



RHÔNE 2017 EN PRIMEUR



2017 Rhône rides in on the wave of success enjoyed across the region in 2015 and 2016. Although the growing season was far from straight forward, it pulls off the hat trick finale of an excellent trio in many instances. Choose carefully and there are rewards a plenty.

Northern Rhône enthusiasts will find plenty to celebrate in this *millésime solaire*, where Syrah's ripe black fruit character sings. Grenache fans must tread more carefully in the South, and whites are on the heady and rich end of the scale, though the successful ones harness the luxurious nature of the vintage to their advantage.

Across the greater Rhône region growers had to deal with an onslaught from nature. Though some appellations were touched by frost and hail, it was the heatwave and drought of the long summer months that left their deepest mark on the vintage. 2017 will go down as one of the driest summers on record, and also one of the smallest vintages in the Southern Rhône. A complicated flowering period reduced yields dramatically in the South. The North fared better and yields there are not much down on an average year despite the extreme drought conditions.

The massive and devastating frost across Europe in April 2017 has meant many French regions have notably small volumes in 2017. Whilst the Rhône's fortunes were hampered by other plights of nature, it too follows the national trend for small volumes, and consequently, pressure on prices and availability.

It would be sage to keep in mind the 2018 vintage, which, for very different reasons, was even shorter in volume than 2017. The pressure on available stock will be felt across the region, but perhaps hardest in the South.

THE GROWING SEASON

After a mild and dry winter ground water reserves remained low. An unusually early spring meant the vegetative cycle got off to a precocious and healthy start, and growers in the North were grateful for the rain that arrived in March. The widespread frost in late April that struck vineyards across Europe did reach its claws as far south as the Rhône, but most of the major appellations were left unscathed.

Early and rapid flowering in May took place in turbulent conditions where unseasonably cool weather was followed by an extreme heat spike. This temperature turmoil meant the region suffered a complicated fruit set with widespread incidences of *coulure*. *Coulure* is the result of abortive flowering, and it reduces the numbers of viable berries per bunch. Grenache and Viognier are particularly susceptible to this phenomenon.

Except for Condrieu, the North was less troubled by *coulure*, although a little rain around flowering in Hermitage meant some growers, like Bernard Faurie, report a 20% loss in yield. In Côte Rôtie yields look close to average, and those that lost a little as a result of the summer heat are only down around 10%, which is a stark contrast with the neighbours in the South, many of whom lost 40% – 50%.

The summer months were extremely warm, dry, and windy. The Mistral blew its ferocious hardest during the late summer and intensified the drought stress. Whilst wind and heat are limiting factors for quantity, they do also mean low disease pressure in the vineyards, which is always great news for a vintage's quality. Thus the small crop was able to ripen with relative ease and evenness. Some drought stress did threaten to block maturation, but most growers report that harvest brought in healthy grapes with excellent ripeness. For some it necessitated a long harvest period, but given that the rain held off until October this was feasible.

As with the entire season, the harvest was extremely early, with whites starting in mid-August. The Perrins of Château de Beaucastel had to recall staff early from summer holidays to bring in the first Viognier on 17th August, and most pickers in Côte Rôtie were well under way by the second week of September.

THE WINES

Small volumes will be the leading discussion point of the vintage. But it is imperative to acknowledge that what reduced the volume had little impact on quality. Indeed, the later part of the growing season was a high-quality one, and many of the wines show the greatest facets of their *terroirs* and varieties. There is a telling consistency in the Northern reds, where Syrah has its archetypal black fruit, graphite, cassis, black olive, juicy, saline finesse on full display. Its wines share much in common with the magnificent 2015 vintage, although the tannins feel softer and creamier than the more robust and muscular tannins of 2015. There is plenty to celebrate in the Northern Rhône reds, and fortuitously, not too great a reduction in volume.

Whilst the reds of the North are *monocépage* Syrahs, the South's great advantage when facing a difficult season is its wide range of varieties and its tradition of blending. Strawberry scented Grenache with its rich body and soft creamy tannins is the backbone of Southern blends. In 2017 it suffered heavy losses and this impact is felt in the wines, many of which have a slightly reduced proportion of the variety in their blends. But there is more to the Southern Rhône than Grenache, and supporting varieties like Mourvèdre, Cinsault, Carignan and Syrah, stepped up, and have been blended to produce robust, spicy wines. They also help to moderate alcohol levels, and these wines do not show the heady extravagance of a high-alcohol year. The quality of tannins in the South feels bigger and more muscular than the supple nature of the North, and some less successful wines feel rustic and over-extracted. But the best are truly excellent, and should cellar well.

Whites in the North and South, generally, weigh in on the heavy side in comparison with 2016. Condrieu is not universally successful, and careful choices are needed here. Viognier's sugar levels rose rapidly at the end of August, and winemakers needed to act extremely quickly. Further south in St Péray, Marsanne has weathered the difficulties well, and the whites have bright charm alongside their ripe notes and seem in better balance than the bigger Marsannes and Roussannes of Hermitage. In the South, it is hard to generalise about the whites. Picking dates and house styles mean they range from watery and alcoholic to full-flavoured and satisfying, and we have offered according to our preference for the latter.

Overall, 2017 is less consistent than either 2015 or 2016. As a result, there are some small changes in our selection of wines this year, offering a slightly tighter list. Crucially, although records will show this was a warm vintage, the reds do not carry a heavy feeling of alcohol. The warmth has manifested itself in the maturity of their tannins rather than high sugar ripeness. It may lack a little acidity in places, but this is not unusual for the Rhône. Growers there have had centuries to understand that freshness is not exclusively dependent on acidity. The dried herb, savoury accent of Southern blends and the peppery spice of Northern Syrah give the wines verve and drive, and their own style of energy and freshness. Despite the small crop the majority of our growers have maintained prices from 2016. As ever, the Rhône offers excellent value.

CATHERINE PETRIE MW



NORTHERN RHÔNE

DOMAINE PATRICK & CHRISTOPHE BONNEFOND, AMPUIS

This estate in the commune of Mornas is perched up on the hills just behind the Côte Rôtie escarpment and is run by brothers Patrick and Christophe Bonnefond. The domaine's style is a modern and polished approach to Northern Rhône Syrah. The wines have a compact richness, which is matched by up to 30% new oak in the top cuvées in 2017, giving the black fruit toasty smoky notes. The Colline de Couzou is a blend of fruit from the Côte Blonde and the Côte Brune, whilst the Rochains and Rozier both come from the heart of the Côte Brune whose schist and mica-schist soils typically give more structure to the wines than the finer, more delicate character of the granite soils found in the Côte Blonde. The Bonnefond vineyard sites are of exceptional quality; their Les Rochains parcel lies just next to Guigal's La Landonne. The wines are never fined, and only undergo a light filtration before bottling. Christophe likes to include some press wine in the final blends, giving them a creamy richness. Their style is slick and seductive.

Despite the stresses of the dry, hot growing season, Christophe happily reports they are only about 10% down on an average yield, and he is very pleased with the quality in 2017. The wines have an aromatic lift of dark cherries and blueberries, and there is a supple, luscious style to the tannins. The wines, usually on the dark side anyway, are particularly deeply coloured this year. The oak is well integrated, and overall the wines have a very pleasing balance that should see them through a long journey in the cellar. As with many producers in the Northern Rhône, the 2017s share much in common with the 2015s, but it is the tannins that set them apart – 2017s are mature and silky where 2015s are firm and muscular. These wines display Syrah's propensity for salinity and spice married with ripe dark fruit.

CÔTE RÔTIE COLLINE DE COUZOU (R)

£315.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond

This comes from plots of vines scattered across the Côte Blonde (25%) and Côte Brune (75%). The granite parcels of the Côte Blonde contribute dark colour, deep berry flavours, juicy sweetness and fine light tannins. The Côte Brune components on the other hand contribute more substance, salty savoury tones and succulent density. The separate parcels are raised in 400l oak *fûts*, with just 10% new oak in 2017. There is a supple, luscious character to the juicy fruit and silky tannins across the parcels. The barrel of press wine will add creamy depth to the final blend. Lifted dark cherries and violets combine with Syrah's natural freshness to complete a balanced wine with the classical, pure tones of benchmark Côte Rôtie. Drink 2020 – 2029

CÔTE RÔTIE CÔTE ROZIER (R)

£215.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond
£220.00 per 3 Magnums In Bond

This cuvée is sourced from the 40-50 year old vines in the Côte Brune's Côte Rozier parcel (the younger vines are blended into the Colline de Couzou cuvée). This has noticeably more structure than the Colline de Couzou, and its fragrant dark fruits and wonderfully velvet-like tannins produce an accomplished wine that combines delicacy and power. Its aromas and flavours dance between crushed dark cherries and raspberries, and sweet cinnamon and nutmeg spice, with a lift of cracked pepper. The 30% new oak is supremely well integrated. Drink 2021 – 2030

CÔTE RÔTIE LES ROCHAINS (R)

£215.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond
£220.00 per 3 Magnums In Bond

Planted in 1947 on the mica-schist soils of the Côte Brune, these old vines lie next to Guigal's famous La Landonne vineyard. Compared with the Rozier, Rochains is always a bolder, denser wine. Its high altitude position gives the wine a peppery freshness and crunchy depth to the dark swirling fruit. Like the Rozier, this has 30% new oak in the blend, which is an excellent match for the richness of the kirsch fruit. The tannins are abundant and given a silky character by the generous coating of dark fruit. This is weightier, but with its freshness and intensity its composure is balanced. Glossy and intense. Drink 2022 – 2035

NORTHERN RHÔNE

DOMAINE RENÉ ROSTAING, AMPUIS

René Rostaing retired after the 2014 vintage, leaving the estate in the capable hands of his son Pierre. René had spent 40 years building a reputation as the patriarch of the Northern Rhône, and Pierre's handling of the 2015s and 2016s showed a seamless handover has taken place. For the 2017 vintage the house recipe remains unchanged: old vines from the region's greatest sites, a high proportion of whole bunch vinification, long macerations, and restrained use of new French oak. Pierre has continued his father's inimitable style in Condrieu, fermenting the wine in stainless steel. The estate is known for its unique use of Rototanks for its red fermentation – closed horizontal tanks with internal plunging mechanisms. René started using these in 1985 and believes they give much gentler pignage than what can be achieved by hand. The closed tanks also help protect the wines from oxidation. This enables long maceration times, and the resulting wines are typically deep in colour, full of flavour, and abundant in tannins.

The Rostaings, great proponents of whole bunch winemaking, say this method helps “keep the freshness and tension” of Syrah. The long maceration period has helped created long tannin chains in 2017, so the texture of the wines is silken and sinuous. The heat of the vintage has given the wines huge phenolic structure and deep colour. Their white – the unoaked Condrieu – by contrast is one of the most elegant of all the whites I tasted during the trip.

CONDRIEU LA BONNETTE

£255.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond

From the southwest facing granite *lieu dit* La Côte Bonnette, which is the first parcel in the Condrieu appellation after the border with Côte Rôtie. This Viognier is always fermented and raised in stainless steel, and is made for youthful drinking. The 2017 has generous apricot and Gala apple aromas, and the palate has some refreshing bitterness typical of the variety when grown on granite. Slightly lower yields this year (35hl/ha) gives the wine a weight, but its fresh structure keeps it well in balance. Drink 2019 – 2022

CÔTE RÔTIE LA LANDONNE

£515.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond (*limited*)

This is Côte Rôtie's most famous lieu dit, and Rostaing's cuvée always delivers the density, precision, and depth one expects from legendary terroir. The wine is distinctively dark in colour as a result of the heat and intensity of the growing season. The heightened black fruit aromas are matched by the flavours on the palate, with cassis, mulberry and kirsch. The tannins are big, structural, and abundant; they hold their powerful tension through the long finish. Drink 2022 – 2035

CÔTE RÔTIE AMPODIUM

£495.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond

'Ampodium' is the Roman name for Ampuis, and this iconic Rostaing cuvée is a blend of 13 *lieux dits* from around Côte Rôtie. This wine has pungent aromas of blackcurrant and the dark intensity of ripe black cherries. The long, supple tannins give the wine creamy length. It is a very fine portrait of Syrah from Côte Rôtie, with the typical traits of black pepper, liquorice and juicy berries. Drink 2020 – 2029

CÔTE RÔTIE CÔTE BLONDE

£550.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond (*limited*)

This cuvée is a blend of two neighbouring parcels grown on the granite soils of the Côte Blonde, and has a similar intensity to La Landonne. Its nose is a little closed at this early stage, but the palate shows pretty fruits with the intense grip of profound Syrah tannins performing at their dark and juicy best. Drink 2022 – 2035

NORTHERN RHÔNE

DOMAINE CLUSEL ROCH, AMPUIS

Over the past few vintages Guillaume Clusel has made his mark on his parents' estate, which is nestled below the steep slopes of the Côte Brune. The style here has always been understated yet complex, where Burgundy-like finesse is combined with Syrah's natural muscle. The domaine has some very old parcels of Syrah vines, and has been organically certified since 2002. The delicate handling in the vineyard and cellar results in wines with lower alcohol than many of their neighbours, and means they produce hugely pure, distinctive wines that avoid any over-extraction. Guillaume never employs a cold soak prior to fermentation and uses a high proportion of whole bunch fruit. As a result, the wines are often paler in colour than their neighbours. This is certainly the case in 2017. From 2016 onwards the estate no longer produces their young vine cuvée, 'La Petite Feuille', as the vines have reached sufficient maturity to be included in the main Côte Rôtie blend, 'Les Schistes' (formerly known as 'Classique'. Keep up!).

CÔTE RÔTIE LES SCHISTES



£370.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond (*limited*)

This wine was, until the 2016 vintage, named 'Classique'. Since 2016 the fruit from a younger parcel of vines, once the cuvée 'La Petite Feuille', have come of age and now bring their crunchy, aromatic red fruit freshness to the main Côte Rôtie blend, now called 'Les Schistes'. It is a blend of four principal parcels in the Côte Brune, where the young and old vines are grown on the mica-schist soils. Pale ruby colour, this has aromas of macerated strawberries and graphite freshness. Grippy tannins and a leafy lift to the palate cut through the sweet red fruit to give it savoury balance. This should drink well in its youth. Drink 2019 – 2028

CÔTE RÔTIE LA VIALLIÈRE



£278.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond (*limited*)

This schist parcel in Côte Brune is particularly respected amongst Côte Rôtie locals. Its mid-slope position and high proportion of gravelly stones aid drainage and produce wines of great finesse as well as notable substance. The 2017 has noticeably riper, more concentrated fruit than the lighter, crunchier Les Schistes. La Viallière is tender and flowing, with a deep fruit core, melting tannins, and elegant freshness. This should evolve with grace in the cellar. Drink 2020 – 2032

The 2017s have a sweet, spiced strawberry scent, and one has to pinch oneself when tasting in the cellar to remember that these are not Pinot Noirs or Grenaches, but in fact an ethereal, distinctively agile and precise style of Syrah the family has been cultivating for years. The domaine is pleased to report after losing 50% of their 2016 harvest, yields in 2017 have bounced back to average (around 32hl/ha, so by no means high).



CÔTE RÔTIE LES GRANDES PLACES



£360.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond (*limited*)

This cuvée is always the most powerful of the Clusel Roch parcels. As usual, it displays the deepest colour of their wines, although still on the limpid, translucent side for the vintage. Compact, muscular tannins and intense fruit concentration make the wine close to inscrutable in its extreme youth. But the calibre of its content and its manifestly high quality structure promise a fine old age. One for the patient. Drink 2022 – 2038

NORTHERN RHÔNE

DOMAINE ANDRÉ PERRET, CHAVANAY

André Perret needs little introduction: he is the master of light-footed, complex Viogniers from the granite soils of Condrieu. The appellation is known for its rich, mouth-coating whites best drunk in their youth, although André's sophisticated, expressive examples also have the potential to age well in bottle too. The 13 hectare domaine includes 5 hectares in Condrieu and 5 hectares in St Joseph, and his close-knit, peppery, herb-tinged St Joseph Rouge is excellent value and not to be missed, as is his pithy St Joseph Blanc.

The 2017 vintage presented a challenge to the growers of Condrieu. As harvest approached at the end of August, the intense heat made sugar levels in Viognier spike dangerously quickly. The most experienced growers realised immediate action was needed to save the vintage, and rapid picking ensued. Even given his quick action, André's Condrieus have come in at around 15% alcohol. He has certainly found a good compromise between phenolic ripeness and fruit ripeness, but these wines are undeniably rich. For fans of aromatic, dramatic Condrieu they offer a luxurious, generous, plush example of the appellation and are a stark contrast to the nervous 2016s. These luscious wines would, however, be an unwise choice for buyers seeking a more restrained style.

ST JOSEPH BLANC

£95.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond (*limited*)

A blend of equal parts Marsanne and Roussanne from the north of France's longest, thinnest appellation that runs for 65 kilometres from the border with Condrieu in the north to St Péray in the south. André's parcels are located in the northern sector, close to Condrieu. The wine is fermented and raised in an equal measure of oak (a fraction new) and stainless steel. The 2017 has an intense apricot scent, with a tropical richness coming through on the palate. The varieties' naturally pithy notes and touch of bitter phenolics come through on the finish. Drink 2019 – 2022

CONDRIEU CÔTEAUX DE CHÉRY

£205.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond

From another *lieu dit* whose vines are approaching 70 years. This wine is vinified in exactly the same way as the Clos Chanson, but spends slightly longer in oak barrel, giving the wine a marginally deeper colour and a sweet peaches and cream scent. In 2017 it has explosive aromatics, and the palate is bursting with ripe citrus and nectarine sweetness. It has a plush weight, creamy texture, and wonderful tension that persist to the end. A full-bodied, dramatic and stylish Condrieu. Drink 2019 – 2024

CONDRIEU CLOS CHANSON

£205.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond (*very limited*)

This southeast facing enclosed vineyard is home to old Viognier vines (55 years+) grown on granitic soils. One third is raised in stainless steel tanks, the other two thirds in oak barrels. It spends 12 months on fine lees with no stirring. This wine is dripping with sweet peaches and honey, and has a broad, weighty texture. Despite its notable volume, it has fresh energy that drives through the long, generous finish. Drink 2019 – 2023

ST JOSEPH ROUGE

£85.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond (*limited*)

These Syrah vines grow in the very north of the appellation and produce a deep ruby wine with brambly aromas reminiscent of autumn hedgerows, and a crunchy, herbal undertow. This is always an excellent value Northern Rhône. Like many 2017s it is deeply coloured, and is perfumed with smoky black fruit, cherries and liquorice. Drink 2020 – 2026

NORTHERN RHÔNE

DOMAINE BERNARD FAURIE, TOURNON

Bernard is slowly moving into retirement having handed over the majority of his St Joseph-based estate to his daughter and son-in-law. But his attempts to finally step into full retirement seem hampered every year by his ardent and sincere passion to tend his precious vines on Hermitage, and to make, year after year, one of the finest examples of Northern Rhône Syrah one can find. He has three small parcels on the famous hill. Fruit from Méal (schist), Greffieux (poor soil at the lower part of the hill), and Bessards (granite) are blended together to create this diamond of a wine. Made in just the way the three generations before him have, the fruit from old vines (some over 100 years) is whole bunch fermented (he doesn't even have a destemming machine) and undergoes a fairly short maceration period (just 15 days in total), which is followed by ageing in barrel (only 10-15% new).

The Northern Rhône has enjoyed three excellent vintages on the trot. Bernard groups 2015 and 2017 together as “millésimes solaires” whilst 2016 is “nordique”. He says the 2015 and 2017 share much in common, but the 2017 has greater balance and finer tannin texture than the 2015, which is a more robust and dramatic style of wine. He is 20% down in volume in 2017 due to rain at flowering. These wines are always made for the long-term. Bernard insists Syrah always closes down for three or four years, and that you simply must wait before opening. This advice should be heeded in 2017.

HERMITAGE



£320.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond (*very limited*)

This Hermitage has superb black fruit and violet aromas, peppered with some light spice. The palate is tight and well formed: layers of fine tannins build up to give the wine a complex and sophisticated structure that has both muscular power and impressive elegance. The finish leaves a salty, soy character lingering on the palate that nicely pulls together the deep dark fruits at the core of this extremely fine wine. Drink 2022 – 2035



NORTHERN RHÔNE

DOMAINE DU COLOMBIER, MERCUROL

This 16 hectare estate is run by brothers Florent and David Viale and produces dark, bold Crozes Hermitage and Hermitage. These wines are brawny and powerful, and have a distinctive palette of dark fruits, black olive tapenade, and graphite smokiness. Although grape growers for almost a century, the family only began to bottle their own wines in the early 1990s.

As always, the new vintage feels a little closed when tasting from barrel. Their wines take a bit of time to come around, but will reward in the long run for those seeking Syrah with meaty, brawny muscle and generous dark fruit. Furthermore, they offer good value.



CROZES HERMITAGE ROUGE

£150.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond



This is grown on clay-limestone soils, just across the river from the Hermitage hill. The 2017 has a deep purple colour almost opaque in depth. It shows the classic cassis, black olive and salty caper character of Colombier's Syrah, with notes of grilled meat. The palate has intensely packed tannins for a Crozes, and once it enters its drinking window these should mellow into the deep, dark fruit. Drink 2020 – 2026

HERMITAGE ROUGE

£250.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond



The Colombier vines lie within the Maison Blanche parcel at the top of the Hermitage hill. This is a deeply, brilliantly coloured Hermitage with intense black fruit aromas, taut tannins, and big, grippy strength on the palate that will need some time in the cellar. 50% whole bunch fruit has given the wine some appealing aromatics that play alongside the brawny strength of the palate. This is one of the most successful Hermitages chez Colombier in recent years. Drink 2023 – 2034

NORTHERN RHÔNE

DOMAINE ALAIN VOGÉ, CORNAS

Alain Vogé is owed a lot of credit for putting Cornas and St Péray on the fine wine map, thanks to his tireless work from the 1980s up to the 2000s. In his later years he has stepped down from the day to day management, entrusting this firstly to the accomplished Albéric Mazoyer and now to Lionel Fraisse who joined the estate in 2012, and who assumes the full post this year following Albéric's retirement. Together they have driven the estate to ever-greater heights, in 2016 overseeing the final stage of conversion to certified organic farming. The domaine is rightly proud of the work it has done to champion the pithy, phenolic character of Marsanne grown on St Péray's limestone and granite soils, and their whites have length and savoury bite. The reds are equally well handled, and are benchmark Cornas – bright Syrah with depth, freshness and a hint of wild hedgerow fruit.

This southerly quarter of the Northern Rhône experienced the dramatic temperature shift around May's flowering that proved so troublesome for Grenache in the South. They also had extremely dry weather in August and September and were not treated to the usual pre-harvest showers they often enjoy, and so the domaine is 40% down on an average yield. But there are no complaints about quality. Lionel explains that 2017 is much like 2012: immediate, generous, and intense. He elaborates that on paper, 2017 is a better vintage for reds than whites, but he continues saying that Marsanne isn't like other whites. Its phenolic intensity means it behaves much like a red wine, and this domaine's are some of the best whites I tasted.

ST PÉRAY FLEUR DE CRUSSOL



£305.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond

The estate makes three St Péray cuvées, with the Fleur de Crussol sitting at the top of the range made from the oldest Marsanne vines of the appellation (80 years+) grown on the granitic and limestone soils of the La Côte *lieu dit* in the heart of St Péray. Aged in 400l oak *fûts* (20% new) for 18 months on its fine lees. This is showing a touch of barrel reduction giving the nose a salted caramel nuance that complements the white flowers and orange zest aromas. The palate shows Marsanne's characteristic grapefruit bitterness with the vintage's natural generosity of sweet apricot fruit and toffee concentration. Drink 2019 – 2023

CORNAS VIEILLES VIGNES



£480.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond

The old vines have an average age of 60 years, and come from slightly higher up the Cornas slope, with deep roots in the granitic soils. This wine has a slightly longer *élevage* than Les Chailles. It has a deep, intense purple colour and aromatic density on the nose. Dark hedgerow fruits with peppery spice are entangled amongst generous, juicy tannins that drive through to a long finish with manifest old vine intensity. Drink 2022 – 2032

CORNAS LES CHAILLES



£330.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond

This is sourced from parcels found towards the bottom of the granitic Cornas slope, where the vines have an average age of 40 years. The wine includes a very small proportion (10%) of whole bunch fruit, and undergoes a long, controlled maceration to draw out the tannins. The 2017 has notable volume and is full of liquorice and dark cherries, and just a hint of grilled meat. Aged in old barrels for one year, it is the dark fruit and spice that sing out here, unmasked by oak aromas. The tannins are abundant and boisterous in their youth, and should develop well with some time in bottle. Drink 2020 – 2030

SOUTHERN RHÔNE

DOMAINE LE CLOS DES CAZAUX, VACQUEYRAS

Brothers Jean-Michel and Frédéric Vache run this Southern Rhône estate with passion, determination and a great enthusiasm for their region. With an aversion to oak ageing, they are more interested in expressing the fruit character of the varieties and their terrific *terroirs*. Alongside this philosophy, late picking, long maceration, and extended *élevage* give the wines their signature primal density.

Alongside Châteauneuf du Pape, Vacqueyras and Gigondas also fell victim to the challenging flowering period and yields of Grenache were severely hampered. Furthermore the dry summer took its toll on Syrah and overall the estate lost 30% of its yield. This estate offers an excellent source of good value wines you can happily tuck away for a few years, and if the excellent 2017s interest you, do not delay.

VACQUEYRAS CUVÉE ST ROCH



£115.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond
£125.00 per 6 Magnums In Bond

This Grenache based blend (65%) with 30% Syrah and 5% Mourvèdre is vinified with no hint of new oak, and draws on the old Grenache vines for its concentration and intensity. Long maceration gives the wine deep colour and pronounced fruit aromas and flavours: crushed raspberries and blackcurrant purée. This wine is a juicy, luscious, plump style with ripe and generous fruit wrapped around the robust tannins. Drink 2021 – 2030

GIGONDAS CUVÉE TOUR SARRASINE



£145.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond
£155.00 per 6 Magnums In Bond

Another Grenache based blend (70%) but with slightly more Mourvèdre (15%) and less Syrah (15%) than the Vacqueyras Cuvée St Roch. These vines are situated at 600 metres altitude on the terraced slopes that reach up to the Dentelles de Montmirail. A full-bodied Southern Rhône classic that is at once ripe and fresh, with a huge intensity of berry fruit, a lift of *garrigue* aromatics, and the spicy note of cracked white pepper. The tannins have excellent texture, and it runs neck-to-neck with the high quality 2016. Drink 2022 – 2032



SOUTHERN RHÔNE

DOMAINE FONT DU VENT, FAMILLE GONNET, BÉDARRIDES

Until recent this substantial estate owned by the Gonnet family had been known as Font de Michelle. The Font de Michelle *lieu dit* is a large parcel in the southeast of the Châteauneuf du Pape appellation, named after the natural water source found there. Due to a recent legislative change that means there is no protection for the name of Font de Michelle – because the *lieu dit* is farmed by numerous vigneronns – the family have taken the decision to rebrand. The style of winemaking, however, remains as impeccable as ever. Guillaume Gonnet has taken up the reins from his parents with impressive assurance. He guides the domaine with a combination of modern innovation and respect for tradition.

The estate does not push alcoholic maturity, and the gentle pumping over of mostly destemmed fruit results in well-balanced wines with appealing juicy fruit. The domaine makes a number of cuvées in Châteauneuf. In some years the estate makes a Cuvée Etienne Gonnet, which is both homage to Guillaume's grandfather as well as the 100+ year old Grenache vines that grow on the plateau, La Crau. In 2017, due to low yields caused by the complicated growing season, this fruit has been added to the main blend, and so the Cuvée Tradition this year has a little extra oomph. The estate is organically certified and has been following a number of biodynamic practices since 2013.

CHÂTEAUNEUF DU PAPE ROUGE (R) CUVÉE TRADITION

£250.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond

£270.00 per 6 Magnums In Bond

This densely-fruited blend is based on fruit from the Font de Michelle lieu dit. Its 70% Grenache is vinified along with a number of other varieties since all – apart from the trellised Syrah – are planted as field blends in *gobelet* bush vines. In 2017 the blend also includes fruit from the old vines grown on the Crau plateau (100 to 120 year old Grenache). This Châteauneuf is dark and grapey, spiced like a Christmas cake, with a freshness underneath that pulls the wine through to a creamy, textured finish.
Drink 2021 – 2030



SOUTHERN RHÔNE

DOMAINE DU VIEUX TÉLÉGRAPHE, BÉDARRIDES

This historic Châteauneuf estate has a well-deserved reputation for its long-lived wines. Belonging to the Brunier family, Vieux Télégraphe comes from a 65 hectare single plot on the plateau of La Crau, one of the highest points between the small towns of Châteauneuf du Pape, Bédarrides and Courthézon. The soil here is carpeted in the famous *galets roulés*, or pudding stones, which insulate the vines against both heat and cold, and aid drainage. The elevation means these vines are exposed to the extremes of the Mistral wind and the fierce sunshine. Not what you would call easy to farm; but the Brunier family have clung to this unruly terrain for over a century, and produce some of the appellation's most traditional and classically styled Châteauneuf from vines with an average age over 60 years. With bottle age the wines develop leather, spice and dried fruit characters.

Their estate in Gigondas, Les Pallières, produces excellent Grenache based blends from vines that are slightly younger than those at Vieux Télégraphe, but still average an impressive 40-50 years. The estate is half owned by legendary American wine merchant Kermit Lynch, a long-standing friend of the family and Southern Rhône enthusiast. The high altitude (250-400m) of this Gigondas parcel affords the wines noticeable freshness.

2017 was, as was the case with all their neighbours, a small harvest for the Bruniers, reporting a 40% reduction on a normal yield. In fact, Frédéric Brunier says it is the smallest he has seen in his career. He explains how they were in serious need of water over the summer, and that the vines were pushed to their very limits. But the character of the tannins has pleasantly surprised him. They do not have any water-stress related hardness but instead they are soft, ripe and supple, if amazingly abundant.



GIGONDAS TERRASSE DU DIABLE DOMAINE LES PALLIÈRES



£250.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond
£260.00 per 6 Magnums In Bond

Dominated by 90% Grenache grown on the decomposed limestone, red clay, and scree soils of the Gigondas terraces below the jagged Dentelles de Montmirail. A small splash of Mourvèdre and Clairette makes up the rest of the blend. The terraces' northerly exposure and high altitude (250-400m) help the wine retain freshness. It is an intensely deep ruby colour, and the Grenache character is soft, generous, and ripe. The fruit feels mature without being dried out, and there are plenty of tannins. These tannins are full-bodied and give structure to this rich, warm red. Drink 2020 – 2028



VIEUX TÉLÉGRAPHE CHÂTEAUNEUF DU PAPE ROUGE



£270.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond (*limited*)
£280.00 per 3 Magnums In Bond

These 60+ year old vines on the stony plateau of La Crau consistently produce a smooth, *garrigue* scented Châteauneuf. Medium ruby and spiced with sweet red berries and dried herbs. The tannins are many, but creamy. Not high acid as such, but there is freshness here, saline and mineral in its character, that gives the sweet fruits a counterbalanced weight. Drink 2020 – 2031

SOUTHERN RHÔNE

CHÂTEAU DE BEAUCASTEL, CHÂTEAUNEUF DU PAPE

Château de Beaucastel is the flagship estate of the Perrin family, masters of the Southern Rhône. This family are a winemaking powerhouse, and admired for both the benchmark examples produced from across the Southern Rhône appellations as well as for the heights of Beaucastel itself. The Beaucastel vines are all in one large 110 hectare block at the northern end of the Châteauneuf du Pape appellation. The plot contains all the archetypal soil types of the region: sand, clay and limestone, with pudding stone pebbles on the surface. Their Coudoulet vines lie just beyond the northern boundary of the appellation and convey much of the typicity of a Châteauneuf in a more accessible format (and with the inclusion of varieties like Marsanne and Viognier not permitted within Châteauneuf itself). The estate famously grows all thirteen varieties historically permitted within the Châteauneuf appellation, with a high proportion of the late ripening Mourvèdre.

The full collection of Perrin wines is quite substantial, and we have selected a shortlist of the most successful to offer in 2017, focusing on Coudoulet and Beaucastel. The estate is 40% down on a normal year – some appellations were hit by spring frost, but the major casualties were the result of *coulure* at flowering and the dry conditions over the summer, which saw some vineyards endure six thirsty months of drought. In spite of these difficulties the Beaucastel 2017s are of superb quality, particularly the flagship red, which is amongst the best the estate has ever made.

CÔTES DU RHÔNE BLANC COUDOULET DE BEAUCASTEL



£180.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond (*very limited*)

Produced in limited quantities, this is an excellent value white you won't want to miss out on. A blend of Viognier (30%), Marsanne (30%), Bourboulenc (30%) and Clairette (10%). A small amount is vinified in oak with the remainder in stainless steel. Soft appealing aromas of apricots and juicy stone fruits betray the relative richness of the vintage. The pure, fruity style of the wine keeps it in balance, and gives the wine a pleasant, refreshing finish. Drink 2019 – 2021

CHÂTEAUNEUF DU PAPE BLANC CHÂTEAU DE BEAUCASTEL



£252.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond (*limited*)

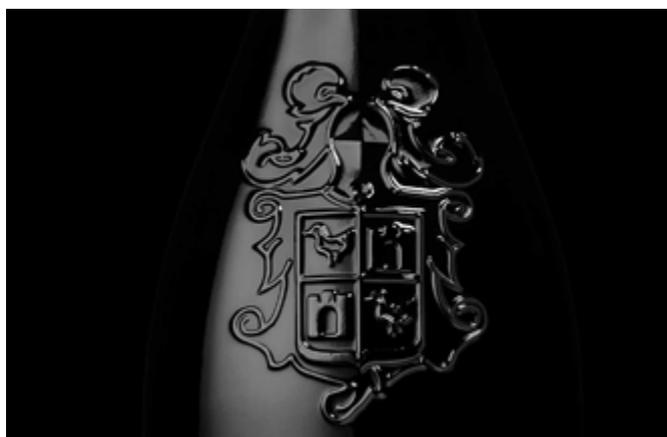
Roussanne forms the major basis of this blend (80%), the rest being made up of Grenache Blanc, Picardin, Bourboulenc and Clairette, with 30% vinified in oak. The estate believes a characteristic of Roussanne is that it welcomes you with open arms in its first five years – young, nutty, fruity, creamy – and then shuts down, only to re-emerge from its chrysalis after 15 years in the cellar with a complex, tertiary bouquet. This is markedly richer than the Coudoulet Blanc, with more structure and weight. Its texture is soft and creamy, and the well-integrated oak supports the luxurious stone fruit superbly. Drink 2020 – 2032

CHÂTEAUNEUF DU PAPE BLANC VIEILLES VIGNES ROUSSANNE CHÂTEAU DE BEAUCASTEL



£270.00 per 3 Bottles In Bond (*limited*)

Unusually for a Châteauneuf this is not a blend, and comes solely from a 3 hectare parcel of very old Roussanne vines (average age of 85+ years) within the Beaucastel estate. These vines produce tiny yields and take slightly longer to ripen their fruit, which means they develop extraordinary phenolic complexity. At this stage the ripe quince notes of the fruit are vying for attention with the toasty spice of new oak (25% new oak is used in the wine's *élevage*). It will need a little time to fall into place, but this full-bodied example of the Perrins' finest white should emerge victorious. Drink 2020 – 2035



SOUTHERN RHÔNE

CÔTES DU RHÔNE ROUGE COUDOULET DE BEAUCASTEL



£150.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond

£156.00 per 6 Magnums In Bond

From a parcel that lies just beyond the boundary of the Châteauneuf appellation but is actually an extension of Beaucastel's single block. It is a blend of 30% Grenache, 30% Mourvèdre, 20% Syrah and 20% Cinsault, and offers much of Châteauneuf's appeal in a more approachable format. The 2017 displays dark, spiced fruit cake aromas and a concentrated kirsch character. The finish has a chalky freshness with a smoky black fruit length. Drink 2020 – 2026

CHÂTEAUNEUF DU PAPE ROUGE CHÂTEAU DE BEAUCASTEL

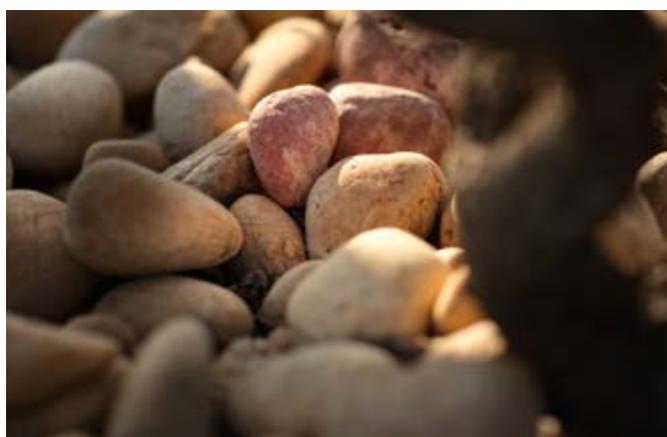


£240.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond

£243.00 per 12 Halves In Bond

£486.00 per 6 Magnums In Bond

This cuvée is famous for drawing on a large proportion of the late ripening Mourvèdre variety (30%) to form the base of its blend. This certainly helped in a year like 2017 that proved more difficult for Grenache. The Mourvèdre gives structure, cool cassis fruit, aromas of *herbes de Provence*, and some fine structural tannins. The Grenache (around 30%) adds sweet crunchy red berry fruit, supple texture, and richness. The remainder of the blend is made up of another eleven of the appellation's permitted varieties. In the face of such a challenging year, this is a remarkable wine, and just goes to highlight the quality of the Beaucastel terroir and the expert touch in the Perrin cellar. The fruit is sweet and long, and the volume of fruit is perfectly pitched against the supple tannins, so that all the wine's notes chime in harmony. It has by far the most sophisticated tannic structure amongst the Perrin portfolio. The wine's juiciness and integration promise an excellent development in the cellar. Drink 2022 – 2035



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Send an email to sales@goedhuis.com, hksales@goedhuis.com or directly to your salesman at their email address listed above.

ONLINE: www.goedhuis.com

All wines are available to buy online. You can also find details of tasting notes and drink dates, and can keep up to date with our news and offers.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

All wines are offered In Bond England.

We will arrange shipment from the domaines in Autumn 2019. On arrival, your wines can either be delivered directly to you or stored Under Bond at our independent storage company, Private Reserves, at a cost of £11.25 ex-VAT per 12x75cl or £5.62 ex-VAT per 6x75cl per annum.

When you decide to take delivery, Duty and VAT at the prevailing rate will become payable. These charges are at present £25.98 per 12-bottle case and 20% respectively.

All En Primeur deliveries will be charged at cost.