



敖云

Ao Yun

ADVENTURE

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PROLOGUE

Above the clouds

It all began in 2008, when we set out on our quest to challenge the status quo with this bold but simple vision: creating an extraordinary wine in China, in a previously unexplored terroir.

Meaning “flying above the clouds”, Ao Yun’s name refers to the extreme altitude of its vineyards, nestled in the foothills of the Himalayas, just outside the legendary city and oriental paradise of Shangri-La.

Our vineyards range in altitude from 2,200 to 2,600 meters, providing some of the most remote locations winemakers ever worked at.

Since the beginning of this epic and incredibly challenging journey, we are constantly learning how to come to grips with this terroir, unique in so many ways.

This is the story of our adventure.

A few numbers...

9

vintages
released

4

villages

2,600^m

altitude of
our winery

31^{ha}

vineyard
surface

773

sub-parcels

35

terroirs
identified

131

farming
families

2,400^{hours}

per ha per year
of manual work

60^{days}

average duration
of harvest

8^{times}
in a row

voted best
Chinese wine*

*by James Suckling
and Robert Parker



2008

Moët Hennessy Wine Estates asks Australian winemaker and scientist, Dr Tony Jordan, to survey the land in China and find the most suitable location for Ao Yun.



2012

The search is over and the location for Ao Yun's estate is settled. Maxence Dulou, experienced winemaker from Bordeaux, joins the adventure as Technical Director.



2013

The first vintage of Ao Yun is made.

Meanwhile, new vines are being planted in our four villages, until 2015.



2016

The research and work on the division of vineyard parcels is completed. Our vines are subdivided into 773 sub-parcels.



2019

The organization of work in the vineyard is revised. Until now, villagers were working in groups. They now work their own plots only, allowing for much more precision.



2022

Release of our 2018 Village Crus range, an opportunity for Ao Yun lovers to further experience the unique diversity of our terroirs.



THE SEARCH
across the vast expanses of China



Tony Jordan: the genesis

Ao Yun wouldn't have seen the light of day if it was not for the late Dr Tony Jordan who spent four years searching across China for the perfect location.

Originally from Australia, Dr Jordan was a pioneer of fine Australian wine in the 1980s. Back then, while everyone was looking for sweet and overripe aromas to get better ratings, Tony was a cheerleader for elegance, freshness and balance. A person of integrity, he would only work on projects in which he truly believed.

This led him to the foothills of the Himalayas, following the steps of the French missionaries who planted the first vines in this secluded place in the 19th century.

"The wines won't be a copy of Bordeaux or any other wine region. They necessarily will have distinctive aromas, flavours and levels of balance that reflect the high altitude terroir of Shangri-La."

Conclusion of Dr. Jordan's journey – November 2012

A mystical place

In 1933, the famous novel *Lost Horizon* by James Hilton described an oriental paradise isolated from the world, later identified as Shangri-La.

The dizzying views and serene landscapes offered by this isolated region are a true inspiration for Ao Yun. Here, high mountains are everywhere providing a spectacular scenic skyline with 118 peaks higher than 5,000 meters.

In this UNESCO protected area named the Three Parallel Rivers, the three great rivers of Asia (Yangtze, Mekong and Salween) run north to south through steep gorges which, in places, are 3,000 meters deep.

This is precisely where you can find our vines, on the banks of the Mekong River, just below the sacred and unclimbed Meili Mountain, rising to 6,800 meters.



DISCOVERY

understanding a unique terroir

THREE PARALLEL RIVERS UNESCO PROTECTED AREA



MEILI MOUNTAIN
6,800M

SINONG
2,300M

XIDANG
2,100M

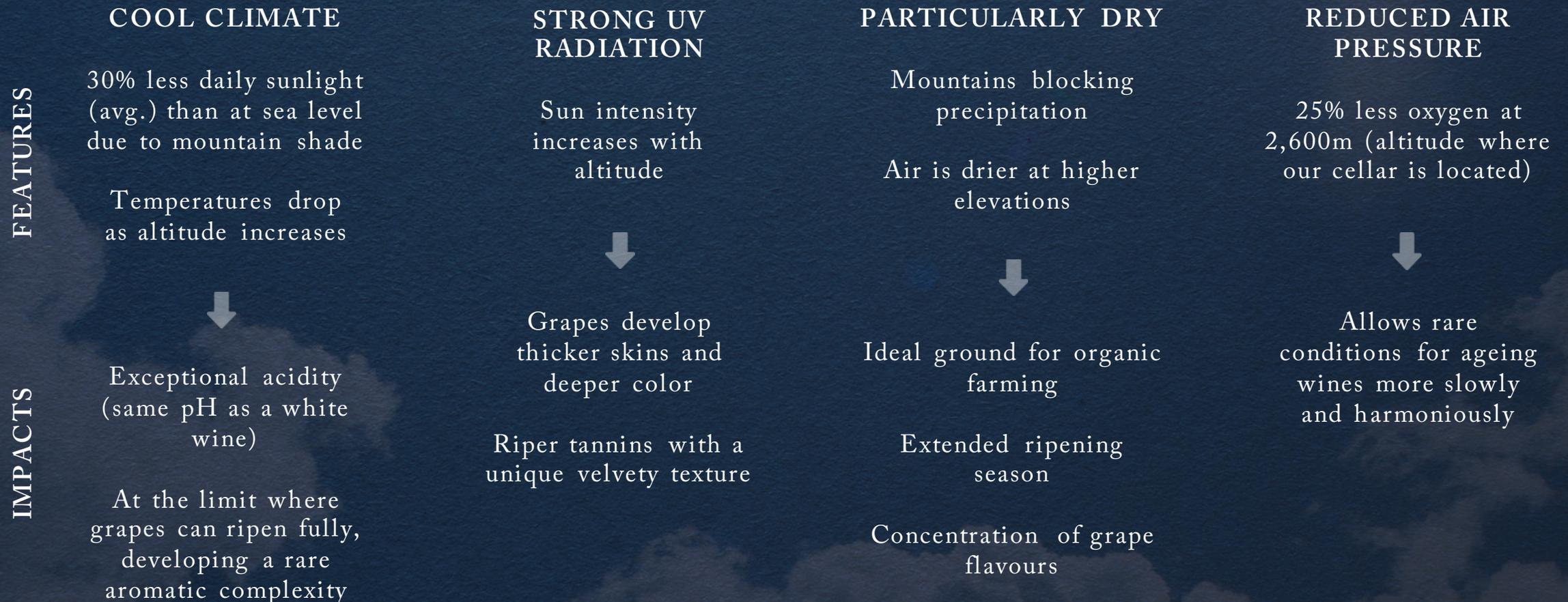
SHUORI
2,500M

ADONG
2,600M

A singular climate

DISCOVERY

The extreme altitude of our terroir unveils a climate like no other. In order for us to comprehend it, a total of ten weather stations are installed around our vineyards, ranging in altitude from 2,200 to 2,600 meters.



Four villages

The four villages making Ao Yun have exceptionally diverse terroir profiles, with notable differences in their soil structure, sun exposure and microclimate.

336 plots and 773 sub-parcels covering 31 hectares across four villages

10 to 20 years old vines

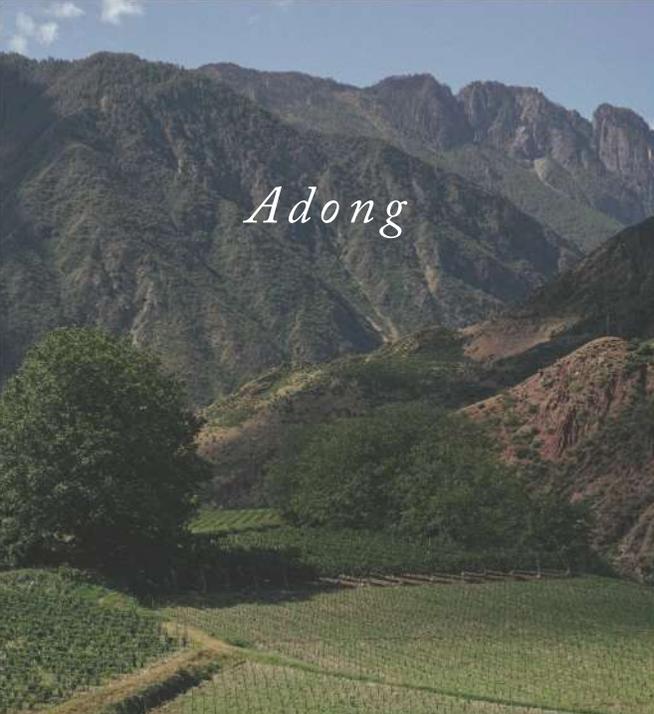
Density of 5,000 to 11,000 plants/ha

50% of surface planted without rootstocks

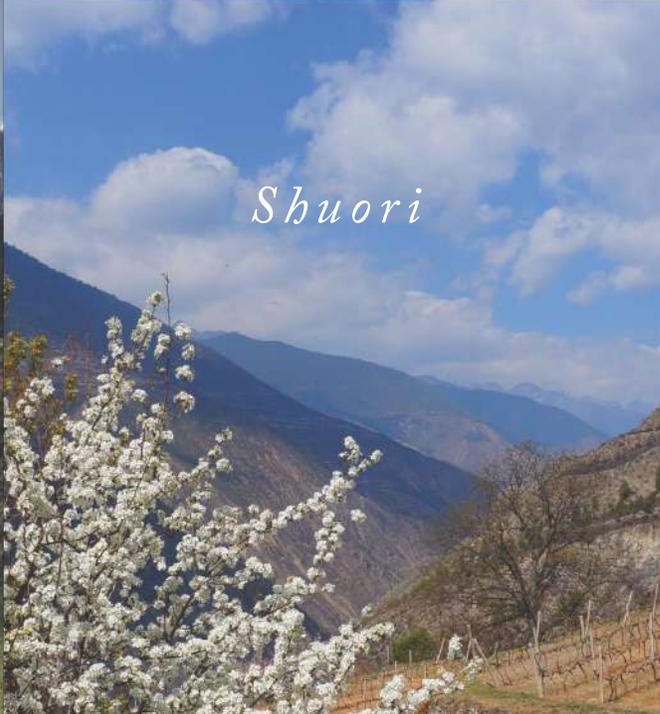
75% of plantings are Cabernet sauvignon and franc, the backbone of Ao Yun

The remaining 25% are Merlot, Petit verdot, Syrah, Malbec and Chardonnay (for our white wine)

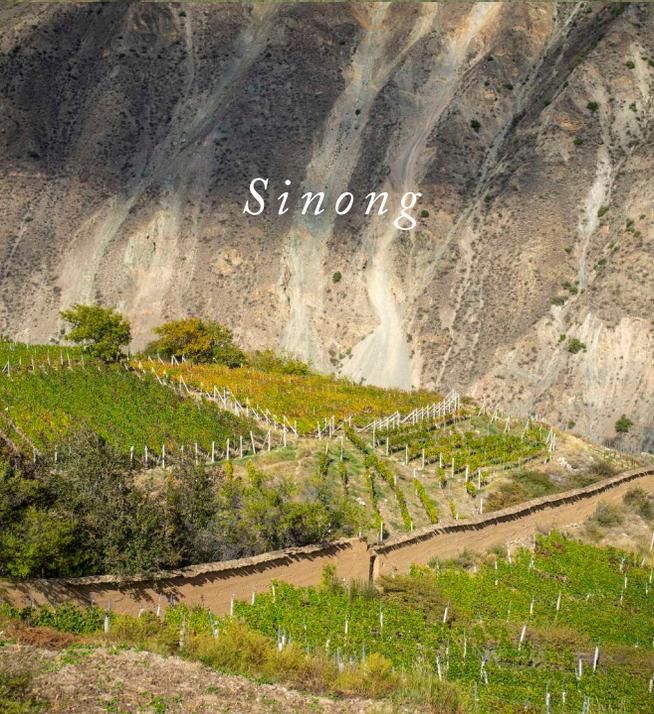
 *Fact:* Our grape varieties are an expression of the place rather than the variety itself. They translate the diversity of our terroirs and the characteristics of the vintage.



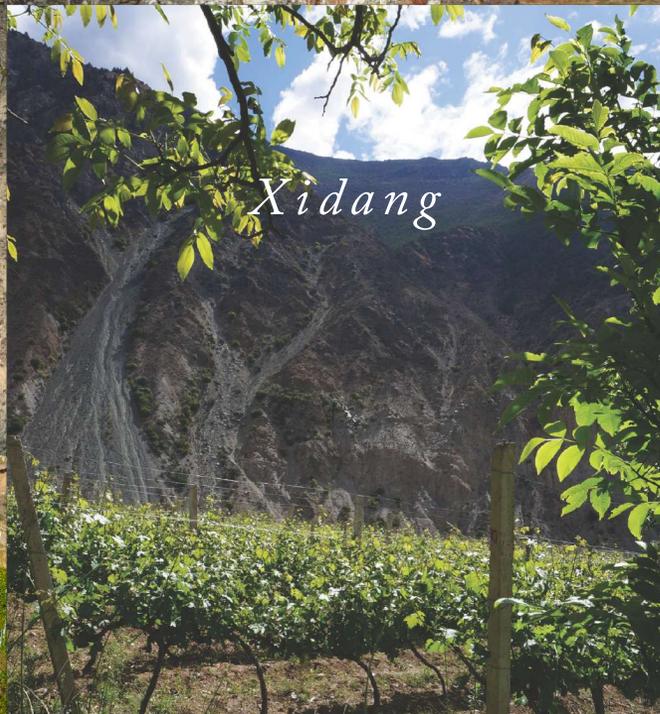
Adong



Shuori



Sinong



Xidang

Adong

[the place where people meet]

COOLNESS



HARVEST TIME



ALTITUDE

2,600 m

SURFACE

10.9 ha

SUNSHINE

9h30min daily (in Sept.)

ASPECT

West-Northwest

SOIL

Colluvium | Clay ●●●● | Schist, granite

BLOCKS

130 parcels / 296 sub-parcels

WINE PROFILE

Bright, round and velvety

Shuori

[people that live around cypress trees]

COOLNESS



HARVEST TIME



ALTITUDE

2,500 m

SURFACE

6.7 ha

SUNSHINE

8h45mn daily (in Sept.)

ASPECT

West

SOIL

Colluvium | Clay ●●●● | Blue and green schist, limestone

BLOCKS

103 parcels / 231 sub-parcels

WINE PROFILE

Fresh, refined and silky

Sinong

[brightness of the future]

COOLNESS



HARVEST TIME



ALTITUDE

2,300 m

SURFACE

8 ha

SUNSHINE

7h40mn daily (in Sept.)

ASPECT

Northeast

SOIL

Colluvium | Clay ●●●● | Slate, sandstone, limestone

BLOCKS

59 parcels / 131 sub-parcels

WINE PROFILE

Mineral, dense and firm

Xidang

[the quiet place]

COOLNESS



HARVEST TIME



ALTITUDE

2,100 m

SURFACE

5.2 ha

SUNSHINE

8h daily (in Sept.)

ASPECT

East

SOIL

Alluvium | Clay ●●●● | Gravels, sand

BLOCKS

44 parcels / 115 sub-parcels

WINE PROFILE

Ripe, tense and rich

A land and its people

A terroir would not be complete without its people. The Tibetan communities that have worked these lands for centuries learned how to adapt their farming techniques to the steep mountainsides.

Humbled by the majesty of their natural environment, local farmers live in complete harmony with their ecosystem, growing plants used for livestock feed and using animal manure as fertilizers.

Today, a total of 131 local families are working hand-in-hand with our viticulturists across the four villages, maintaining with the greatest care the vines that grow on their soil.





ADAPTATION

respecting the land, reinventing ourselves

Handcrafted

Due to the scarcity of land and the steepness of our vineyards, the work is conducted entirely by hand, from trimming the canopy to mowing the grass and harvesting the grapes, without the use of machines.

- Vines planted on multiple tiny terraces
- Every single vine shoot is taken care of individually
- 2,400 hours of manual labor per hectare per year
- Requiring much greater effort than in conventional vineyards

 *Fact:* While such farming methods are very time-consuming, logistically challenging and physically demanding, they reveal incredible potential for crafting fine wines.



More than organic

Ao Yun has embraced the self-sufficient lifestyle of the local farmers, whereby people, plants and animals rely on each other in a closed ecosystem.

We perpetuate these time-honored traditions with a 100% organic and regenerative viticulture.

- Excess shoots, leaves and weeds feed livestock
- Animal manure is used to fertilize the vineyards
- Supporting natural ecosystems through a virtuous circle

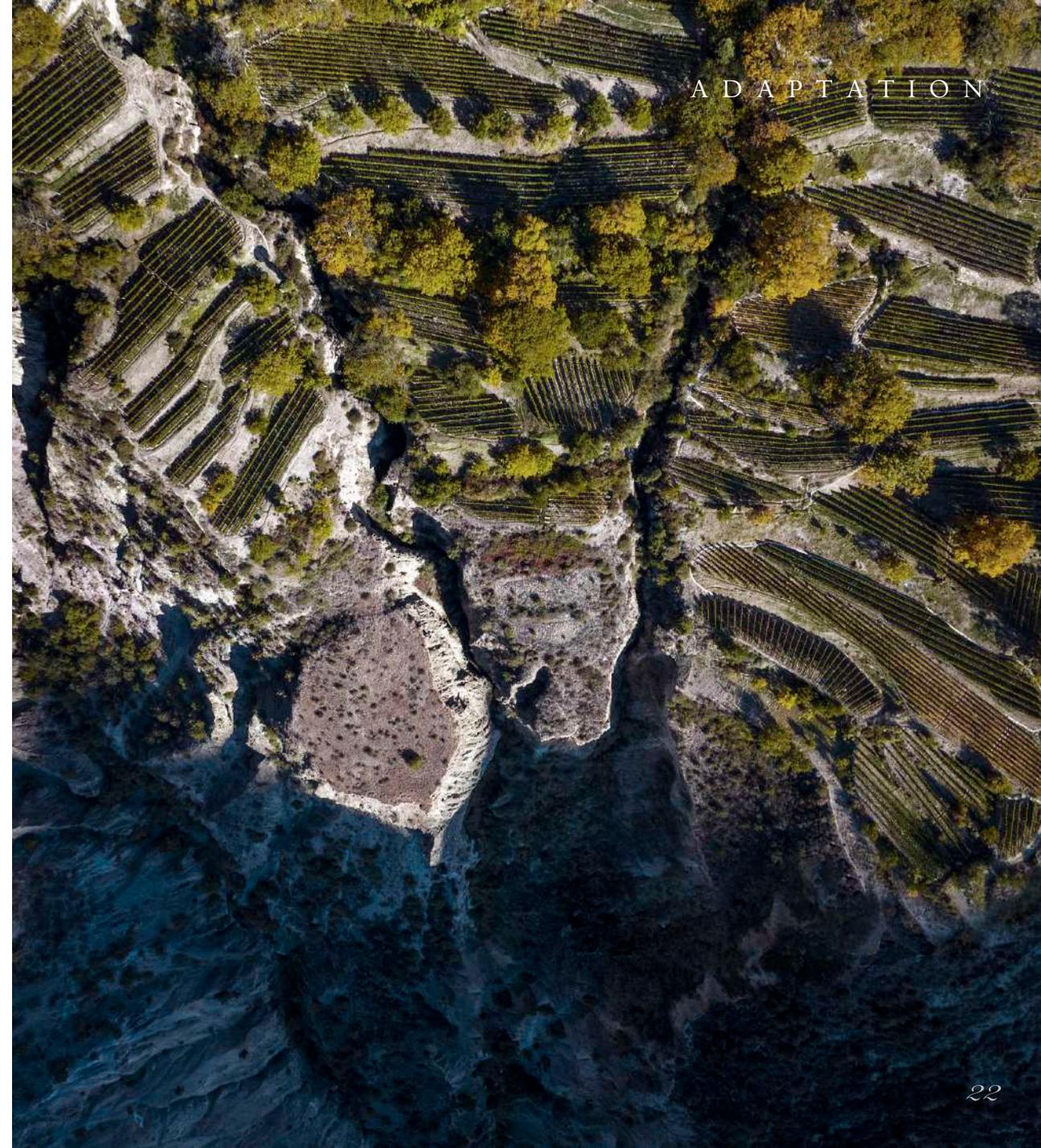


Parcel by parcel

More than 40 million years ago, the mountains we call home have formed as a result of a continental collision.

This has led to an incredible diversity of soil structure from a vine parcel to another, which we have clearly identified through precise vineyard delineation.

- 336 parcels subdivided into 773 sub-parcels
- Regrouped into 35 types of terroir vinified separately



Blending as an art

Echoing the complex composition of our soil structure, our wine is made of multiple layers that come together to create the perfect balance.

Involving a number of chosen parcels that may vary from year to year, Ao Yun is the result of a meticulous blend which aims at highlighting the variability of our terroirs and the characteristics of each vintage.

Wines from each terroir type are:

- tasted at sea level for better sensory acuity
- blended at the winery at 2,600 meters of altitude



As gently as possible

At our altitude, grapes render high levels of tannins and color pigments. Thus, we are extra cautious in the cellar to avoid over-extraction, while enhancing aromatic purity and faithfully translating our terroirs into the wine.

- Grapes are delicately cracked, not crushed
- Maceration at low temperature for more elegance
- Use of gravity to move grapes instead of pumps
- Increasing use of stoneware jars and glass vats to replace oak





A human adventure...

Since day one, Ao Yun established a unique partnership system with local farming families, based on fairness and mutual trust.

Through long-term agricultural leases, we rent their land to grow our vines, which the farmers maintain all year round with our guidance, and for which they receive steady compensation, above average in the region.

As a result, all of our farming partners have been working with us since the beginning of this adventure, twelve years ago.

...proudly made in China

Inspired by the five thousand years of Chinese civilization and its historic inventions which changed the world forever, from the compass to papermaking, we are committed to place China and Shangri-La on the world map of fine wine, setting ourselves no limits to creativity and excellence.

To pursue this mission, we are constantly learning from our environment and adapting our methods, undaunted by the challenge of living most of the year in this isolated part of the world, showing extraordinary resilience and determination in scaling new heights in winemaking.

VINEYARD TEAM

- 131 local families
- 4 village chiefs
- 4 vineyard assistants
- 2 viticulturists
- 1 vineyard manager

WINEMAKING TEAM

- 13 local families
- 1 assistant winemaker
- 1 cellar assistant
- 1 quality control manager
- 1 maintenance manager

Maxence Dulou

Estate Director and Winemaker



Born and raised in the Entre-Deux-Mers, Maxence Dulou's strong attraction to nature was certainly inspired by his grandparents' farm and his mother's passion for gardening.

Early on, Maxence saw in grape growing an opportunity to express his love for the living as well as to connect with different cultures. This is what led him to learn winemaking in Bordeaux and to graduate in 2001 with a National Oenology Diploma (DNO).

Led by his thirst for discovery and perpetual questioning, Maxence then moved to Burgundy and Alsace to challenge his Bordeaux skills as a winemaker. Destiny took him afterwards to Chile in 2003 where he was offered to work for a family-owned property. This is where Maxence met his wife, before flying together to South Africa for a new adventure.

In 2005, he joined Château Quinault in Saint-Emilion, where he was responsible for both winemaking and viticulture. Quinault was acquired in 2008 by Château Cheval Blanc, giving him the opportunity to learn the secrets of fine viticulture and winemaking. In parallel, Maxence took up studies again at 35 years old to become Agronomist Engineer.

It is at that time that Maxence was offered the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to kick-start the Ao Yun project, which he and his family embraced without hesitation. With his wife and young children, he moved to Shangri-La in 2012 to create the team, plant the vineyards and build the estate's foundations, while discovering with amazement a unique terroir many would have been frightened of.

Today, after twelve vintages at Ao Yun, Maxence continues to lead the team, more determined than ever to follow his dreams.



SIGNATURE

Remarkably unique

At Ao Yun, we aim at reflecting the high altitude terroirs of Shangri-La in their most genuine form.

For us, the highest form of excellence is not concentration nor power, but instead, purity, elegance, freshness, complexity and a structure that enables the wine to span decades in a beautiful way.

We trust that the art of blending allows to reach unrivaled levels of quality, particularly with such variety of terroirs we have at our disposal, thanks to our high mountain environment.

This all translates into a velvety tannic texture and naturally vibrant acidity, a dense mouthfeel counterbalanced by a weightless feeling, an ethereal expression like no other, which evolves into a long, distinctive saline finish.



Ratings & recognition

« MANY WINES CLAIM UNIQUENESS –
AO YUN'S CLAIM IS INCONTESTABLE »

JANCIS ROBINSON, AO YUN 2013



2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021

Robert Parker
WINE ADVOCATE Edward Ragg

93 94 95 96 96 /

JAMESSUCKLING.COM

96 97 98 98 99 98

vinous Antonio Galloni

_____ 96 / /

JANE ANSON
INSIDE BORDEAUX

93 94 95 96 97 96

drinks
business Colin Hay

_____ 95+ 96+ 97+ 97+

Decanter Georgie Hindle

_____ 95 96 96 96

TERROIR SENSE
WINE REVIEW Ian d'Agata

95 92 96+ / / /

ALEXANDRE MAILLON

_____ 95+ 96 96+ 95+

bettane +
desseauve

95 95 96+ / / /





MAXENCE DULOU

ESTATE DIRECTOR & WINEMAKER

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