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Guigal Heads to Châteauneuf-du-Pape with Château de Nalys

By

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Guigal acquired Château de Nalys after decades of searching and planning. *E. GUIGAL*

E. Guigal has released Châteauneuf-du-Pape wines since the French estate was founded in 1946. It is the culmination of several decades of searching

and planning, Guigal finally acquired its own estate in the famed appellation in 2017, Château de Nalys.

Guigal reached particular acclaim with its “LaLa” wines—La Mouline, La Landonne, and La Turque—and with this combination of renowned winery with an even more iconic region, it will be looking to reach similarly lofty heights.

The first releases from Château de Nalys debuted at the end of 2018. Four total bottles were made available, with the whites from 2017 marking first wines from the estate made entirely under E. Guigal’s stewardship.

“We have been searching for a quality estate in Châteauneuf-du-Pape for about 20 years,” says Philippe Guigal, the third-generation winemaker of the family firm. “By having started on this AOC [*appellation d’origine contrôlée*, or controlled destination of origin] with the vintage 1942 Guigal Châteauneuf-du-Pape, we knew what we wanted but more importantly, we knew what we did not want. Therefore, Château de Nalys is the combination of an outstanding terroir combined with a deep and strong history, as well as one with an amazing potential to reveal even more. There’s no other estate more exciting to work in Châteauneuf for us.”

The Nalys estate is listed in records over 400 years old, and takes its name from the original occupant, Jacques Nalis. Guigal is just the fourth owner of the property. “We stay very humble and need to learn a lot from our terroirs and the local habits in Châteauneuf-du-Pape, but we are eager to show the full potential of the amazing property and dedicate a lot of time and energy to achieve it,” Guigal says.

The rich history of the region dates back even further than this particular estate. The area was settled around the end of the 10th or beginning of the

11th century, and by 1317, Pope John XXII began construction of the hilltop castle in the village for which it's now partially named.

As for the Nalys estate itself, it's comprised of 60 hectares across three evenly sized plots, each with a distinctive terroir. One of those, La Crau, showcases pebbly soil—the round rocks are known as galets roulés—and resides in what Guigal calls, “the most recognizable and legendary terroir of Châteauneuf.”

Bois Sénéchal also showcases the galets, along with, “a layer of clay to keep an interesting freshness in the wines,” while Nalys, or Grand Pierre, offers a, “mix of sand and clay producing balanced, fresh, and delicate wines.”

The Châteauneuf-du-Pape AOC is traditionally associated with 13 grape varieties, and across the three parcels, the estate grows them all. “Château de Nalys shows an incredible combination of terroirs and grapes for a diversity of complex wines in the two colors of Châteauneuf-du-Pape,” Guigal says.



2016 Château de Nalys. E. GUIGAL

E. Guigal is known to produce a significant portion of white wine for a Rhône winery, with Philippe tabbing the figure at 25% of production, and found Nalys to come in at a similarly high ratio. “Nalys, with almost 18% of white wines, is a perfect match for us,” he says. The AOC as a whole has a lower ratio of approximately 7% white varieties grown.

Grenache, or specifically Grenache Noir, is the most common variety in the appellation, and with its Northern Rhône roots E. Guigal was also pleased to see a hefty dose of Syrah grown across the Nalys estate.

“In the same idea, a significant percentage of Syrah—about 20%—planted 15 to 20 years ago does not hurt in our vision to balance the richness and the warmth of the Grenache,” Guigal says. “We are fully satisfied with the grape balance at Château de Nalys.”

The aforementioned first wave of four releases from Château de Nalys was spearheaded by a red and a white Grand Vin showcasing varieties from all three of the vineyards—The Château de Nalys Grand Vin Blanc 2017 and Château de Nalys Grand Vin 2016, both priced at US\$105. The Blanc is golden colored in the glass and delivers a rounded, characterful body with plenty of depth, weaving together fruits and floral notes, and vanillins from the oak. The red is full-bodied and juicy, with berries and cherries balanced by a touch of acidity and spice.

The other two releases, Saintes Pierres de Nalys Blanc 2017 and Saintes Pierres de Nalys 2016, are available on premise only. In contrast to the Grand Vins, both of these have been made with an emphasis on freshness in profile.