



PATRICK ALLEN SELECTIONS

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Château Virgile Costières de Nîmes

The Domaine at-a-glance

Owners: Serge and Thierry Baret
Winemakers: Serge and Thierry Baret
Soil: Clay and Alluvial Deposits
Size: 35 Ha **Location:** Vauvert, Costières de Nîmes
Appellations Produced: Costières de Nîmes



Serge Baret & Thierry Baret

This family-owned domaine is managed by two brothers, Serge and Thierry Baret, who along with their father, cultivate 35 hectares of vineyards. The domaine, which is located 15 km from the Mediterranean Sea, dates back to 1748. The vineyards which are planted right at the edge of a plateau, where there are deep alluvial gravel deposits from the Rhône River — a mixture of granite and limestone pebbles (known locally as *gress*). The vines enjoy the benefits of a Mediterranean climate on the sunny slopes above the *Natural Parc de la Petite Camargue*. The national park is a vast wetland famous for its pink flamingos, indigenous white ponies, and its gourmet salt, *fleur du sel*. The Mediterranean climate in this region provides three characteristics that are beneficial to producing excellent quality grapes:

1) abundant sunshine; 2) rainfall within a limited number of days; and 3) favorable winds that keep the grapes free of moisture and mildew.

Though Costières de Nîmes is one of the oldest viticultural areas in France, it isn't until recently that it has received the recognition they deserves. In 1986 Costières de Nîmes was elevated from a Vin de Pays to A.O.C., and in 2004 the area was re-classified as part of the Côtes du Rhône. Today there are less than 100 private wineries, and the majority of wine in the area is produced by négociants and cooperatives.

The seemingly incongruous, and almost surreal symbol of the region, is a crocodile chained to a palm tree (see top left of this page). The symbol dates back to Nîmes' Roman roots, and represents their triumphal campaigns in Egypt. In the image, Egypt is represented by a crocodile, and the chain attached to a palm tree symbolizes Egypt's capture. The victorious soldiers were then rewarded with farms and vineyards on the rolling hillsides around the city of Nîmes.

The name Château Virgile which now is used in reference to the noted Roman poet Virgil, was the name of the original owner of the domaine.

The entire Baret family is warm and hospitable. Serge and Thierry are very personable and hardworking winemakers dedicated to utilizing the latest technology to improve the quality of their wines and elevate the appellation of Costières de Nîmes.



The Camargue

The estate of Serge and Thierry Baret yet one more name to add to the list of burgeoning talent in the Costières de Nîmes, a region that has officially been bounced back and forth between the Rhone and Languedoc (perhaps in part because both would claim it).

David Schildkencht - The Wine Advocate

Château Virgile, Costières de Nîmes Rosé 2016 - Grenache 80%, Syrah 20%

Technical Notes: The grapes are hand-harvested at night to preserve their freshness, and are then de-stemmed before undergoing a short 12-hour maceration in temperature-controlled stainless steel tanks. Beginning in 2009 Serge and Thierry have progressively increased the percentage of Grenache from 60% to 80%. The result is dramatic. Though they have always made elegant, balanced rosés, the wines have become increasingly perfumed and silky.

Tasting Notes: Delicate aromas of wild strawberry and red cherry dominate the nose of this beautiful rosé. The wine is bright pink with a tinge of fuchsia in the glass. The strawberry and cherry notes carry through to the mouth, where they are complemented with hints of red raspberry and refreshing minerality. Château Virgile produces a very versatile rosé, crisp enough to drink on its own, but flavorful enough for a meal.