

LIKE MANY IN southern France, this estate has a winemaking heritage that reaches far into the past. Indeed, in constructing a new winery in 2013, the owners unearthed a long-forgotten Roman villa, fully equipped with olive presses and a wine cellar.

The proprietors are Vianney and Laure Benoist; Laure's parents were previously in charge before handing over the mantle in 2009. Many of the vines here are more than 50 years old, and the fruit used to be sold to Domaines Ott, until the recent decision by the Benoists to keep the rewards to themselves and bottle the wine under the Canadel name.

Vianney enthuses about his place of work: 'We have a great and singular terroir, which delivers a powerful but elegant taste to the wines,' he says. The vines for this Best in Show winner are planted on terraces [locally called *restanques*] cut into the steep slopes of a natural arena that has a south-facing exposition.

'Working on terraces is a time-consuming

Tasted against

There were no other Platinum Best in Category wines tasted

and dangerous process, but a great challenge for a winemaker,' says Vianney. 'I have 98 terraces, so I have 98 different notes with which I can combine to play a complex melody in our wines.'

The blend here is 60% Mourvèdre and 35% Cinsault, complemented by 5% Grenache. Mourvèdre is a challenge, Vianney says, although it has its rewards: 'If you can tame its natural character, then you can transform its power into elegance.' The wine spends six months in concrete tanks before being bottled and released.



Above: Laure Benoist and husband Vianney took over from her parents at Château Canadel in Bandol in 2009