faugères, Fos, Laurens and Roquessels, its 1,600 hectares of vines lie mostly within the Haut-Languedoc Regional Natural Park, benefiting from an exceptional environment that naturally guided growers towards a commitment to its preservation.



## Grape varieties

- **Red varieties:** Syrah, Grenache, Carignan, Lledoner Pelut, Mourvèdre and Cinsault
- **White varieties:** Roussanne, Grenache Blanc, Marsanne, Vermentino (Rolle), Clairette, Viognier, Carignan blanc, Macabeu, Bourboulenc

## Specific features

- The only appellation in the Languedoc planted on a terroir of 100% schist
- One of the few PDOs in the Languedoc to produce wines in all three colours, as well as a wine-based spirit: Fine Faugères
- Over 90% of the area is engaged in an environmental approach (50% certified organic, the rest being HVE and Demeter)
- A well divided area with young vines, vines over 30 years old (50%) and century-old vines (52 ha)





## A 100% SCHIST TERROIR...

A precious terroir dating back to the Viséan period (-340 million years), Faugères displays a remarkable singularity in the Languedoc wine landscape: 100% of its soils are made up of schist.

**"The schists of Faugères, blended with sandstone, form clay-rich, acidic soils that retain water and feed the vine, while the blocks of stone provide good soil texture - neither too clayey nor too stony"**, explains geologist Jean-Claude Bousquet.

This geological characteristic, specific to the Faugères appellation, proves decisive when facing today's challenges. Therefore, during dry summers - often the case the past few years - the deep rooting of the vines allows them to find moisture and produce yields that are certainly lower but provide juices of great quality. In the glass, this geological singularity makes all the difference: Faugères wines retain a striking freshness despite the southern climate!

Testimony from Adèle Arnaud (Mas Lou):

**"It was the schist that drew us to Faugères in 2014. We love the finesse it brings, its minerality and its flinty aromas. The more demanding the soil, the more the terroir expresses itself."**

## ...ALIVE...

**"Rising to today's challenges means exploring what is possible and experimenting as much as we can. The aim is to make the appellation an open-air laboratory. We must therefore try, test, sometimes fail, and try again."**

Nathalie Caumette

Since the 19th century, the vines have shaped Faugères. Over generations, the local farmers have built a landscape of dry-stone walls, capitelles and terraces, bearing witness to an intimate bond between people and their terroir.

Recognised as a VDQS (vin de qualité supérieure) in 1955, then as a PDO in 1982, the Faugères cru is the foundation of a community united around the quality of its wines and respect for its terroir. **"Faugères is more than an appellation; it is a committed collective driven by a pioneering spirit that constantly pushes us towards excellence"**, says Nathalie Caumette.

Since 2016, the appellation has welcomed twelve new independent wineries, illustrating the growing attraction of its terroir and the elegance of its wines. These newcomers - experienced oenologists, expert winegrowers, novice winegrowers or simply enthusiasts - all help to enrich the diversity and quality of Faugères wines. The local cooperative, Mas Olivier - Les Crus Faugères, has also renewed itself, welcoming 14 new producers.



# ...AND PRESERVED

## Pioneering measures

A key element of the Faugères appellation, nature has always been a central concern for the collective. In 2008, the winegrowers of Faugères even approached the INAO to have agro-environmental measures written into their specifications: a ban on full-surface chemical weeding, limits on nitrogen inputs, and compulsory grassing of headlands. A pioneering step in France.

## Beyond organic: forward-thinking environmental projects

Beyond regulatory measures, the Faugères PDO is developing innovative projects that position the appellation as an incredible laboratory for sustainable viticulture.

### A SUSTAINABLE APPROACH TO FIGHTING FLAVESCENCE DORÉE

The appellation oversees the GDON du Faugérois, the local reference organisation. Rather than systematically resorting to insecticides, winegrowers favour collective monitoring of vineyards, targeted removal of affected vines, and treatments adapted to the disease. Several times a year, they walk through the vineyards together to identify infected vines - an approach rarely seen on this scale.

### DISEASE-RESISTANT GRAPE VARIETIES

Since 2020, six estates have been involved in the Oscar Oc programme (CIVL, Inrae, IFV), which tests disease-resistant varieties on the schist soils of Faugères. The programme aims to significantly reduce reliance on fungicides over the long term and, ultimately, to integrate these varieties into the appellation's specifications. Further plantings of disease-resistant white varieties are planned by 2027.



### COVER CROPS AND THE END OF HERBICIDES

A pioneer in experimenting with alternatives to chemical weed control, Faugères saw the creation in 2015 of the department's first GIEE, "Les Enherbeurs". Today, almost every estate practises either natural or sown cover cropping, and eight winegrowers have their own seed drills. A lasting use of agroecological practices helps preserve and nourish the soils.

At the beginning of 2025, around ten hectares of agro-melliferous cover crops were sown as part of a partnership with the professional beekeepers' association, ADA Occitanie, supported by the Hérault Department. In addition to meeting agronomic objectives, these cover crops provided resources for bees and other beneficial organisms.





## ADAPTING TO DROUGHT

As part of the European CepOClime programme, an experimental plot at the Mas Olivier cooperative compares six rootstocks known for their drought tolerance. This monitoring, led by the Chamber of Agriculture, is due to conclude in 2027.

## SOIL HEALTH AND NATURAL SYMBIOSSES

In partnership with the start-up Mycéa, for several years the appellation has been studying the beneficial effects of mycorrhization on vine nutrition and resilience. The first results, observed on an old Carignan plot, confirm improved vine establishment and enhanced soil vitality.

## WATER QUALITY

Since 2020, an unprecedented environmental monitoring programme has been measuring the quality of three rivers flowing through the vineyards (the Rieutord, Libron and Taurou). This network, funded by the Hérault Department and implemented by the consultancy company Aquascop, provides a direct indicator of the sustainability of viticultural practices on an appellation.

With 50% of the appellation's surface area under organic farming, the Faugères vineyard achieves results four times higher than the national average in viticulture.



## Tangible results

While the first conversions to organic farming date back to 1999, *"the appellation has established itself as a pioneer of environmentally respectful viticulture,"* says Nathalie Caumette, before proudly sharing the latest figures: *"In 2024, over 90% of cultivated areas are covered by an environmental commitment under the AB, HVE or Demeter labels. A powerful testament to the commitment of Faugères winegrowers to sustainable viticulture."*

# « A HIGHLY SOUGHT-AFTER REGION



***"Faugères is chosen for the quality of its wines"***

Jérôme Salles, Vice-President of the appellation and President of the Mas Olivier - Les Crus Faugères cooperative

***"We believe Faugères is unique in Languedoc for its wild character and the highly distinctive, mineral identity of its schist-grown wines."***

Thibaud and Sophie Bardi, Domaine Bardi d'Alquier

***"We were looking for a terroir that would surprise us and allow us to make the wines we love: fine, elegant and driven by freshness."*** - Chloé Barthet and Frédéric Almazor, Domaine Les Serrals

***"Faugères is first and foremost a landscape of wooded and cultivated hillsides that unfold one after another. With its holm oaks, junipers, rock roses and strawberry trees, it has a wild, Mediterranean feel. You feel good here - calm and free; it belongs to "us" and to everyone at once. The wines reflect this place. They offer aromas of small fruits, Mediterranean vegetation and tapenade, with lightly toasted notes and a freshness-driven balance, as we are careful to harvest before the grapes become overripe. These are complex, harmonious wines, without harshness - and that is thanks to the schist."***

Luc Ollier, Domaine Ollier-Taillefer

***"What makes Faugères recognisable in a blind tasting is its minerality - in both whites and reds. It is a terroir that asserts itself even alongside highly aromatic varieties, and one that is enhanced by time,"***

says Sybil Baldassarre (La Graine Sauvage).

***"On schist, the vine is forced to 'work', reaching deep to find nutrients. That is the hallmark of great wines!"*** adds Henri Monteux (Domaine de Monthélys).

# THE FAUGÈRES WINES

For many, Faugères brings to mind red wines with a strong character, true reflections of their unique terroir. However, while preserving the reputation built on the impeccable quality of these purple-hued nectars, the appellation has always embraced - and at times even driven - change, developing the production of fine rosé wines early on, before working just as early towards recognition of the excellence of its white wines. Today, one thing is clear: across all three colours, Faugères consistently distinguishes itself through the freshness of its wines. An asset that positions this historic Languedoc appellation among its most attractive crus.

## White wines

Complex, balanced and naturally vibrant, Faugères PDO white wines have been officially recognised by the INAO since 2005. Once confidential, production volumes are steadily increasing, reflecting growing enthusiasm for this style of wine. *"The diversity of grape varieties grown - Vermentino, Grenache Blanc, Roussanne to name just a few - gives rise to wines whose distinctive freshness and complexity appeal strongly to consumers,"* analyses Hélène Frey, Director of the PDO.

## Rosé wines

While the Faugères area has been producing rosé wines for over half a century, recognisable for their floral notes and red berry aromas, a number of visionary estates have ventured into the production of age-worthy rosés, revealing Faugères' untapped potential in this category. Their membership of l'association internationale des rosés de terroirs highlights a collective desire to showcase the singularity of Faugères rosés within the Languedoc, while surprising the palates of the most demanding wine lovers.



## Red wines

Broad and complex, Faugères red wines offer silky tannins, spicy notes and garrigue aromas that provide them great finesse, even in their youth. As such, winegrowers are free to mature - or not - their wines in oak. *"Barrel ageing is far from the norm, and Faugères winegrowers are first and foremost committed to respecting the terroir and the fruit, preserving their inherent minerality, freshness and finesse,"* highlights Jérôme Salles.



## Fine Faugères: the Faugérois' best-kept secret

Still relatively unknown, Fine Faugères traces its origins back to the 18th century. Recognised as an Appellation d'Origine Réglementée in 1948, then abandoned in the 1980s, its production was revived in 2000 by a group of passionate winegrowers aware of the heritage embodied by this unique spirit. Today, Fine Faugères is produced artisanally by Martial at the Atelier du Bouilleur. Distilled twice in a Charentais pot still and then aged in oak barrels for at least five years, it reveals fruity and saline notes, along with aromas of tobacco.



Useful information: to plan your getaway, the interactive map on the official website lists all points of interest across the region.

# DESTINATION FAUGÈRES: WINE TOURISM AT THE HEART OF SCHIST

Awarded the "Vignobles & Découvertes" label since 2014, Faugères has established itself as a must-visit destination for those seeking to combine terroir, nature and culture.

Particularly dynamic in direct sales, the appellation's winegrowers place great importance on welcoming visitors. Gourmet restaurants, charming accommodation, vineyard walking trails and sometimes unusual visits... Faugères offers a wine tourism experience that is as rich as it is inventive.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

Granted in 1982 with the AOC status, Faugères brings together 55 wineries across 1,600 hectares of a 100% schist terroir unique in Languedoc.

A pioneer in agroecology, the appellation now stands as a living laboratory where winegrowers are reinventing their craft.

Balancing respect for terroir with creative boldness, Faugères illustrates a simple truth: freedom is shaped by place, and it is within this fertile tension that today's great wines are written.





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