

PHARAON

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2015 Grenache

Vin de Pay des Cotes Catalanes

Produced and bottled by Dept. 66, Maury, France

“There are two ways of seeing: with the body and with the soul. The body's sight can sometimes forget, but the soul remembers forever.”

— Alexandre Dumas, *The Count of Monte Cristo*

Winemaker Dave Phinney experienced such an observation following a visit to the vineyards surrounding the idyllic town of Maury, France perched at the base of the Pyrenees Mountains in the spring of 2008. Taken aback by the raw beauty and potential for an exceptional wine, he immediately became invested in the region by acquiring prime, hillside vineyards. Beginning with 40 acres of 80-100 year old, head trained vines, a vision for a winery soon resulted to realize his dream. This idea required some serious contribution however, including multiple sojourns back and forth from his home base in the Napa Valley as well as ingratiating himself to dubious locals. A modern winery soon resulted and additional vineyards were carefully selected to become a part of what is now known as Department 66; and Dave's second home one week per month. Grenache along with Syrah are the stars of the project, which are carefully blended together in a decidedly New World approach. The Grenache is from old vine on Maury schist whereas the Syrah is from granite soils. The natives have now become friends, and together a collective spirit has emerged, primed to reveal what this singular region is all about.

Following five successful vintages in Maury and some acclaim, Dave determined he could offer more. Something truly exceptional that would represent the absolute best of what Department 66 is all about. Only four barrels were deemed worthy enough following a scrutinizing selection process. The result is called Pharaon and we are pleased to offer the first national release of this powerful and intense wine.

As a child, one of Dave's favorite books was the Count of Montecristo. On page one, the protagonist, Edmond Dantes, arrives in Marseille, France on a ship named Pharaon, which has etymologic roots dating back to ancient Egypt. The name resonated and remained with him throughout his life. Favoring a unique approach to branding wines, it seemed especially appropriate to name his flagship wine, Pharaon. Ironically, Dantes fiancé turned enemy in the book, Mercedes, hails from Catalonia where the wine originates.

Department 66

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WINEMAKER NOTES

Provocative aromas of sweet oak, dark chocolate liqueur, Tahitian vanilla, sage, and plum saturate the glass in a beguiling complexion of aubergine. Sapid flavors of rhubarb, savory red fruits, and boysenberries are evident and harmoniously blend with mineral notes and schistous highlights. The tannins are firm but agreeable and primed for extended aging. Finishing with a spirited acidity, the wine elegantly charms the palate indefinitely.

BLEND

Grenache

Alc/Vol

15.5%

MATURATION

The wine was aged 18 months in 100% new French oak from seven different barrel makers.