

Les Cabotines - le vin au féminin

27 Jan 2013 by Julia Harding MW

Last week I was invited to a screening of a film about two women, Carole Leblanc, a nurse from Québec, and her partner Jo Befort, a vet from Alsace, who have fallen in love with wine and have been making their own in southern France under Les Cabotines label for the last five years. They found and rented 4 ha of old vines - Syrah, Grenache and Cinsault - in Collias in the Gard département and rent a cellar in the centre of the village, kitted out mostly with second-hand equipment.

This charming film gives a very personal view of growing grapes and making wine, alongside their day jobs, helped by various gangs of friends when it comes to pruning and harvesting. It also discusses the question of becoming accepted as a gay couple in a small French village. There's plenty of insight into both the hard physical work behind every bottle of wine and their relatively unusual context. Lots of great attitude.

The wines are not bad at all: a very drinkable and digestible rosé (Grenache and Cinsault) plus three red blends. My favourite was the middle one in the range: Les Ares Premiers 2010 IGP Coteaux du Pont du Gard, 60% Syrah, 40% Grenache, low yields (25 hl/ha) thanks to old vines, and 25% aged in new oak. There's plenty of Syrah structure and perfume with the generosity of southern French Grenache - it's still very youthful. They sell most of their wine from the cellar door and it is not available outside France - 'unless you come to visit us and buy some', said Leblanc.

Made by professional British filmmaker Fiona Cunningham-Reid, who got roped into harvesting one winter while she was house-sitting nearby, the film lasts around 50 minutes and won the award for the best feature (*le meilleur long métrage*) in the [2012 Oenovideo awards](#). It celebrates the sense of community that they have created around their passion for making wine and sharing it and takes you through the seasons of one year, treading a careful path between explaining all that is involved without overloading the spectator with technical detail.

The film is not on general release but you can buy it (£7.99) or rent it (£4.99) [here](#).