

Alain Graillot Syrocco

Zenata, Morocco

This North African Syrah may just be the dark horse of the Graillot portfolio, though it still delivers plenty of interest and value. For those new to this wine, it hails from the Atlantic ventilated hills of Morocco's Zanata region in the lee of the spectacular Middle Atlas Mountains. The relatively cool climate and altitude here - and the mix of red and black clay over a base of limestone and ancient ocean-bed remnants - provide the right mix of conditions for scented, juicy, layered Syrah that Alain Graillot hopes will showcase the surprising potential of Morocco.



The story has it that Alain Graillot was cycling in Morocco (hence the tandem bike and palm tree on the label) when he stopped off at Domaine des Ouled Thaleb, 40km inland from the Atlantic Ocean in the lee of the spectacular Middle Atlas Mountains. A conversation with the Domaine's then oenologist, Jacques Poullaine, and a close look at sites in Rommani and Benslimane convinced Graillot of the potential for producing highly elegant Syrah.

The towns of Rommani and Benslimane lie between Casablanca on the Atlantic Ocean and the Middle Atlas Mountains. As such, there is a relatively cool climate thanks to the ocean breezes and an altitude of about 500m. The Syrah vines are 10-40 years old (average 25 years). Overseen by Stéphane Mariot, the vineyard work is meticulous, with goblet pruning, hand weeding and hand ploughing, no herbicide or fungicide treatments are used. The grapes were 100% destemmed and fermented in closed concrete vats. Daily pump-overs were done, and maceration was completed in 10 days. The wine was aged for 15 months, first in tanks and then finished in large oak casks imported from Burgundy (from François Frères).

KEY FACTS

- 100% Syrah
- Organic Farming
- Vineyards all ploughed by hand
- 25 year old vines on average
- Aged in large older barrels

