



Rhône 2014 – Gigondas Written by Jancis Robinson 22 Dec 2015



The postcard-pretty village of Gigondas pictured here has used the sales pitch 'vins d'altitude'. Its vineyards are certainly higher than those of Châteauneuf - and from many of them there are the most spectacular views. In warm, ripe years its wines can benefit from extra freshness. But in 2014 when many grapes struggled to achieve full ripeness (see the introduction to Rhône 2014 – Châteauneuf-du-Pape reds), the lower temperatures associated with elevation may not have been an advantage.

I must say I was surprised when I arrived at the generic wine organisation in Gigondas (having driven down from Tournon, where I stayed in a smart hotel whose wifi system banned guests from accessing anything as evil as JancisRobinson.com) by the sheer number of bottles in their dark red sheaths – exactly 100, of which 21 were already bottled. This was even more than last year's total of 94 – and almost as many wines as the regular bottlings of Châteauneuf I tasted.

Unlike 2013, 2014 was a particularly generous crop. A total of 44,000 hl (1.16 million gal) was harvested whereas fewer than 30,000 hl in 2013. The average is 36,000 hl. Unlike the northern Rhône, the southern Rhône was not particularly badly affected by the *Drosophila suzukii* fruit fly but there was a bit of black rot early in the season and, after the very wet summer, quite a bit of grey rot at the end.

The wines were very varied, presumably according to how severely the crop was thinned in midsummer and how efficient the sorting was when the grapes arrived (relatively late) at the cellar. This was a very difficult harvest and some of the results were distinctly dilute and tart - most unusual in this part of the world. Some of the wines tasted a bit more like green fruit juice than wine, and some of the tannins didn't seem to ripen properly so that there was some discomfort on the finish. Flavours ran the gamut of black pepper through to roses but with lots of wines lacking really convincing Gigondas character and tasting rather more like red table wine. In general there was no shortage of acidity.

The prices of Gigondas rose considerably for the small 2013 harvest and have remained at that level for the 2014. For me, this is not one of the most successful appellations in 2014 – although I am usually a fan of Gigondas. Though they are likely to have a bit more longevity than the very forward Vacqueyrases. (For more general comments on the ageing potential of Gigondas, see How Gigondas ages.)

The proposal for a white Gigondas continues to trundle through the regulatory process. Clairette and Grenache Blanc are the principal pale-skinned varieties grown in Gigondas vineyards but there is also some Marsanne, Roussanne, Viognier and Bourboulenc. The 102 wines below, 100 tasted blind in Gigondas plus examples from Guigal and Tardieu Laurent, are ordered alphabetically by producer (sur) name.

- **Montirius, Confidentiel 2014 Gigondas**

Tasted blind. Cask sample. Light, sweet rather charming nose. Rather savoury, a sort of claret structure. You could reproach it for being a bit mean but the balance is good. If you are looking for southern Rhône claret...

Drink 2019-2023

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- **Montirius, La Tour 2014 Gigondas**

80% Grenache, 20% Mourvèdre. Tasted blind. A tiny bit bretty on the nose with green strawberry fruit on the palate. Jammy fruit juice again.

Drink 2017-2019

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- **Montirius, Terre des Aînés 2014 Gigondas**

Tasted blind. Cask sample. Very pale rim. Light fruit juice rather than wine! Easy peasy but difficult to see why one would buy this if you could find an older, more typical Gigondas. A bit sweet and sour.

Drink 2018-2022

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