



KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

## DOMAINE LES EMINADES

Country: France

Region: Languedoc-Roussillon

Appellation(s): Saint-Chinian

Producer: Patricia & Luc Bettoni

Founded: 2002

Annual Production: 5,500 cases

Farming: Organic (Certified), Biodynamic (Certified)

Website: [www.leseminades.fr](http://www.leseminades.fr)

*Les Eminades*

LA PIERRE PLANTÉE

*Saint-Chinian*  
APPELLATION SAINT-CHINIAN CONTRÔLÉE

2021

“We started with nothing—just a lot of courage,” says Luc Bettoni, who counts no vigneron in his immediate family despite growing up around the vineyards of Madiran, deep in France’s southwest. For his wife, Patricia, the path to becoming a vigneronne was just as unlikely. It began serendipitously, when she met Luc at a wine-tasting-themed party put on by enology students while she studied pharmacology in Toulouse. Luc had taken a keen interest in enology after earning degrees in biochemistry and microbiology and interning in an enological laboratory in Madiran. The couple’s chance encounter led Patricia to develop a whole new passion.

Later on, while employed as the enologist for a Languedoc domaine, Luc expressed to Patricia his desire to make his own wine. “It didn’t take much to convince me to embark on this adventure with him,” she recalls warmly. The search for a great terroir where they could put down roots—despite having no savings—ultimately led them to Saint-Chinian, where they were struck by the wild beauty of the landscape and its rich diversity of soils.

In 2002, they purchased twelve hectares of vines, primarily in limestone-rich sites where the grapes would retain good acidity levels despite the baking Mediterranean climate. The land was mostly overgrown, and they worked hard to clear it and bring the vineyards up to shape. The young vigneron replanted five hectares at higher density to better shade the fruit and prevent soil evaporation. They gradually added plots over the years, including some very old plantings, seeking out vineyards at higher elevation where grapes ripen later, to preserve freshness and balance. Patricia and Luc now farm thirty small parcels across three communes. Their soils include quartz- and iron-rich sandstones, rocky alluvial deposits, and various limestones, while exposures range from south-facing—with the sea visible in the distance—to cooler north-facing sites.

The Bettonis’ vineyards have never come into contact with herbicides, and Luc abandoned chemical treatments early on because the products made him ill. They obtained organic certification in 2008 and then, realizing their farming nearly qualified as biodynamic, completed that conversion ten years later.



# KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

## LES EMINADES (continued)

Winemaking at Les Eminades is gentle and straightforward, with the goal of expressing the nuances found within Saint-Chinian's fascinating diversity of terroirs through the lens of traditional Languedocien *cépages* such as Cinsault, Grenache, and Carignan. Fermentations in their small cellar occur spontaneously, and sulfur doses are kept very low to achieve a seductive aromatic and textural quality in the wines. Their distinct cuvées yield a range of expressions of this tremendously undervalued appellation, yet they share a striking purity of fruit, intoxicating aromatics, and suave tannins rarely seen this far south.

<u>Wine</u>	<u>Blend</u>	<u>Vine Age</u>	<u>Soil Type</u>	<u>Vineyard Area*</u>
Saint-Chinian <i>blanc</i> "Montmajou"	80% Grenache Blanc, 20% Marsanne	Planted in 1991	Jurassic limestone	n/a
Saint-Chinian "La Pierre Plantée"	34% Cinsault, 33% Grenache, 33% Syrah	30-70 years old	<i>Molasse</i> (conglomerate) with <i>galets roulés</i> (rounded riverbed stones)	5 ha
Saint-Chinian "Cebenna"	65% Grenache, 30% Syrah, 5% Mourvèdre	20-60 years old	Red sandstone, Lias limestone, Jurassic limestone	2 ha
Saint-Chinian "Sortilège"	55% Mourvèdre, 40% Syrah, 5% Grenache	20-40 years old	Jurassic limestone	4 ha

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

## VITICULTURE / VINIFICATION

- Vines are mostly *gobelet*-trained
- High-density planting (6,000-7,000 vines per hectare) to create shade
- Diverse exposures from south-facing, with the sea visible in the distance, to north-facing
- Grapes are hand-harvested
- Fermentation takes place in stainless steel and concrete tanks
- Fermented with indigenous yeasts
- Reds wines: no punchdowns, only light pumpovers during vinification
- Wines are not fined
- "Les Eminades" is one of the *lieux-dits* within the parcels Patricia and Luc bought in 2002. Intrigued by the name, they did some research and found the origin in a text from Provençal poet Frédéric Mistral. Mistral wrote of an *Emina*—an ancient measure of wheat used to sow an *Eminade*, or a plot defined as a small *clos* sitting high and well-exposed. This term is of Italian origin and crossed the south of France, as it can also be found in the Pyrénées Orientales. Their respective grandfathers made the same journey, so they chose this word as the name of the domaine.



# KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

## LES EMINADES (continued)

### Saint-Chinian *blanc* “Montmajou”

- Vineyards face south at 250 meters elevation
- Grapes are raised in 400L barrels for 10 months *sur lie*
- Montmajou is a *lieu-dit* that means *mont majeur* (large mountain) in Languedocian dialect, because it is the highest point of the village

### Saint-Chinian “La Pierre Plantée”

- Vineyards face south at 150-170 meters elevation
- Grapes are 80% destemmed with 20% whole clusters
- Maceration lasts 15 days
- Aged for 10 months in concrete tank
- Named for a *lieu-dit* where a large vertical rock formation (*pierre plantée*) once served to demarcate the borders of three neighboring villages

### Saint-Chinian “Cebenna”

- Vineyards sit at 200-260 meters elevation
- Grapes are 40% destemmed with 60% whole clusters
- Maceration lasts 10 days
- Aged for 10 months in stainless steel and concrete tanks
- Cebenna is the mythological name of the Carroux, a granite mountain 15 km away that is visible from their north-facing vineyard sites

### Saint-Chinian “Sortilège”

- Vineyards sit at 260-270 meters elevation, with Mourvèdre facing south toward the sea
- Grapes are 70% destemmed with 30% whole clusters
- Maceration lasts 12 days
- Aged for 20 months in 228-600L barrels (10% new wood on larger formats; *barriques* are 1-7 years old)
- Sortilège refers to a nearby area of Jurassic limestone once home to wild truffle oaks; the name was chosen because this cuvée evokes notes of black truffle after 8-10 years in bottle