

Domaine Lafond, Lirac Blanc 'Roc-Epine'

Grape Varieties: Grenache 50%, Roussanne 30%, Viognier 20%.

Terroir: Stony & sandy soil under a blanket of red galets - large stones similar to thosefound in Chateauneuf-du-Pape.

Climat: Warm Mediterranean climate. Very windy! Mistral territory. Lirac is on the West side of the river in the Southern Rhone Valley..

Vineyard and winemaking: Hand-harvested intact berries arrive in the winery. Careful handling to avoid oxygen exposure. 4-12 hours short maceration to enhance aromatic quality in the juice and fermentation at a low temperature and bottled in the January following vintage.

Tasting note: Just 10% of the crop spendsa few months in oak barrels, the rest is fermented and aged in stainless steel to preserve the maximum of aroma and freshness. One of my favourite southern Rhône white that has lovely Roussanne and Viognier aromas, a delicious, succulent texture from the Grenache blanc and finishes fresh and clean

Food pairing: Shellfish and fish. An aperitif on a warm summer's evening (if we ever have one). The freshness and bright acidity also make a good match with tangy cheese – a goats cheese for example. Crottin de Chavignol would be perfect.