

PROFILE

# COMPOUND COMPLEX

BASILE GUIBERT

From reading Isaac Asimov novels to taking a slow boat to China and continuing a tradition, Mr. Basile Guibert has very complex traits that recall those of the wines his family makes

BY LI HAOHAN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHINO SARDEA



**M**r. Basile Guibert, youngest son of the founders of the Mas de Daumas Gassac vineyard in France, holds the unofficial title of ambassador to Asia, which means he is responsible for growing the business in the region by spreading the word about its

#### GRAND VIN 2016

This year, Mas de Daumas Gassac is presenting its Red Grand Vin 2016. Produced from 40-year-old vines, the wine is distinguished for its high freshness and hints of ripe fruits such as cassis. It is ideal for consumption while young. The estate's plots are mostly dedicated to Cabernet Sauvignon, with diverse red varieties also including Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Pinot noir, Tannat, Nebbiolo, Barbera and Dolcetto.

The estate is also releasing its White Grand Vin 2016, which features the Mas de Daumas Gassac white signature, highlighted by exotic fruits and light sap notes, a fresh finish, and a dash of saltiness. This profile is made up of 8.1 per cent rare grape varieties. The vineyard's white varieties include Chardonnay, Viognier, Petit Manseng, Marsanne, Roussane, Chenin blanc, Sercial and Muscat.

Mas de Daumas Gassac grows 40 ancient rare grape varieties from around the world, including uncloned vines that date back before the 1920s, making up rare and complex ingredients for its wines.

Gault & Millau has declared the winery "the Lafite Rothschild of the Languedoc", while The Times compared its vintages to "Latour". British wine critic Michael Broadbent ranked its vintages among the 10 best in the world, while wine guru Robert Parker applauded them as "exceptional".

In 1991, the estate debuted its Moulin de Gassac selection, which was voted the world's best wine by the International Wine Challenge in London in 1993.

produce and the uniqueness of the place that gives the grapes grown on it their special qualities.

Mr. Guibert, 35, has an affable personality, which suits his job well. His conversation repertoire is not limited to wine – philosophy and culture are among his passions – and he can frame his life experiences with both youthful enthusiasm and a disarming sophistication. He travels across China and Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea, and has made Singapore, where he lives with his wife, his base. Wherever he may be, he hosts lunches and dinners to showcase his wines, which he pairs with whatever food he thinks will bring out their quality. "I think it is the best way to introduce wines – to get people enjoy it with food, especially local cuisine," he says.

In the 1970s, Mr. Aimé Guibert and Mrs. Véronique Guibert founded the vineyard Mas de Daumas Gassac, today a collection of 52 small plots surrounded by 3,000 hectares of protected forest, and named it after the *mas* or the rural farmhouse that serves as a landmark in the area. The vineyard has made a name for following old European winemaking traditions where a lot of the processes are done by hand from picking the grapes to sorting them out and finally depositing them in fermentation vats.

The vineyards are fully organic. A compost with ewe manure is used as fertilizer, while natural predators, such as birds and insects, that thrive in the area keep pests away. Two years ago, horse-drawn plows were introduced to work the estate's best vineyards.

The winery is co-owned by Mrs. Guibert, and run by her four sons with the late Mr. Aimé Guibert: Samuel, Gaël, Roman and Basile Guibert.

Although lesser known than other wine-producing areas, the Mas de Daumas Gassac vineyard in the Languedoc commune of Aniane in the South of France, is held in high regard for its outstanding red and white wines. Out of its 2016 vintage, only 7,500 cases were produced, some of which were released recently.

In Singapore, Mas de Daumas Gassac wines are served at Odette, Les Amis, La Terre, Lerouy, Waku Ghin, and Salt Tapas & Bar, and sold through the The Vintage Club and Redmart. [P](#)



#### BASILE TAKES 20

Mr. Basile Guibert, who is growing the Mas de Daumas Gassac business in Asia, answers 20 revealing questions.

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|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>1. Cult following or mass adulation?</b> Cult following for Mas de Daumas Gassac &amp; mass adulation for Moulin de Gassac.</p> | <p><b>7. Selling a good brand or selling a good product?</b> Both!</p>                                                           | <p><b>14. Mountain hideaway or beach retreat?</b> Beach retreat.</p>                                         |
| <p><b>2. Starting over or continuing the tradition?</b> Continuing a tradition.</p>                                                   | <p><b>8. Mountain or sea?</b> Sea.</p>                                                                                           | <p><b>15. Light conversation or deep musings?</b> Deep musings!</p>                                          |
| <p><b>3. Bad music in good stereo system or good music in bad stereo system?</b> Good music of course!</p>                            | <p><b>9. Fiction or non-fiction?</b> Fiction</p>                                                                                 | <p><b>16. Searching or finding?</b> Searching.</p>                                                           |
| <p><b>4. Ballet or opera?</b> Opera.</p>                                                                                              | <p><b>10. Well-planned journey or adventure trip on impulse?</b> Depends on who is tagging along, but I guess a bit of both.</p> | <p><b>17. Contemporary art or classical art?</b> Both of course! I love art; you can't make me choose!</p>   |
| <p><b>5. Sci-fi or historical romance?</b> Sci-fi. Isaac Asimov is the best!</p>                                                      | <p><b>11. Surprise ending or problem ending?</b> Surprise ending.</p>                                                            | <p><b>18. Formal dinner with associates or hanging out with the boys?</b> Formal dinner with associates.</p> |
| <p><b>6. Excellent wine with middling food or middling wine with excellent food?</b> Ha-ha-ha! Excellent wine!</p>                    | <p><b>12. Slow boat to China or fast train through France?</b> Slow boat to China of course!</p>                                 | <p><b>19. Keeping a pet or growing a plant?</b> Growing a plant!</p>                                         |
|                                                                                                                                       | <p><b>13. Love at first sight or calculated love affair?</b> Love at first sight.</p>                                            | <p><b>20. Sleep or food?</b> Sleep.</p>                                                                      |