La Grange
Créateur de grands vins
It was always our – Renate and Rolf Freund’s – dream to not only sell but also to produce excellent wines. After 25 years of merchandising wine we were eager to take the next step. This was the right moment. The question was: where? We eventually chose France – and, in particular, the Languedoc. The reason: The region was increasingly attracting interest and more and more vintners in the Languedoc were receiving top reviews/ratings at the large wine tastings. The extraordinary potential of the region thus became visible.

The situation was similar to the one in the 1970s in Tuscany: A new generation of wine enthusiasts went new ways and made modern wines with a lot of ambition. The very same dynamics of renewal and improvement could now be felt in the Languedoc and we wanted to be part of it. We were determined to make excellent wines and to contribute to the rise of the Languedoc. We contacted Jean Natoli, a well reputed flying winemaker and expert of the region, and asked for his support.

A few months later we found La Grange, and with it exactly what we had imagined: a vineyard with a very diverse terroir, a location close to the Cevennes in pristine nature, plentiful water supply and a place to fall in love with. Thus our slogan: so close to paradise.

After Jean Natoli had assured us that the terroir of La Grange had the potential for outstanding wines, we bought the place. That was 2007. Since then we have focused our work on making great wines of the Languedoc.
What have we improved since then?

The first step was to conduct an in-depth analysis of every individual lot: condition of the soil, does the grape variety fit the soil, age of the vines, health status, and status of the trellis.

In the following years, we eradicated and replanted several vineyards and acquired additional ones in good locations. As a result, the quality of our grapes has improved significantly.

In 2014/15 we built a new wine cellar. Our goal was to have a functional space that would provide us with sufficient space to vinify the important lots individually as well as to have the technological opportunity to plan and control every detail of the process.

Since we love nature, we decided that the cellar should be built of natural stone from the region: Pierre de Beaulieu – a fine limestone that has been used for the Languedoc’s castles and palaces for centuries. It provides strong insulation, represents a sense of history, and is simply beautiful.

We treat grapes, berries, must and wine with utmost care in order to yield a maximum amount of aromas in the wine. For this reason, we built the cellar on and into the slope, so that the grapes can be filled into the fermentation tanks by means of gravity and without using pumps. In addition, we acquired a press that works particularly smoothly.

For the cellar, we chose steel tanks as these can be cleaned in the best way possible using the lowest amount of water and because the temperature during fermentation is easy to control.

We renovated and insulated the old cellar and refitted the cement tanks since they have a high temperature stability – which is optimal for the storage of wine.

Finally, we bought a bottling plant of the newest technology. It cleans the bottles, and injects nitrogen, which is followed by the filling, and the closure. Thus, between the closure and the wine is nitrogen, which increases the longevity of the wines.
What makes the wines of La Grange so unique?

**Our philosophy**
We consider each wine a work of art.

**Intentional limitation of yields**
The yields of our Carignan Berthomieu, for example, are only twelve hectoliters per hectare.

**The age of our vineyards**
Many of our vineyards are over 50-years-old, some more than 75, and one is even older than 100. Accordingly, their yields are small.

**Our extremely diverse terroir**
La Grange is located between three volcanoes that have continuously reshaped the geological layering of the soil. As a result, we have an unusual diversity in the terroir:

- Volcanic rock (porphyry)
- Limestone
- Sandstone
- Keuper
- Shale
- In the river valleys alluvial soil with a lot of debris

This means that each location has a different character and tells a different story. We take advantage of this and make wines with great personality, with concentration and complexity. Whenever we plant anew, we have the right soil for each type of grape.

**Our natural supply of water**
The most important spring of the region, La Rasclauze, is located on our vineyards. The Romans led its water via an aqueduct to Beziers. The slope on which La Grange sits seems to be the dome above a large underground lake. For our vineyards, this means that the plants are neither subject to stress during extreme periods of drought nor do they halt their production in such situations, as they still find sufficient water and continue to ripen.
Cool nights, healing wind
La Grange is located at the edge of the national park Haut Languedoc on a plateau that leads to the mountain range of the Cevennes. The wind mostly blows strongly from the Cevennes towards the Mediterranean. Due to the altitude and the cool wind from the mountains, the temperatures at La Grange are colder than at the vineyards located in the lower regions of the Languedoc. At night, temperatures in the summer are 10 to 15 degrees lower than during the day, so that the vines can relax and ripen well-balanced and slowly.

If the wind does come from the Mediterranean, it rains. It then soon shifts again, blowing strongly from the North, and dries the leaves of the vines, so that the incidence of illness is far lower than in other regions.

Extreme diligence in our work in the vineyards
The conditions of our vineyards are continuously analyzed. Are the plants in a natural balance? If not, we give them what they need. Where do parasites appear, where do vines fall ill? If dangers show up, we react early and considerate. We work with a minimum of sprays and do not use herbicides.

The wines of La Grange are authentic
Our wines are among the best that is produced in the Languedoc. We are proud to represent the tradition of the region. The old types of vines such as Marsanne, Grenache Blanc, Grenache Rouge, Carignan, Mourvedre and Cinsault are essential for the personality of our wines.
In the 19th century, a family by the name of Sabatier lived at La Grange. Sheep farming was just as important to the Sabatiers as growing wine. We took up this tradition and La Grange is now also home to sheep again. They also serve as our fire protection: They graze beyond the old cellar under the trees, thus creating a zone without grass and brush. This is important to us as there are bush fires each year that can become a real threat. In the area that is kept clean by the sheep fire can only advance very slowly – it is thus a safety belt for us.

As an homage to the previous owners, we created the wine series “Tradition” which is inspired by the high quality wines of the Sabatier family. Naturally, the label also bears our sheep.
La Grange represents sustainability

We joined “Terra Vitis,” the most important association for sustainable wine-making. We work according to the rules of the Viticulture Raisonnée of Terra Vitis and are regularly subject to evaluation. Currently, we are being certified as a particularly sustainable winery under the norm HVE 3. HVE, a norm created by the French government, stands for “Haute Valeur Environnementale,” meaning “utmost careful treatment of the environment.” This standard requires careful treatment with respect to resources and nature, but also respectful treatment with regard to employees. There are three levels (HVE 1 to HVE 3) of certification. La Grange fulfills the requirements of the highest norm HVE 3.

Our vineyards are small and are often located on terraces that are supported by old walls made of rocks. They are surrounded by the Garrigue, the wild bush forest of the Languedoc with its small oak trees and broom. Plenty of spices such as rosemary, bay, and thyme grow in the Garrigue year round. The wind constantly carries the intense scent of these herbs throughout our vineyards. And those who drink our wines rediscover this scent – the wines of La Grange have their own unique spiciness which, together with the fine acidity, provides vividness and freshness.

The Garrigue is, of course, also home to wild boars, numerous bird species, beetles and butterflies. The biodiversity at La Grange is incredible. Each year, kestrels, hoopoes, orioles, goldfinches, redstarts, owls and many other bird species pay us their respects.

La Grange has a differentiated assortment of wines

Our assortment is truly “democratic.” It contains very good wines at affordable prices. Our top quality wines “Castalides” are among the best wines of the Languedoc. We named them Castalides after the water nymphs that guard our wells and our underground water supplies and make La Grange such an inspirational place. The Castalides wines come from the best locations of our vineyards.

Our premium wines of the “Tradition” series represent an homage to the wines of the Sabatier family which raised sheep and made wines at La Grange in the 19th century. The “Tradition” wines come from those locations which the Sabatier family used for their special wines for festive occasions.

The “Terroir” line consists of wines made from premium grapes that are able to unfold their full potential in our vineyards: Since each grape variety grows on a different top quality terroir, and because the yield per vine is small, each wine has a unique personality. The Terroir series signifies the power and diversity of La Grange’s terroir.

The “Classique” series consists of three wines that are easy and smooth, with a lot of fruit, and are sure to cause smiles on the faces of those that enjoy them.