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Papier et web  
05/05/2021

## Wine ‘Mozart’ Laurent Vaillé of Grange des Pères dies

Tributes have been paid to Laurent Vaillé, founder of the highly regarded Grange des Pères winery in Languedoc, who has died.



Vineyards near to Aniane in Hérault, Languedoc. Credit: Hemis / Alamy Stock Photo

Tributes were paid across Languedoc and beyond this week following news of the death of Laurent Vaillé, founder of the celebrated **Domaine de la Grange des Pères** near to Aniane in a picturesque corner of southern France to the north-west of Montpellier.

‘He was the Mozart of wine,’ said Aniane’s mayor, Philippe Salasc, to *France Bleu* radio.

Marcel Orford-Williams, a buyer specialising in southern France for The Wine Society in the UK, said on *Twitter* that Vaillé was one of Languedoc's stars.

Another of the region's top wineries, Domaine Virgile Joly, described Vaillé as 'one of the most remarkable French wine producers'.

While Vaillé was known for preferring to stay out of the spotlight, his work in the vineyards and the cellar put him among those winemakers who helped to show Languedoc's potential as a source of fine wines in the modern era – in a region historically better known for prioritising high volumes.

Grange des Pères traces its roots back to 1958, when Vaillé's grandfather bought a property near to Aniane. However, Vaillé and his family replanted vines and established new vineyards in the area in 1988.

Vaillé had studied oenology at Montpellier University, and also done work experience with Eloi Dürrbach of Domaine de Trévallon in Les Baux de Provence, Gérard Chave of Domaine Jean-Louis Chave in Hermitage and Jean-François Coche-Dury in Meursault.

'Eloi Dürrbach provided the initial inspiration as he started from scratch and that encouraged me to do the same,' Vaillé told *Decanter's* James Lawther **[in a rare interview at the winery in 2020](#)**.

Things moved quickly after the first red wine launched with the 1992 vintage, a Vins de Pays (now IGP) blend of Mourvèdre, Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon. Cunoise has since been added. A white wine made its debut with the 1995 vintage.

A single bottle of the 1992 vintage sold for €5,219 via online auctioneer and retailer iDealwine in December 2019.

The group said in a tribute this week that Vaillé's success serves as inspiration to talented winegrowers in lesser-known regions and appellations.

Although Grange des Pères wines remain Vins de Pays / IGP today, the winery lies in Terrasses du Larzac appellation territory.

Sebastien Fillon, Terrasses du Larzac president, cited a *Le Monde* article about Vaillé on Twitter and said that the appellation's winemakers have lost 'a great neighbour, a pioneer, a talented winemaker who took Languedoc wines to the top. Our condolences to the Vaillé family'.

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