

Dom de la Zouina, Volubilia Gris 2007 Guerrouane

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What could be more suitable for the dying rays of the northern hemisphere's summer than a dry rosé bargain made for the table? And what a story this one has to tell.

It was grown in Meknes in Morocco on a domaine with which two highly experienced Bordelais fell in love in 2001. According to UK importers Caves de Pyrène, always on the lookout for the quirky and satisfying, Gérard Gribelin and Philippe Gervoson were "struck by the richness of the terroir, the particularity of the soil and the climate, they were certain that they could produce unique results and so they decided to translate their passion and wine-making savoir-faire from Pessac-Léognan to Morocco." The estate is now run by Christophe, son of Gérard Gribelin, who has been running Ch de Fieuzal for about 30 years while Philippe Gervoson has been director of Ch Larrivet Haut-Brion since 1987.

Haven't you always felt that there must be huge, under-realised potential in Morocco (see the *Oxford Companion* on Morocco [here](#))? On vineyards such as these at relatively high altitudes, there must be great day-night temperature variation and a very dry climate must make for pretty healthy vines. Rainfall must be pretty low so, as in Spain, vine density is too – 4,000 vines a hectare, apparently. And the vines can't be all that old as the varieties apparently are the relatively new Languedoc crossings Caladoc and Marselan (which also have their own entries in the good old *Oxford Companion*).

But this cleverly named wine is delicious. *Vin gris*, particularly pale rosé, is a Moroccan speciality and this wine was clearly made with the express intention of producing a fine pale pink wine rather than being a by-product of the red wine making process which so many slightly lurid pale red wines sold as pinks are. The nose and flavour really are quite voluble – hinting at both spice and warmth. The acidity is pretty low – I would drink this before the end of 2008 – but it has real fruit impact on the palate, a bit of something to get your teeth into on the finish and in many ways it resembles a fine Provençal pink except that it is much less delicate. "Roll on the merguez [highly spiced sausages]", I wrote in my tasting notes. It really does cry out for something spicy. It went beautifully with the chilli beef and carrots and the black bean noodles in our Chinese takeaway the other day.

Although it expresses the relatively low latitude of Moroccan vineyards, it also has the winemaking sophistication of Bordeaux. I don't know what the Bordelais are doing other than a green harvest and very strict selection of grapes, but I wish I had come across more Moroccan wines as fine as this. And, unusually for a Caves de Pyrène import, the price looks ridiculously low.

The wine is £6.29 from Bertrand and Nicholas of Bourne End, £6.60 direct from the importers Caves de Pyrène near Guildford, and a puzzling £16+ from La Barbe of Reigate (surely shome mishtake?). Winesearcher doesn't cite stockists outside the UK at this point but surely the Bordeaux owners have ensured that it's on sale in France? And I hope that it might be more widely available soon, before it loses freshness.

You might also be interested in my [recent survey](#) of other superior pink wines.

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