

IMPORTED BY
OLIVER MCCRUM WINES
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DIDIER GERBELLE WINERY

AYMAVILLE * VALLE D'AOSTA

The Valle d'Aosta is a small mountainous valley tucked away in the north-west corner of Piedmont, bounded by France and Switzerland. The wine culture here is quite different from that found in Piedmont, however; Aosta is characterized by very high altitude vineyards (up to 3,000 or even 4,000 feet above sea level), many indigenous varieties, and steep, terraced vineyards. The wines found around the town of Aymaville are mostly red, which is interesting (high-altitude viticulture is usually concerned with white wine), and there is a very distinctive smoky, plummy, berryish quality that immediately draws you in. These flavors, and the savory brightness that comes from high altitude, make me wish I'd found these wines sooner.



Didier Gerbelle, a graduate of the famous enology school in Alba, is not yet thirty years old and he has returned home to take over his family's vineyards. Some of my favorite wines are made by young enologists who respect their family's terroir but don't impose on it by heavy-handed winemaking, and Gerbelle is a good example of this. His wines are direct, very flavorful, very savory, not at all oaky, and a delight to drink. The only problem is there isn't enough: annual production here is 1,000 cases.

DIDIER GERBELLE · AYMAVILLE · VALLE D'AOSTA

TORRETTE VALLE D'AOSTA DOC

Grapes: Petit Rouge 80%, the remainder Syrah, Cornalin, Fumin and Premetta.

Vineyards: The grapes are grown in the communes of Villeneuve and Aymavilles at an altitude of between 2,000 and 2,500 feet above sea level; the soil consists mostly of sand with stones, and contains little organic material or nutrients.

Vinification: after the harvest the grapes are destemmed, crushed and divided between stainless steel and wooden fermenters. Yeasts are added; the maceration lasts for between 12 and 15 days. Malolactic fermentation follows shortly thereafter. The wine is aged briefly in larger barrels (1,000L) before bottling.

Production: 2,500 bottles



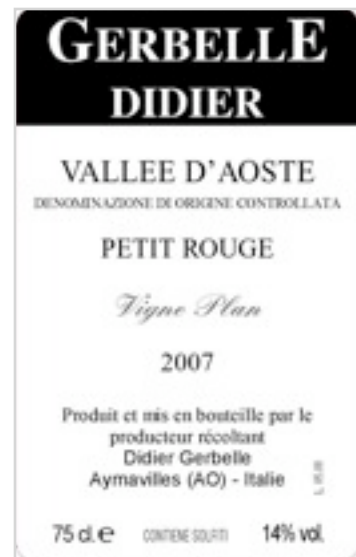
PETIT ROUGE 'VIGNE PLAN' VALLE D'AOSTA DOC

Grapes: 100% Petit Rouge

Vineyard: The grapes come from the 'Plan' vineyard in the commune of Villeneuve, at 2,200 feet above sea level. The soil consists mostly of sand with stones, and contains little organic material or nutrients. Vine density is very high, more than 10,000 plants per hectare; yield per plant is very low, a little over 2 pounds of grapes per plant.

Vinification: after the harvest the grapes are destemmed, crushed and divided between stainless steel and wooden fermenters. Yeasts are added; the maceration lasts for between 12 and 15 days. Malolactic fermentation follows shortly thereafter. The wine is aged for a year in larger Allier oak barrels (1,000L) before bottling.

Production: 1,200 bottles



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TORRETTE SUPERIEUR 'VIGNE TSANCOGNEIN,' VALLE D'AOSTA DOC

Grapes: Petit Rouge 70%, the remainder Cornalin, Fumin and Premetta.

Vineyard: the grapes come from the 'Tsancognein' vineyard in the commune of Aymavilles, at 2,100 feet above sea level. The soil consists mostly of sand with stones, and contains little organic material or nutrients. Many plants are own-rooted (not grafted onto American rootstocks). Yield is about 1.5 tons per acre.

Vinification: after the harvest the grapes are destemmed, crushed and fermented in stainless steel fermenters. Yeast is added; the maceration lasts for between 12 and 15 days. Malolactic fermentation follows shortly thereafter. About 60% of the wine is aged for a year in larger Allier oak barrels (1,000L), the remainder in stainless steel, before bottling.

Production: 1,400 bottles

