



In 2012, Julien and Delphine began to restore a hillside that hadn't been planted for generations; there were fully-grown trees where these vines are now. They call it Les FrieyS, pronounced "freyS," with a hard s. (In the south of France the disappearance of the last consonant when speaking French doesn't always apply, most often with the letter "s"—this is just the start of the madness of French regional dialects and pronunciation.) This half-hectare hillside vineyard (0.56ha to be exact) is somewhat steep and set on limestone and clay with only a few vine rows on each terrace. It's a lovely spot and when Julien is there he has a glow of the excitement for its potential—plus it kind of acts like his outdoor man cave with a super cool 007 wine cooler hidden inside the stone wall behind a tiny rock façade door, complete with glasses and a corkscrew.

Mistakes happen, and while many might not be considered good, some turn out to be happy accidents. Case in point: from their nursery they gathered and planted Carignan, Grenache and what they were told was Cinsault, which ended up being an ancient, rare massale selection of Mourvedre from the Aude—a French department located just to the south and west of Escalette. It wasn't difficult to tell it wasn't Cinsault (nor any of the other grapes in their vineyard); the plant grew differently and the additional time it needed to ripen properly diverged from the typical grapes they work with; this is why Mourvedre is usually reserved for places with constant exposure to the sun and a lot of warm weather. Les FrieyS is a co-fermentation of all the grapes together, so finding the good balance of ripeness all at once between the three grapes is a tricky one. Yet the results from their first vintage were stunning, and Mourvedre made itself a permanent member of the team.

Everything for this wine is destemmed and vinified over 20-25 days in steel tanks and aged in 600 liter barrels for 18-20 months. The stems were left out during vinification because the vines are too young for their taste to add the qualities they want to the wine. Despite this, the wine is loaded with x-factors deep in mineral and ferrous characteristics. It's serious wine, like Hermitage level seriousness, but Delphine says it's also "glou glou," a French term for glug glug—delicious and hard to keep from drinking it too quickly. If Ze Cinsault (another wine in their range) is date night wine, this is the "drink it, don't think it" wine of serious wines.