

**2011 Domaine du Grapillon d'Or Gigondas
1806**

More upfront and textured, the 2011 Gigondas 1806 (named after the year the estate was founded) is a rock star in the vintage with its licorice-laced blackberry fruit, scorched earth, pepper and roasted herb-driven aromas and flavors. Medium to full-bodied, with loads of texture and sweet tannin, it won't make old bones but will dish out loads of pleasure over the coming 5-6 years or more.

Another estate that over delivers, Domaine du Grapillon d'Or has always been run by the Chauvet family, with the father/daughter pair of Bernard and Celine Chauvet now running the show. Covering 35 acres in Gigondas (2 hectare in Vacqueyras and a small amount in Vin de Pays), they normally release two Gigondas cuvees in each vintage, with the 1806 being mostly Grenache and aged all in oak tanks, and the Excellence having a touch more Syrah, from

- Jeb Dunnuck (December, 2013)

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1806**

Also seriously impressive, the 2012 Gigondas 1806 is comprised of 80% Grenache and 20% Syrah that was aged all in larger, older barrels. It shows the freshness and purity of the vintage nicely with plenty of crisp currant and blackberry fruit, edgy minerality, ground herbs and tinges of leather on the nose. This carries it to a medium to full-bodied, concentrated and yet classically-styled wine that should be reasonably approachable on release, yet evolve gracefully for upward of a decade.

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Excellence**

Looking at their bottled releases, the 2011 Gigondas Excellence is a tank-aged blend of 60% Grenache and 40% Syrah that comes from the older vines on the estate. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered, it is a beautifully pure, lively effort that exhibits classic blackberry fruit, mulled spices, leather and dried garrigue-like aromas and flavors to go with a medium-bodied, balanced and already delicious profile on the palate. It's an outstanding, classic Gigondas that will drink nicely over the coming 6-8 years.

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Moving to the 2012s, the Gigondas Excellence is gorgeous and up with the creme de la creme of the vintage. Comprised of 60% Grenache and 40% Syrah, aged all in tank, it offers up notes of blackcurrants, sweet cassis, licorice, crushed stone-like minerality and loads of spice on the nose. This is followed by a medium to full-bodied, supple, elegant and perfectly balanced Gigondas that should deliver the goods for 10-12 years or more.

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