

GARBER & CO

A WINE COMPANY



Roucas Toumba

Country: **France**

Region: **Rhone**

Appellation: **Vacqueyras**

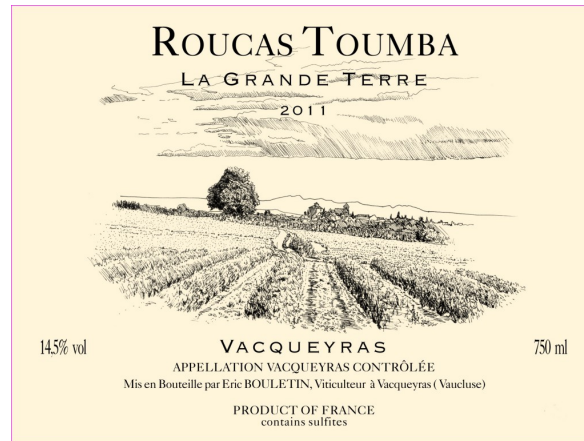
Producer: **Eric Boulettin**

Founded: **1723 estate • 2000 winemaking**

Annual Production: **1100 cases**

Farming: **Lutte Raisonnée**

Website:



The name of the property - Roucas Toumba

comes from the fallen stones in the area. The domaine has been in the family since 1723 and covers a modest 3 hectares of parcels in the southern Rhone village of Vacueryras. With barely a thousand inhabitants, Vacqueyras has nearly 200 winegrowers. Like Eric's father, most of the village's growers sell to the local wine cooperative.

Eric Boulettin's father died when he was 15, and one year later he left school to help his mother at the domaine. The family had sold the grapes to the co-op until 2000 when Eric began to make his own wine. Eric produces around 1,100 cases of wine annually from 3ha of old vine (some planted in 1915) Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre with yields of about 30hl/ha.

In taking over the family business, Eric chose to follow the example of many in France's natural wine movement, and has been farming and working in the cellar without chemicals, synthetics, or commercial additives since day one. Roucas Toumba (named for the area's fallen rocks) employs few new barrels in order to produce sublime, mineral driven wines.

His other guiding principle is the contact he has with his vines. He spends as much time as possible in the vineyards, undertaking much of the work by hand. With his 16ha, this is thankfully still just feasible. In certain parcels of Grenache, where the vines are over 80 years old, this is really the only option.

Vacqueyras has always somewhat suffered from its position as "petit frère" to the more illustrious nearby appellation Châteauneuf-du-Pape. This collective inferiority complex is without foundation in this village which is producing outstanding wines, particularly since achieving Cru Status in 1990.

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Roucas Toumba *(continued)*

The distinctive clay and sand dominated soils give Vacqueyras an identity suitably different from that of popular near- neighbour Gigondas. The wines are perhaps a little more elegant here, with more focus on primary fruit and in the best examples, finesse and real harmony; importantly Rouca Toumba has vines in all the best parcels - Garrigues de l'Etang, Le Grès, Restanques de Cabassole, Les Débats, and La Marine.

Most grapes are de-stemmed and fermentation occurs in concrete tank for Syrah and Grenache and in stainless steel tank for Mourvèdre. Fermentation is generally for 30 days (at 18°C) using natural, indigenous yeasts. Cuvaison between 18 and 25 days and the press wine is kept separate until the end of the malolactic fermentation. The wines are then aged in seasoned 500L barrels for Grenache and Mourvèdre and in 228L barrels for Syrah. The wines are not fined and generally not filtered prior to bottling. Most grapes are de-stemmed and fermentation occurs in concrete tank for Syrah and Grenache and in stainless steel tank for Mourvèdre. Fermentation is generally for 30 days (at 18°C) using natural, indigenous yeasts. Cuvaison between 18 and 25 days and the press wine is kept separate until the end of the malolactic fermentation. The wines are then aged in seasoned 500L barrels for Grenache and Mourvèdre and in 228L barrels for Syrah. The wines are not fined and generally not filtered prior to bottling.

The Wine Advocate rated the 2004, 92pts and the 2005, 91-93pts declaring it "a candidate for Vacqueyras of the vintage." Since 2007 he has been making Cotes du Rhone (declassified into VDP) as well. In 2012, he released an entry level Vacqueyras, "La Grande Terre" more approachable in its youth than the Restanques. Very elegant wines, almost more Burgundian than Rhodanien.

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Roucas Toumba *(continued)*

<u>Wine</u>	<u>Blend</u>	<u>Vine Age</u>	<u>Soil Type</u>	<u>Vineyard Area</u>
VDP Pichot Toumba 2013	34% Grenache 33% Syrah 33% Carignan	40 – 90 year vines	Sand, Clay, Silt, Gravel, Limestone	3.0 ha
VDP “Les Grand Chemins” 2012	Grenache Syrah Mourvèdre	40 – 90 year vines	Sand, Clay, Silt, Gravel, Limestone	3.0 ha
Vaqueyras Blanc “Les Premices” 2012	20% Marsanne 17% Roussanne 16% Clairette 15% Grenache Gris 14% Viognier 14% Vermentino 4% White Varietals	40 – 90 year vines	Sand, Clay, Silt, Gravel, Limestone	3.0 ha
Vaqueyras “La Grande Terre” 2011	60% Grenache 20% Syrah 20% Mourvèdre	40 – 90 year vines	Sand, Clay, Silt, Gravel, Limestone	3.0 ha
Vaqueyras “La Restanques Cabassole” 2011	60% Grenache 25% Syrah 10% Mourvèdre 5% Viognier	40 – 90 year vines	Sand, Clay, Silt, Gravel, Limestone	3.0 ha

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Roucas Toumba *(continued)*

VITICULTURE / VINIFICATION

VDP Pichot Roucas 2013

34% Grenache, 33% Syrah, 33% Carignan. A microproduction here from 50 year old grenache/carignan, and young vine syrah planted at the base of the hillside terraces where the senior Vacqueyras vines are found. Harvested by hand and given a shorter cuvaison than the Vacqueyras, it is a superbly made VDP. It has a dark cherry, spicy fruit with a southern print, is supple and not too dense and has that most important quality of being easily drinkable. Unfined and unfiltered. For drinking now to 2016.

VDP Les Grand Chemins 2012

The 'Les Grand Chemins' is a delicious blend of Grenache, Syrah and Carignan. The wine lifts out of the glass with fresh plum and cassis aromatics whilst still maintaining restraint and subtlety that is often not the case when dealing with such bold flavors. The palate has a rich denseness about it but never strays from the course due to the delicate acidity and soft tannin. This wine is an absolute cracker. In the cellar the wines are fermented naturally in tank and aged in barrel.

Vacqueyras Blanc “Les Premices” 2012

This is only the second vintage for this unique and complex blend of Marsanne, Roussanne, Viognier, Clairette, Vermentino, and Grenache Gris, raised in large 500L barrels. This has quickly become a favorite among somms at michelin starred restaurants strong in seafood for its balance of richness and citric, stony cut. '12 has terrific freshness....

Vacqueyras “La Grande Terre” 2011

A new entry level estate wine, this is offer a more accessible young Vacqueyras, while the Restanques ages.

Vacqueyras “Restanques de Cabassole” 2011

The proof both that Bouletin is an exceptionally gifted winemaker AND that this parcel of VERY old vine Grenache is quite special are in this year's Restanques de Cabassole. AMAZING. If it wasn't a Vacqueyras, but rather a CdP, people would gladly pay double this tariff.

Here is Parker's review: "This sensational Vacqueyras is one of the best wines of this powerful, strong vintage for this still under-the-radar appellation for high quality red wines. A blend of 60% Grenache, 27% Syrah, 10% Mourvedre and 3% white varietals, the 2010 was aged in 600-liter demi-muids (the Grenache and Mourvedre) and smaller barrels for the Syrah. Its opaque ruby/purple color is followed by notes of licorice, graphite, blackberries, cassis liqueur, and subtle smoke, scorched earth and forest floor. Impressive aromatics and flavors are found in this viscous, seriously endowed 2010, suggesting it can be drunk now and over the next decade." 92 points