



- **Country:** France
- **Region:** Languedoc-Roussillon
- **Subregion:** Saint-Chinian
- **Vintage:** NV
- **Colour:** Red
- **Grape Variety:** Alicante-Bouschet
- **ABV:** 17.5%
- **Bottle Size:** 50cl
- **Closure:** Natural cork
- **Style:** Rich and sweet
- **Drink With:** Dark chocolate desserts

## GERRARD SEEL: WINE MERCHANTS TO THE TRADE SINCE 1984

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## CHÂTEAU VIRANEL GOURMANDISE

<https://gerrardseel.co.uk/products/chateau-viranel-gourmandise>

Chateau Viranel Gourmandise is complex on the nose which is dominated by red and black fruits - blackcurrant and cherry - plus a touch of prune, sweet spice and some rose petal nuances. On the palate, it is harmonious with flavours that are found on the nose, nicely balanced and with a delicate sweetness.

Perfect as an aperitif or a dessert wine, Château Viranel Gourmandise is a *Cartagène*, a blend of the must from Alicante-Bouschet grapes and Languedoc *eau de vie*. It's a very distinctive, traditional Languedoc product, with aromas of liqueur cherries and baking spice and well integrated alcohol.

This *vin de liqueur* is aged for 20 years in oak barrels, using a *solera* system that was started in 1987. Château Viranel only produces three hectolitres per year, made from a blend of *saignée* juice and *eau-de-vie* (of which, two thirds of the alcohol has been aged for two or three years). The fruit of the grapes and the grape brandy are mixed together and then put into old barrels. Each year Château Viranel produces only around 500 bottles, which represents a 20th of the entire *solera*.

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### ABOUT THE GROWER

Situated in the foothills of the Massif Central in Languedoc-Roussillon, Château Viranel lies at the heart of the Saint-Chinian appellation. One of the most influential features of the property that contributes to the incredible quality of wines is the unique microclimate. This, combined with the estate's chalky soils, gives ideal conditions for the cultivation of wine grapes. Overlooking the Valley of the Orb, the southern exposure of Château Viranel's vineyards ensures they receive the maximum amount of sunlight, allowing the grapes to ripen both steadily and completely.

Vinification at Château Viranel is really traditional - the family has been making wine here for several generations and the history of the property can be traced back to 1551 - yet they use one technique for the reds that we had not encountered before. It's called *délèstages* (rack and return): rather than just pumping the fermenting juice taken from the bottom of the tank over the top of the cap of grape solids, they empty the vat of all juice and then return all of the must over the cap. This has the effect of fully breaking up the cap instead of the wine gently finding the same old path back to the bottom of the vat, thus ensuring maximum extraction not only of colour but of soft tannins and wonderful flavours.

The white wines, too, are all little gems with the Viognier being a real feather in their cap. It retains great freshness, and aromatic intensity whilst managing to avoid being another example of the oily, overblown style so often encountered. All in all, the wines of Château Viranel are not only some of the finest of Saint-Chinian but of the entire Languedoc-Roussillon region. They offer exceptional value and we cannot recommend them highly enough.