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Publication of a communication of approval of a standard amendment to a product specification for a name in the wine sector, as referred to in Article 17(2) and (3) of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/33

(C/2024/6179)

This communication is published in accordance with Article 17(5) of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/33 [1].

COMMUNICATING THE APPROVAL OF A STANDARD AMENDMENT

'Costières de Nîmes'

PDO-FR-A0161-AM02

Submitted on: 25.7.2024

DESCRIPTION OF AND REASONS FOR THE APPROVED AMENDMENT

1. Geographical area and area in immediate proximity

In Section IV 'Areas and places in which the various operations are conducted' of Chapter I of the product specification for the 'Costières de Nîmes' designation, point 1 'Geographical area' and point 3 'Area in immediate proximity' have, without further change, been amended by adding a reference to the 2023 Official Geographic Code.

This editorial amendment allows the geographical area to be identified with reference to the 2023 version of the Official Geographic Code, which is issued by the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE), and gives the definition of the geographical area legal certainty.

The same reference has been added to the single document, under the headings 'Geographical area' and 'Further conditions – area in immediate proximity'.

2. Winemaking practices

In Section IX 'Processing, production, maturation, packaging, storage' of Chapter I of the product specification for the 'Costières de Nîmes' designation, point (d) 'Winemaking practices and physical treatments' has been amended to specify that for the production of rosé wines, the use of oenological charcoal is permitted, in line with European regulations, for musts and new wines still in fermentation following pressing, without exceeding 20 % of the total volume of rosé wine produced by the winemaker for any given harvest.

The authorisation of this winemaking practice is mentioned under the heading 'Specific oenological practices' of the single document.

3. Labelling

In Section XII 'Presentation and labelling rules' of Chapter I of the product specification for the 'Costières de Nîmes' designation, point 2 'Special provisions' has been amended to include the labelling rules for referring to the broader geographical unit 'Vignobles de la Vallée du Rhône', as set out in the agreement signed between the various protection and management bodies concerned. This information must appear in the same visual field as all the mandatory details, be printed in characters of the same graphic design and colour as those of the designation, and be no bigger than two thirds of the size of the designation.

This amendment has been added to the single document, under the heading 'Further conditions – Labelling'.

[1] OJ L 9, 11.1.2019, p. 2.

4. **Details of the inspection body**

Section II 'Details of the inspection body' of Chapter III of the product specification has been updated to specify that checks on compliance with the product specification must be carried out on the basis of an approved inspection plan and by a third-party body offering guarantees of competence, impartiality and independence delegated by the INAO, the inspection authority.

This update does not affect the single document.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

1. **Name(s)**

Costières de Nîmes

2. **Geographical indication type**

PDO – Protected Designation of Origin

3. **Categories of grapevine product**

1. Wine

3.1. *Combined Nomenclature code*

— 22 - BEVERAGES, SPIRITS AND VINEGAR

2204 - wine of fresh grapes, including fortified wines; grape must, other than that of heading 2009

4. **Description of the wine(s)**

1. Red wines

BRIEF WRITTEN DESCRIPTION

Wines with the designation 'Costières de Nîmes' are still wines that are either red, rosé or white.

In the case of the red wines, the malic acid content is less than or equal to 0,4 g/l at the packaging stage.

— At the packaging stage, the wines have a fermentable sugar (glucose and fructose) content less than or equal to the following values:

Red wines with a natural alcoholic strength by volume less than or equal to 14 %: 3 g/l

Red wines with a natural alcoholic strength by volume greater than 14 %: 4 g/l

— The wines have a minimum natural alcoholic strength by volume of 11,5 %.

— After malolactic fermentation, the red wines have a modified colour intensity greater than or equal to 6.

— The total acidity and volatile acidity contents for the red wines are those laid down in EU legislation.

— The red wines are produced mainly from the Grenache noir N, Mourvèdre N and Syrah N varieties.

The red wines, which are made primarily from the Grenache N and Syrah N varieties, are the product, above all, of the winemakers' know-how. The young wines have aromas of red fruit and a medium ageing potential, with aromas that later evolve into more spicy and vegetal notes. These elegant yet structured and well-balanced wines belong to the great family of wines of the Rhône Valley.

General analytical characteristics

— Maximum total alcoholic strength (in % volume) —

— Minimum actual alcoholic strength (in % volume) —

— Minimum total acidity: —

— Maximum volatile acidity (in milliequivalents per litre): —

— Maximum total sulphur dioxide (in milligrams per litre): 140

2. Rosé wines

BRIEF WRITTEN DESCRIPTION

— The wines have a minimum natural alcoholic strength by volume of 11,5 %.

— At the packaging stage, the wines have a fermentable sugar (glucose and fructose) content less than or equal to the following values: 4 g/l

— The rosé wines have a modified colour intensity less than or equal to 2.

— The standards for volatile acidity and sulphur dioxide are in line with EU legislation, as are the other analytical criteria.

— The rosé wines are produced mainly from the Grenache noir N, Mourvèdre N and Syrah N varieties.

The rosé wines are mostly vivid in colour, very fresh yet full-bodied, with a good aromatic persistence in the finish. They have aromas of small red fruit and of dried fruit.

General analytical characteristics

— Maximum total alcoholic strength (in % volume) —

— Minimum actual alcoholic strength (in % volume) —

— Minimum total acidity: —

— Maximum volatile acidity (in milliequivalents per litre): 14,28

— Maximum total sulphur dioxide (in milligrams per litre): 180

3. White wines

BRIEF WRITTEN DESCRIPTION

— The wines have a minimum natural alcoholic strength by volume of 11,5 %.

— At the packaging stage, the wines have a fermentable sugar (glucose and fructose) content less than or equal to the following values: 4 g/l

— The standards for volatile acidity and sulphur dioxide are in line with EU legislation, as are the other analytical criteria.

— The white wines are made primarily from the Grenache blanc B, Marsanne B and Roussanne B varieties. These are well-balanced, lively wines, with floral aromas reminiscent of white flowers, and fruity aromas reminiscent of citrus and white-flesh fruit.

General analytical characteristics

— Maximum total alcoholic strength (in % volume) —

— Minimum actual alcoholic strength (in % volume) —

— Minimum total acidity: —

— Maximum volatile acidity (in milliequivalents per litre): 14,28

— Maximum total sulphur dioxide (in milligrams per litre): 180

5. **Winemaking practices**

5.1. *Specific oenological practices*

1. Growing method

The minimum planting density of the vines is 4 000 plants per hectare. The spacing between the rows must not exceed 2,50 m, and the spacing between plants in the same row must be at least 0,8 m.

The area available for each plant must not exceed 2,5 m^2. This surface area is obtained by multiplying the spacing between the rows by the spacing between the plants.

— Pruning takes place before 1 May.

— The vines are pruned using short pruning, with a maximum of six spurs per plant. Each spur has a maximum of two buds. Vines trained using the Royat cordon system, however, may be pruned with a maximum of 10 spurs per plant, each spur having a single bud.

— Single Guyot pruning may be used for the Syrah N and Viognier B varieties, with a maximum of 10 buds per plant, of which no more than six on the cane, and one or two replacement spurs with a maximum of two buds each.

Irrigation may be authorised.

2. Specific oenological practice

For the production of rosé wines, the use of oenological charcoal is permitted for musts and new wines still in fermentation following pressing, without exceeding 20 % of the total volume of rosé wine produced by the winemaker for any given harvest.

In addition to the above provision, the oenological practices followed must meet the requirements laid down in EU legislation and in the Rural and Maritime Fishing Code.

5.2. *Maximum yields*

1. Red and rosé wines

66 hectolitres per hectare

2. White wines

70 hectolitres per hectare

6. **Demarcated geographical area**

The harvesting of the grapes, vinification and the production of the wines take place in the following municipalities of the department of Gard, based on the 2023 Official Geographic Code: Aubord, Beaucaire, Beauvoisin, Bellegarde, Bernis, Bezouce, Bouillargues, Le Cailar, Caissargues, Garons, Générac, Jonquières-Saint-Vincent, Lédenon, Manduel, Meynes, Milhaud, Nîmes, Redessan, Rodilhan, Saint-Gilles, Sernhac, Uchaud, Vauvert, Vestric-et-Candiac.

7. **Wine grape variety(ies)**

Bourboulenc B - Doucillon blanc

Carignan N

Cinsaut N - Cinsault

Clairette B

Grenache N

Grenache blanc B

Macabeu B - Macabeo

Marsanne B

Marselan N

Mourvèdre N - Monastrell

Roussanne B

Syrah N - Shiraz

Vermentino B - Rolle

Viognier B

8. **Description of the link(s)**

8.1. *Details of the geographical area*

The term '*costière*', from which the geographical area of the registered designation of origin 'Costières de Nîmes' takes its name, denotes the stony, sometimes rolling, plateau situated between the Vistrenque – the Nîmes depression flanked by the River Vistre – to the north-west, the Gardon and Rhône plains to the east, and the Camargue plain to the south. Composed of a succession of small hills, the plateau extends from north-east to south-west over some 40 km and is around 15 km wide. The geographical area is therefore confined to the territory of 24 municipalities in the department of Gard.

The climate is Mediterranean, with plenty of sunshine (on average 2 700 hours per year) and a period of sub-drought in summer. The climate is influenced by the Mistral, a cold, dry, often violent northerly wind that blows down the Rhône Valley, but the area also benefits from cool sea breezes from the nearby Camargue, which sweep over the plateau by convection, as the air is heated by the stony soil and rises. The tempering effect of these breezes increases the variation between daytime and night-time temperatures.

In the late Tertiary and early Quaternary period, the Rhône basin was criss-crossed by powerful rivers transporting a considerable volume of materials, which today occur as layers of pebble interspersed with red sandy clay. This highest and, therefore, oldest level accounts for the bulk of the plateau and gives it its uniqueness, despite the plateau's size, which has earned it the title of the largest 'Villafranchian terrace' in Europe. The soil is of varying depth, very stony, and red to varying degrees, depending on the infiltration of the clay with run-off water. It has good (though not excessive) water reserves and warms up quickly.

8.2. *Information on the quality and characteristics of the product*

In the 1920s, producers created a union to define the production area of 'Costières' wines. This led to a request for recognition as wines with the designation of origin 'Delimited wine of superior quality' in July 1942, and to recognition as a registered designation of origin in 1986, initially under the name 'Costières du Gard', and from 1989 under the name 'Costières de Nîmes', after the terrace that forms the base of the geographical area.

Marking a transition between the Languedoc region and the Rhône Valley, of which it forms the southernmost part, the vineyard area covers some 4 500 ha and produces an average of 220 000 hl, accounted for by red wines (55 % of production), rosé wines (40 % of production) and, to a lesser degree, white wines. These wines are produced by 15 wine cooperatives and around a hundred privately owned cellars.

A quarter of the volume produced is sold outside France, with almost half of that sold outside the European Union, mainly to Canada.

8.3. *Causal interactions*

Benefiting from a unique history and geographic location, at the transition between two cradles of civilisation in winemaking, Languedoc and Provence, bounded by cities steeped in history and culture, such as Nîmes, Beaucaire or Saint-Gilles, at the foot of the Urgonian ridges, and firmly rooted in the feature that unites it, the 'Villafranchian terrace', the '*costière*' plateau offers all the elements that have allowed winemakers to highlight the originality of a production method that is based on traditional know-how and seeks to optimise the quality of the wine.

The natural factors exhibited by this production method have features that can be found in the crop potential preserved by winegrowers, in particular through the rules on the harvest and transport of the crop laid down in the product specification.

The parcels specifically demarcated for the harvesting of the grapes are situated on the terrace, the soil of which comprises Villafranchian gravel, known locally as 'Gress', interspersed with a sand matrix. These parcels enjoy optimum drainage conditions and optimum water retention thanks to the frequent presence of a clayey stratum, known locally as 'Gapans', which ensures the plants can continue to grow during the hot, dry summer periods.

The layer of pebbles – sometimes several metres deep – stores the heat by day and releases it by night. The rise in temperature by day creates a temperature difference, which reinforces the convection effect and draws in sea breezes from the Camargue. This increased variation in temperature, which is a feature of the climate of the geographical area, preserves freshness and aromatic complexity, while the warm, dry summer climate helps the grapes to fully ripen. The combination of these natural factors, together with the frequency of the Mistral, which ensures concentration of the sugar content of the grapes and limits the development of fungal diseases, contributes to the continuity of wine production in the geographical area.

Drawing on a carefully demarcated parcel area and traditional, restructured grape varieties, producers have managed to preserve the originality of their production by exchanging their collective know-how, while at the same time allowing individuality to be expressed.

Keen to enhance the image of their wines by protecting the geographical area and raising awareness of the quality of their know-how and of the vineyard area, to manage the living environment by using the landscape as a tool to develop and improve the production area, and to preserve the natural resources by maintaining a diversity of flora and fauna, all the relevant partners established a Landscape and Environmental Charter that was signed on 5 July 2007 and recognised within the International Charter of Fontevraud in March 2009.

9. **Essential further conditions (packaging, labelling, other requirements)**

Area in immediate proximity

Legal framework:

National legislation

Type of further condition:

Derogation concerning production in the demarcated geographical area

Description of the condition:

The area in immediate proximity, defined by derogation for vinification and the production of the wines, comprises the territory of the following municipalities, based on the 2023 Official Geographic Code:

— Department of Bouches-du-Rhône: Arles, Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer, Tarascon;

— ,Department of Gard: Aigues-Mortes, Aigues-Vives, Aimargues, Boissières, Cabrières, Calmette, Caveirac, Clarensac, Codognan, Collias, Comps, Dions, Estezargues, Fournès, Fourques, Gajan, Langlade, Marguerittes, Montfrin, Nages-et-Solorgues, Parignargues, Poulx, Remoulins, Rouvière, Sainte-Anastasie, Saint-Bonnet-du-Gard, Saint-Gervasy, Saint-Hilaire d'Ozilhan, Saint-Laurent-d'Aigouze, Vergèze, Vers-Pont-du-Gard.

Labelling

Legal framework:

National legislation

Type of further condition:

Additional provisions relating to labelling

Description of the condition:

(a) The labels of wines eligible for the registered designation of origin may bear the name of a smaller geographical unit, provided that:

— it is a registered location;

— it appears on the harvest declaration.

(b) The labels of wines with the registered designation of origin may specify the broader geographical unit 'Vignobles de la Vallée du Rhône' in accordance with the conditions specified in the agreement signed between the various protection and management bodies concerned. This information must appear in the same visual field as all the mandatory details, be printed in characters of the same graphic design and colour as those of the designation, and be no bigger than two thirds of the size of the designation.

Link to the product specification

https://info.agriculture.gouv.fr/gedei/site/bo-agri/document_administratif-6c0260e8-3690-4c85-911c-6e57fdf3b94b