Ao Yun

A refined, ageworthy vintage: dark currant and blackberry meet mountain herbs, cedar and graphite, all carried by brisk acidity and a silken, layered texture.

Ao Yun 2020

, China

Alcohol :14,00 %

Composition: 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 18% Cabernet Franc, 10% Merlot, 6% Syrah, 6% Petit Verdot

Region and Vineyards

Carved into the foothills of the Meili Snow Mountains, the Ao Yun vineyards span the villages of Xidang, Sinong, Shuori and Adong between roughly **2,200-2,600 m**. High **diurnal range**, intense UV light and a prolonged season build colour, fine tannin and aromatic lift while preserving acidity. The terraces sit on well-drained alluvial-colluvial soils; steep gradients and narrow rows demand meticulous handwork, with irrigation guided by snowmelt and careful water management.

In 2020, a dry, warm season ripened each altitude band cleanly. The grand vin drew **72%** of its fruit from the two coolest, highest villages—Adong and Shuori—balancing richness with freshness. Harvest unfolded over about **51 days**, parcel by parcel, at low yields (≈**16 hL/ha**), capturing precision and depth that define the vintage's **vibrant** profile.

Winemaking

Ao Yun 2020 is a Cabernet-framed blend of **60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 18% Cabernet Franc, 10% Merlot, 6% Syrah and 6% Petit Verdot**. Grapes from the four villages (Adong 34%, Shuori 38%, Sinong 18%, Xidang 10%) were vinified separately with gentle extraction to respect altitude-derived finesse.

Élevage lasted **12 months** split between **stoneware jars (≈40%)** and French oak (≈30% new, ≈30% older barrels), followed by a short settling period in tank before bottling. The stoneware safeguards aromatic purity and texture; the measured oak regimen adds structure and length without masking terroir signatures. The result is a wine of **fine-grained** tannins, clarity of fruit and poised freshness.

Tasting Notes

- **Color:** Deep ruby with a youthful purple rim.
- **Aroma:** Blackcurrant, blackberry and blueberry layered with wild mint, green pepper, cedar, graphite and subtle clove; hints of orange-peel lift and cocoa.
- **Palate:** Full-bodied yet aerial; cool-toned dark fruit wrapped in **powdery** tannins and lively acidity. Savoury pepper, tobacco leaf and stony minerality run through a long, vertical finish.

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Did you know?

"Ao Yun" means "flying above the clouds." Beyond oak barrels, the estate matures a significant share of the wine in local **stoneware** to preserve purity and calibrate oxygen exchange—an approach tailored to the winery's extreme-altitude environment and mosaic of terraces.

Wine Pairing Ideas

- **Five-spice duck breast:** aromatic spice and dark fruit mirror the glaze; lively acidity cuts through richness.
- **Herb-crusted lamb rack:** Cabernet structure and herbal notes echo the crust and tame the fat.
- **Charcoal-grilled ribeye:** dense fruit and fine tannins complement Maillard depth and marbling.
- **Aged Comté:** nutty umami and firm texture resonate with the wine's mineral length.

96

Robert Parker (RP) : 96 Points (2020)

The 2020 Ao Yun is a blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 18% Cabernet Franc, 10% Merlot, 6% Syrah and 6% Petit Verdot, with the fruit being sourced from Ao Yun's four villages in order of rising altitude and percentage terms as follows: 10% from Xidang, 18% from Sinong, 38% from Shuori and 34% from Adong. The wine has a very deep purple appearance and sports a beautifully complex nose of lifted, perfumed dark fruit—cassis, bramble, black cherry, black plum, blueberry, mulberry—with herbaceous notes of mint, green bell pepper and sage, these primary elements marrying beautifully with some subtle, new oak notes of clove, toast, smoke and vanilla. Like the Village Cru red wines, this was matured for 12 months in 30% new, small-format French oak with 30% in older wood and the remainder in Yunnanese stoneware jars. On the palate, this is very full-bodied with super-ripe coating and fine-grained tannins with vibrant acidity—this comes naturally at 3.35 pH—and well-integrated 13.5% alcohol, providing the platform for the concentrated dark fruit and sweet and savory pyrazine and new oak notes. While this wine does not have the immediate "generosity" or sumptuousness of the 2019 vintage, it is undeniably elegant, polished and powerful in its own vintage expression. With its very long length, the 2020 Ao Yun has a complex, layered finish that is abundantly youthful. While it is approachable now, it will show better going forward and will comfortably age for at least 15 years.

96 Decanter

Decanter (DCT) : 96 Points (2020)

Smells wild and strong on the nose, some elements of blackcurrants, damsons and plums, but darkly cool not overly ripe. The meaty, wild Syrah elements come through (even at just 6% of the blend) with a touch of florality from the Cabernet Franc (19%). Really vivid bright purple in the glass too, almost fuschia pink on the rim. Thick and unctuous, this has weight and body with a fleshy, plump texture, almost chewy but bouncy too so you get strength and clear structure but with lift and brightness from the pure fruit and high acidity. I love the styling, feels controlled and purposeful. Suave but still muscular, confident. It's a big wine with plenty to say. Very long and keeps the intensity all the way through. I like the cool mint eucalyptus note on the finish reminding you it's full of Cabernet. I'd still struggle to say where it's from but it's very good. 6% Syrah and 5% Petit Verdot complete the blend.