



## JEB DUNNUCK

"Consistently thrilling wines come from L'Aventure, which is run with incredible talent and passion by St. Emilion native Stephan Asseo. His 2016s are incredible efforts, and the 2017 more Rhône blends are certainly in the same ballpark. Due to the heat spikes at harvest, Bordeaux varieties were much more difficult and hit or miss."

### ESTATE OPTIMUS 2016

TASTING DATE 11/29/2018 RATING **94**

Starting with the 2017s and with what could be considered the entry-level wine from Stephan Asseo's L'Aventure estate, the 2017 Optimus is based on 49% Syrah, 41% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 10% Petit Verdot that was brought up in 60% new French oak. It reveals a vivid purple color as well as notes blackberries, ground herbs, caramelized meat, and hints of chocolate. Beautifully balanced and full-bodied, it has a seamless, incredibly delicious style and is a brilliant introduction to the wines of this estate. It will keep for upwards of a decade.

### ESTATE CUVÉE 2016

TASTING DATE 11/29/2018 RATING **99**

A wine that flirts with perfection is the 2016 Estate Cuvée, which is 52% Syrah, 32% Cabernet Sauvignon, and the balance Petit Verdot, all of which spent 15 months in new French oak. Deep ruby/purple-colored, with a masculine bouquet of crème de cassis, graphite, liquid rock-like minerality, and lead pencil shavings, it reminds me of a top 2010 Pomerol with its opulence, power, and purity. Hitting the palate with full body, a layered, seamless, multi-dimensional texture, and present yet polished tannins, this beauty is one of the finest examples of this cuvée yet produced. Give bottles 2-3 years and it will keep for 15+.

### CÔTE À CÔTE 2016

TASTING DATE 11/29/2018 RATING **98**

The 2016 Côte à Côte is blockbuster and one of the wines of the vintage. A blend of 55% Grenache, 25% Mourvèdre, and the rest Syrah, brought up in a mix of 30% new French oak, 28% once used barrels, and the rest in amphora and concrete tanks, it offers a heavenly perfume of blueberries, blackberries, crushed violets, wild strawberries, ground pepper, and spring flowers. About as pure and seamless as it gets, this beauty hits the palate with full-bodied richness, a multi-dimensional texture, no hard edges, and a huge finish. I finished my note on this wine with "Killer stuff!" You can drink this today or cellar it for 10-15 years.

### LES DEMOISELLES 2016

TASTING DATE 11/29/2018 RATING **95+**

The 2016 Les Demoiselles is a 60/40 split of Mourvèdre and Syrah that was brought up mostly in used barrels and amphora tanks. It's full-bodied, layered, and pure, with fabulous notes of cassis and blueberry fruits intermixed with ample smoked meats, sappy herbs, and olive tapenade. One of the more backward wines in the lineup, give it a good 3-4 years of bottle age and it should cruise for a decade or more.

### INSPIRACIÓN 2016

TASTING DATE 11/29/2018 RATING **94**

A Priorat-inspired blend of 40% Grenache, 33% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 27% Syrah, the 2016 Inspiracion comes all from the estate L'Aventure vineyard and was aged 14 months in 40% new French oak, with 20% of the blend brought up in amphora. It boasts a deep purple color as well as a big perfume of blue fruits, liquid violets, damp herbs, and earth, with just a hint of chocolate. Deep, rounded, and opulent on the palate, with some aggressive tannins that need a year or two of bottle age, it's another terrific wine from Asseo that will keep for 10-15 years.

### FOR HER 2016

TASTING DATE 11/29/2018 RATING **97+**

The 2016 For Her got more than one "Wow" in my notes and boasts a rock star nose of pure blueberry and blackberry fruits, liquid violets, crushed herbs, and ground pepper. A blend of 46% Syrah, 39% Graciano (which they originally thought was Monastrell), and 15% Viognier, this full-bodied effort cuts a straight, focused path on the palate and has good acidity, awesome purity of fruit, and a great, great finish. Give bottles 2-3 years of bottle age and drink over the following decade or more.

### CHLOÉ 2016

TASTING DATE 11/29/2018 RATING **96+**

The 2016 Chloe (69% Syrah and 31% Grenache) is one of the closer, tighter, and more backward wines in the lineup. Sporting a deep purple color, it offers terrific notes of blackcurrants, spiced meats, and ample minerality and crushed rock characteristics. Structured, full-bodied, beautifully concentrated, and pure, it's loaded with potential yet needs 2-3 years of bottle age. Trust me, it's a brilliant wine.