



Willow Creek District, Paso Robles

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# The Story

Stephan Asseo has been in the wine industry for nearly three decades. After he graduated oenology college in the Burgundy region of France in 1982, the Asseo family purchased their first property, Domaine de Courteillac, on the Right Bank of Bordeaux. Later, the family purchased additional properties: Chateau Robin and Chateau Fleur Cardinale. With a unique style, Stephan raised those properties to a level of quality that brought him continuous accolades from the European press, travel guides and the Wine Spectator. Soon, well established wineries like Chateau Guillot Clauzel in Pomerol and Chateau Corbin were asking Stephan to manage their properties as well.



In July 1998, with their three children and 7 luggage's, they landed in San Francisco to start their new adventure. What started out as the dream of a “crazy” French man slowly became reality and in the past 20 years L’Aventure has become an established winery in Paso Robles known for its high-end cuvees and terroir focused philosophy.

When Stephan announced his desire to create a vineyard and winery in America, most of his friends and customers were surprised. Why would he leave an established, comfortable situation in Europe to take a chance in the new world? For Stephan, who wanted to expand his expertise while gaining more freedom in viticulture and vinification, it was the beginning of a new adventure. In 1996, this led him and his wife, Beatrice on a quest for a great terroir. After searching for over a year among the world’s great wine fields, ranging from South Africa to Lebanon, Argentina and Napa, they found Paso Robles.





# The Terroir



The site for the vineyard was selected after an extensive study of the area that matched Stephan's experience as a vigneron. He immediately favored the west of Paso Robles for its sloping hills and authentic quality terroir. The one hundred twenty-seven-acre property he chose is comprised of multiple hills of various elevation, complex soils and excellent water drainage. He finds the aspects of this terroir to be fundamental in obtaining the high-quality fruit necessary to create the wines he had envisioned for L'Aventure.

Because of its proximity to the ocean, the vineyard is characterized by warm clear days with nighttime temperatures which can drop by approximately 40 degrees. This dramatic temperature variation increases the time of the grapes maturation cycle providing fruit that creates a more complex and balanced wine. With clear, sunny days typically lasting well into November, our fruit has the chance to stay on the vine longer to develop mature polyphenols, while the cool nights help retain acids, resulting in the ideal combination of maturity and balance.

The rolling hills that define the vineyard provide multiple facings on which Stephan strategically planted vines with carefully chosen grafted rootstocks. The thin layers of topsoil on these hills covers a succession of siliceous and calcareous shale which consists of old marine bones, shells, diatoms and plankton slowly deposited on the seabed over millions of years, only to be lifted through tectonic activity. The combination of these base soils with clay, metals, and quartz contribute to the complexity of the fruit in multiple ways.

This soil locks up nutrients coaxing the vines to create small, thick skinned berries to ensure protection of its precious seeds. The shale also acts like a sponge, storing water during the rainy season and redistributing it back to the roots in the dry season. This assures a perfect feeding for the vines, giving them a balanced water source from which they regulate themselves, as opposed to the bingeing characteristics typically developed with irrigation. The shale also coaxes the vines to send roots deeper to collect water as the surface dries, rather than staying close to the surface and collecting from the drip system.

Stephan's choice of this lean terroir provides him with the fruit necessary to create wine with a good balance between alcohol and acidity. The resulting wine are full and rich yet well balanced with finesse and elegance.

# The Vineyard

Stephan chose to install a vertical trellis system in the vineyard. The foliage is a very important element as it is the “maturity” factory of the vine. The shoots are raised up between the wires allowing significant sun exposure and increased photosynthesis to promote greater maturity of the polyphenols that provide the intense color and soft tannins found in L’Aventure wines. This also provides a better balance of the sugar/ phenolic acid combination of harvest. This is why our canopy is extensive: more than four feet tall, allowing a huge amount of leaf growth. We systematically trim the canopy to ensure optimal sunlight penetration, maximizing photosynthesis.

The time of harvest is based not only on the usual brix criteria, but also when the phenolic maturation is perfect. The yield harvested is limited to two tons per acre to ensure premium fruit optimum maturity, balance and concentration.

In 2008, L’Aventure became 100% estate with 58 planted acres, 40 separate blocks, and 10 different varieties planted. L’Aventure is known for red blends which Stephan feels are the cornerstone of our production. Each block is harvested, sorted, and fermented separately which lends to the complexity of our wines as the blends truly began with the planting of the vineyard.



1. Syrah 470; 420A (2004)
2. Syrah 470; 420A (2004)
3. Cabernet Sauvignon 337; 420A (1998)
4. Petit Verdot; 02 110R (1998)
5. Petit Verdot; 02 110R (1998)
6. Cabernet Sauvignon 337; 110R (2004)
7. Grenache Noire; 110R (2004)
8. Grenache 362; 110R (2004)
9. Syrah 1; 110R (1998/2003)
10. Syrah 877; 3309 (2000)
11. Syrah 99; 3309 (1999)
12. Syrah 01; 420A (1999)
13. Syrah Estrella; 420A (1999)
14. Cabernet Sauvignon 15; 420A (1999)
15. Syrah 1; 420A (1998)
16. Syrah 1; 420A (1998)
17. Syrah 1; 1103P (2005)
18. Monastrelle 571; 1103P (2011)
19. Mourvedre Ax369; 140R (2000)
20. Mourvedre Ax369; 140R (2005)
21. Mourvedre Ax369; 140R (2003)
22. Mourvedre Ax369; 140R (2000)
23. Cabernet Sauvignon 337; 161/49 (2000)
24. Petit Verdot 1058; 1103P (2004)
25. Cabernet Sauvignon 337; 110R (2004)
26. Cabernet Sauvignon 337; 110R (2004)
27. Syrah 7; 420A (2004)
28. Syrah 7; 420A (2004)
29. Syrah 7; 420A (2004)
30. Viognier Ax642; 3309 (2000/2005)
31. Petit Verdot 02/400; 110R (2001/2004)
32. Mourvedre Ax369; 140R (2003)
33. Roussanne 468; 1103P (2016)
34. Monastrelle 571; 1103P (2011)
35. Syrah 470; 420A (2004)
36. Monastrelle 571; 1103P (2011)
37. Syrah 877; 3309 (2000)
38. Cabernet Sauvignon 337; 420A (2004)
39. Cabernet Sauvignon 337; 420A (2004)
40. Syrah 877; 1103P (2016)
41. Grenache Blanc 141; 110R (2008)

*L'Aventure*





■ Siliceous (60.4%)

■ Calcareous (39.6%)

*L'Aventure*

- 1. Botella loam, 2 - 9% slopes
- 2. Calleguas clay loam, 0 - 30% slopes
- 3. Calodo gravelly loam, 0 - 30% slopes
- 4. Gazos loam, 9 - 30% slopes
- 5. Gazos-Norraena complex, 9 - 30% slopes
- 6. Linne clay loam, 5 - 15% slopes
- 7. Linne-Calodo complex, 5 - 40% slopes
- 8. Lockwood clay loam, 2 - 30% slopes
- 9. Lopez gravelly silty clay loam, 5 - 30% slopes
- 10. Windage silt loam, 2 - 15% slopes
- Soil pit locations

*Adventure*





# The Cave and Aging Process

French oak, because of its origin and texture, does not require the same toasting as other oak. Stephan chooses a long, soft and deep toasting, allowing a true respect of the fruit and wine characteristics. This provides rich, soft stable tannins and subtle vanilla and toast characteristics to the wines. Our barrels come from a variety of master coopers providing a range of barrel profiles which Stephan uses to create subtle and balanced blends. Stephan's several years working with these professionals helps him in obtaining his ideal combination of barrels from which to create his wines. Also, as of the 2015 vintage, some clay amphoras and cement cones have been used in the aging process for our Rhone blends : Côte a Côte, Les Demoiselles, Sibling. The ultimate goal is to bring an additional touch of complexity. The wine in the amphora will keep more primary aspect, aromas, and more freshness. The concrete will limit the micro oxygenation, giving the wine more vibrancy, freshness and authentic varietal aromas.

In 2016, our project of underground caves attached to a brand-new tasting room got completed. On an ecological reason, by having caves there is no need for outside energy to keep the temperature cool and the humidity just right. In the caves, the temperature is consistently cool at 58°-60°F and the humidity is naturally always at 75%-80%. By no longer using air conditioning, the evaporation percentage has decreased and since the evaporation is smaller, the alcohol level is more stable as well.

