



I requested a mini-vertical during my visit to L'Aventure to get a fuller picture of how these wines age. Winemaker Stephan Asseo, along with his daughter and General Manager, Chloé Asseo-Fabre, shared two six-vintage verticals of the Côte à Côte and Estate Cuvée (now called the Estate Reserve). In both cases, we tasted through the 2008-2013 vintages. I'm happy to say that each vintage's character came through in the wines, which is a priority for Asseo. In a region where ripeness can sometimes overwhelm terroir and vintage, Asseo strives for transparency, which is evident here. I also witnessed a steady decline in total alcohol levels, with the earliest vintages of Côte à Côte in the 16+% range and the Estate Cuvée around 15.9%. Even those wines showed the balance that L'Aventure has mastered. However, the wines are generally better today than they were in the past. Part of this has to do with a less aggressive oak regimen. The Estate Cuvée (Estate Reserve) is down to 85% new oak with the 2023 vintage. The new releases are gorgeous. The 2023 Chloé, which in recent vintages has been leaning toward a fresher style, is still balanced but structured, intense and built for the long haul. The For Her, a co-fermented blend of 58% Syrah, 30% Graciano and 12% Viognier, is the wine of the vintage for L'Aventure. This remains one of the absolute top estates in the region—a well-deserved reputation.

- Eric Guido, June 2025

Estate Cuvée 2013

RATING 96

The 2013 Estate Cuvée is spicy to the core, with an intense burst of incense and cedar spice box giving way to dried strawberries, black cherries and a whiff of ground clove. This is a classy effort with sleek textures, a core of tart wild berry fruits that slowly saturate, enhanced by nuances of Earl Grey and lavender. Adolescent tannins, adding a lovely framework of tension as hints of blackberry and cocoa fade slowly. The 2013 Estate Cuvée is still slowly maturing in bottle.

Estate Cuvée 2012

RATING 94

The 2012 Estate Cuvée is intense and backward in the glass, blending grilled herbs with spiced blood orange, dried blueberries and cedar box. It's more lifted than anticipated, with vibrant black fruits and salty mineral tones excited by a core of juicy acidity. This tapers off classically dry and dramatically long, with a balsamic flourish and a dark chocolate tinge. The 2012 is in a lovely place.

Estate Cuvée 2011

RATING 93

The 2011 Estate Cuvée is darkly brooding and understated, with a dusty blend of dried florals, scorched earth, dried black cherries and lifting nuances of mint. It is elegance personified with weighty textures offset by a core of vibrant acidity as depths of ripe red and black fruits swirl throughout, complicated by a tinge of olive toward the close. This leaves a savory mineral component, nearly smoky in character, framed by edgy tannins.

Estate Cuvée 2010

RATING 97

Tobacco leaf and clove combine with plum sauce, pencil shavings and cocoa as the 2010 Estate Cuvée seduces the taster from the glass. The balance here is remarkable, perfectly ripe yet refined, with citrus-laced wild berry fruit and tactile mineral tones over silken textures. Vibrant acidity maintains fabulous energy as citrus-infused black cherries pinch the cheeks, and residual tannins add a gentle firmness. The 2010 is pure class, in a perfect drinking window.

Estate Cuvée 2009

RATING 95

The 2009 Estate Cuvée is minty fresh, with an airy bouquet of lavender-laced blackberries, grilled herbs, pine shavings and crushed stone. This is elegant pure seduction, mixing cherries and plums over a tactile mineral core, all supported by vibrant acidity. The 2009 maintains a firm tannic grip while remaining fresh, finishing classically dry, long yet poised. The evolution here is marvelous. This beauty is just coming into its own.

Estate Cuvée 2008

RATING 94

The 2008 Estate Cuvée is expressive, mixing crushed raspberry, peppery rose and nuances of tomato leaf and tobacco. It is in beautiful form, still radiant and lively in character, with sleek textures and depths of ripe red and black fruits elevated by a core of tantalizing acidity. It leaves a grippy resonance of adolescent tannin as hints of plum mix with tart cherry through the long, remarkably fresh finale.