



KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

DOMAINE DE DURBAN

Country: France

Region: Rhône

Appellation(s): Beaumes-de-Venise, Muscat de Beaumes-de-Venise

Producer: Henri Leydier

Founded: 1967

Annual Production: 25,000 cases

Farming: Haute Valeur Environnementale

Website: www.domainedurban.com



To walk through the high-altitude vineyards at Domaine de Durban is to walk through an astounding span of history. On the site of a former Roman healing springs destination, a mere handful of soil reveals well-preserved, ancient Roman roof tiles and medieval pot shards. The domaine and its vineyards sit atop a picturesque plateau in the Vaucluse, sheltered by the Dentelles de Montmirail, just above the village of Beaumes-de-Venise. The scenic views put one at pause considering the timelessness—wine has been a part of the culture here for millennia, and ancient philosopher Pliny the Elder was the first known to praise the Muscat from this place. During the Middle Ages, it was a fortified farm, where it has run regularly since 1159. Jacques Leydier bought the property in the 1960s when the farm had fallen into disrepair. Today, his grandsons, Henri and Philippe, are running the domaine. This magical spot has assumed a higher purpose today, producing some of the most memorable wines of the Southern Rhône. The Leydiers farm fifty-five hectares of vineyards to make a powerful and aromatic Gigondas, a velvety Beaumes-de-Venise Rouge, and undeniably the most celebrated Muscat in the entire appellation.

A constellation of fortune seems to converge at this particular spot. Pine trees protect the area from the intensity of the persistent mistral. The soils are rich and deep, with clay, limestone, and the soft, ochre Trias, lending finesse and freshness to the wines. The high altitude in the vineyards means a slightly cooler microclimate with strong sun exposure, a blessing that the Leydiers credit for the amazing consistency their wines enjoy year after year. (Even *The Oxford Companion to Wine* takes space to note the terrific concentration that Durban's vineyards achieve.) The Leydiers are particularly proud of their Muscat de Beaumes-de-Venise, a *vin doux naturel*, as they are among the last to craft it in the traditional style. Leydier's old-fashioned vinification keeps the spirits as low as possible, so that they may hold on to the bright freshness in the grapes. One can find more powerful Muscats, but none as tasty and fine.



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DOMAINE DE DURBAN (continued)

<u>Wine</u>	<u>Blend</u>	<u>Vine Age</u>	<u>Soil Type</u>	<u>Vineyard Area*</u>
Muscat de Beauges-de-Venise	Muscat à Petits Grains Blanc	35 years	Clay, Limestone	25 ha
Beauges-de-Venise	70% Grenache 25% Syrah 5% Mourvèdre	47 years	Clay, Limestone, Trias	21 ha
Gigondas	70% Grenache 30% Syrah	Planted in 1974	Clay, Limestone	6 ha

* "ha"=hectares; one hectare equals roughly two and a half acres

VITICULTURE / VINIFICATION

- Vineyards are sustainably farmed
- The Leydiers also produce a red and a white Vin de Pays de Vaucluse for the Selected & Blended by Kermit Lynch line (see that tech sheet for specifics)
- All the grapes are harvested by hand
- Reds are aged in 15 years old 50 HL wood *cuve*

Muscat de Beauges-de-Venise :

- Vines yield 30 hl/ha
- Traditionally produced
- Grapes ferment in stainless steel at 15°C
- Neutral spirit (7-10%) is added to stop fermentation
- Wine ages in cement and stainless steel before bottling
- Final wine has 110 grams per liter of residual sugar, with 15% alcohol

Beauges-de-Venise:

- Grapes are entirely de-stemmed
- Grapes are fermented in stainless steel for approximately 20 days
- 2 pumpovers each day
- Wine ages in cement tank for 8 months
- Wine is bottled unfiltered

Gigondas :

- Grapes are entirely de-stemmed
- Grapes are fermented in stainless steel for approximately 25 days
- 2 pumpovers each day
- Wine ages in cement tank for 8 months
- Wine is bottled unfiltered



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DOMAINE DE DURBAN (continued)

MISCELLANEA

On the Durban label there is a coat of arms with three “Ts.” This is the official coat of arms of the village of Beames-de-Venise. The modern day city was originally three villages (Aubune, Beames, and Saint Véran). The “T” is a *tau* which is also an old form of the cross. The three *taus*, or crosses, are for the protectors of the three villages, Sainte Anne, Saint Roch, and Saint Sébastien.