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THE RHONE REPORT



Rhone Report Reviews

September 2011



2009 Calendal Côtes du Rhône Villages Plan de Dieu

92

A stunning Côtes du Rhône that shows the best of the vintage, the 2009 Calendal Plan de Dieu, a 50/50 blend of Grenache and Mourvèdre that's aged all in older wood, delivers an intense, perfumed array of black cherry, licorice, underbrush, and flowers on the nose. There's a sappy richness to the aromas, as well as solid freshness and focus. Medium to full-bodied on the palate, with ripe fruit, a focused, powerful feel, good acidity, and ripe tannin that shines on the long, heady finish, this awesome value needs a decant if drinking anytime soon, and should continue to perform for 5-8 years.

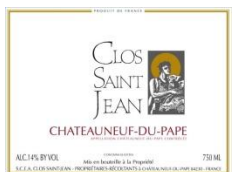


2007 Clos Chanteduc Côtes du Rhône

90

Made by Yves Gras of Domaine Santa Duc, the 2007 Clos Chanteduc Côtes du Rhône is a brilliant wine that shows the depth and quality of the vintage. A tank aged blend of 65% Grenache, 35% Syrah, it sports ripe, beautifully perfumed aromas of garigoue, lavender, licorice, and leather on the nose, with pure, unadulterated Grenache fruit providing the

backbone and core of the wine. Medium to full-bodied on the palate, with a pure, fleshy texture, sweet fruit, and a long, borderline decadent finish, this is drinking spot-on and should continue to shine for another 2-3 years. This fantastic value should not be missed.



2010 Clos Saint Jean Châteauneuf-du-Pape Blanc

91

A blend of equal parts Grenache blanc, Roussanne, and Clairette that's aged half in a combination of new and used barrels, and half in tank, the 2010 Clos Saint Jean Châteauneuf-du-Pape Blanc is a very pretty, clean Châteauneuf-du-Pape Blanc that possesses a solid mix of ripe fruit and edgy minerality on both the nose and palate. Showing subtle tropical fruits, grilled pineapple, and wet stone-like aromas, this medium-bodied, very

well done white builds on the palate with more richness than you would expect, but balances it out with racy acidity and solid focus. While this can age, I would opt for drinking bottles over the coming 2-3 years.

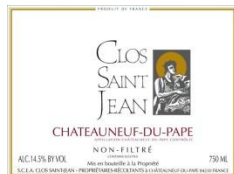


2009 Clos Saint Jean Châteauneuf-du-Pape

93

A fantastic base cuvee, the 2009 Clos Saint Jean Châteauneuf-du-Pape is a blend of 75% tank aged Grenache, 15% Syrah, and the rest Mourvèdre, Cinsault, and Vaccarese. It displays a meaty, perfumed, and spice-laced bouquet of red fruits, licorice, and mineral, medium to full body, a superb, silky texture, admirable balance, and plenty of length on the finish. While not as deep or rich as the Vieilles Vignes, it has solid concentration and a very

drinkable, delicious style. Consume bottles over the coming decade or so.

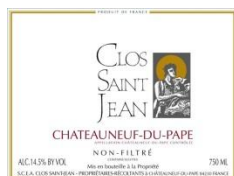


2010 Clos Saint Jean Châteauneuf-du-Pape

92-94

The 2010 Clos Saint Jean Châteauneuf-du-Pape, tasted as individual components, should be up there with the '07 and '09 versions in terms of quality. The final blend should somewhere in the range of 75% Grenache, 15% Syrah, and the rest a mix of Mourvèdre, Cinsault and Vaccarese, with the Grenache aged all in tank, and the Syrah and Mourvèdre aged in large barrels. Showing a beautiful perfume of spice

laced red fruits, licorice, and big minerality, both the Grenache and Mourvèdre components were brilliantly textured, with superb balance, fleshy fruit, and ample structure on the finish. A year in year out purchase, this should drink well for 12-15 years.

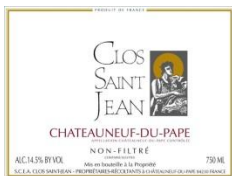


2009 Clos Saint Jean Châteauneuf-du-Pape Vieilles Vignes

94

The 2009 Clos Saint Jean Châteauneuf-du-Pape Vieilles Vignes is a blend of 75% old vine Grenache, 15% Syrah, and the balance a mix of Cinsault, Mourvedre, and Vaccarese, with the Grenache seeing only tank, and the Syrah and Mourvedre components aged in larger oak barrels. Showing a similar profile to the straight Châteauneuf-du-Pape (it's basically the same wine, just with older vines), yet with more girth and richness, the wine displays

gorgeous kirsch, white chocolate, licorice, sweet spice, and flower oil-like qualities on the nose. This is followed by a full-bodied, brilliantly textured wine that has a seamless, downright sexy profile of ripe fruit, solid concentration, and fine tannin on the long finish. This beauty can be consumed now, or cellared for a decade.



2010 Clos Saint Jean Châteauneuf-du-Pape Vieilles Vignes 93-95

The 2010 Clos Saint Jean Châteauneuf-du-Pape Vieilles Vignes is a selection of the older vines from the estate, with some of the Grenache destined for this cuvee also going into the Deus-Ex Machina. Tasted out of tank, the wine sports a perfumed, floral and spice driven profile with sweet red fruits, kirsch, and underbrush characteristics. Full-bodied, yet quite compact and elegant, with a brilliantly seamless texture, this firms up nicely on the finish and shows loads of fine, polished tannin (which is a hallmark of this estate.) It should benefit from a handful of years in the cellar, but will most likely also be straight up superb on release.



2009 Clos Saint Jean Châteauneuf-du-Pape La Combe des Fous 98

About as elegant and seamless as Châteauneuf-du-Pape gets, the brilliant 2009 Clos Saint Jean Châteauneuf-du-Pape La Combe des Fous is a blend of 60% old vine Grenache, 20% Syrah, 10% Cinsault, and 10% Vaccarese. While the Grenache is aged entirely in tank, the Syrah is aged in demi-muids. Sporting massive aromatics of incense, meat juice, flowers,

spice, and loads of licorice-drenched red fruits that literally leap from the glass, the wine is full-bodied and simply perfectly put together. Seamless, very rich, and yet not heavy or cumbersome in the least, this firms up beautifully on the finish and highlights very fine, polished tannin. Quite possibly the wine of the vintage, this is heavenly stuff that should age effortlessly for two decades.



2010 Clos Saint Jean Châteauneuf-du-Pape La Combe des Fous 96-99

I was able to taste multiple barrels and components destined for the 2010 Clos Saint Jean Châteauneuf-du-Pape La Combe des Fous, and while I've always preferred the more structured, powerful feel of the Deus-Ex Machina, I'm not too sure that this cuvee isn't every bit its equal. The final blend will be somewhere around 60% Grenache and the rest a mix of

Syrah, Vaccarese, and Cinsault, with all of the samples showing overall elegant, yet very rich, full-bodied, and gorgeously textured profiles, as well as loads of silky, very fine tannin and solid underlying structure. It will be interesting to see how this shows from bottle, but the sheer seamlessness will certainly allow this to drink well on release, but given the concentration and balance, it should also age effortlessly. Up there with the best of the vintage.



2009 Clos Saint Jean Châteauneuf-du-Pape Deus-Ex Machina 96-99

Not yet bottled but tasted as a final blend, the 2009 Clos Saint Jean Châteauneuf-du-Pape Deus-Ex Machina, a blend of 60% tank aged Grenache and 40% barrel aged Mourvèdre, is more massive and structured than the La Combe des Fous, showing decadent cassis, blackberry, grilled meat, and touches of chocolate on its brooding, slightly backwards

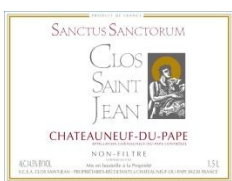
bouquet. Whereas the La Combe des Fous is perfumed and much more finesse driven, this is more in the style of a blockbuster, showing a powerful, full-bodied, rich feel, substantial underlying structure, and a very long, structured finish. This needs 2-3 years of bottle age, and should be incredibly long-lived.



2010 Clos Saint Jean Châteauneuf-du-Pape Deus-Ex Machina 96-99

As with the La Combe des Fous, the 2010 Clos Saint Jean Châteauneuf-du-Pape Deus-Ex Machina was tasted as individual components as the final blend has yet to have been made. Texture, richness, and structure are the buzzwords here, and the Mourvèdre component is straight up fantastic. Given the structure, this will require more time than the

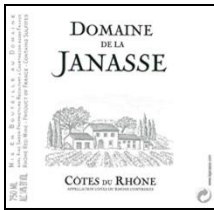
La Combe des Fous, but don't kid yourself, the fruit, texture, and richness here will be a thrill ride on release. Of course, it will benefit from 4-6 years in the cellar, and not hit its stride until about age 10. Southern Rhône lovers should not miss this stunning effort!



2009 Clos Saint Jean Châteauneuf-du-Pape Sanctus Sanctorum 97-100

A cellar selection that ends up translating into a vineyard selection (the individual lots are blind tasted in the cellar and a single plot has so far always been the selection), the utterly captivating 2009 Clos Saint Jean Châteauneuf-du-Pape Sanctus Sanctorum is a 100% Grenache cuvee that's aged all in demi-muid, and bottled only in magnum (600 total magnums, with 350 allocated to the US.) Tasted out of barrel, the wine sports heavenly aromatics of raspberry, kirsch, mineral, white chocolate, meat juice, incense, and licorice

on the nose. Utterly intense, yet elegant and complex at the same time, it is full-bodied and seamless on the palate, showing a decadent, rich texture, perfect balance, and subtle structure that builds in the mouth, finishing with loads of polished, perfectly ripe tannin.



2010 Domaine de la Janasse Cotes du Rhone Blanc

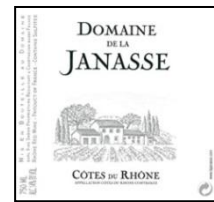
88

A blend of 50% Grenache, 15% Clairette, 15% Bourboulenc, 10% Viognier, and 10% Roussanne that's aged for 6 months on lees in stainless steel, the 2010 Domaine de la Janasse Cotes du Rhone Blanc is a fresh, crisp white that shows edgy citrus, white peach, and mineral aromas, a medium-bodied, fleshy palate, solid richness, and juicy acidity that keeps you pouring another glass. Delicious and easy drinking, serve this chilled as an aperitif or with lighter styled foods over the coming 2-3 years.



2010 Domaine de la Janasse Vin de Pays de la Principauté d'Orange Blanc 89

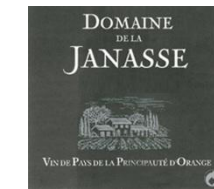
The 100% Viognier 2010 Domaine de la Janasse Vin de Pays Viognier is aged for 6 months in 25% new French oak. Displaying a textbook Viognier bouquet of peach, mineral, flower oil, and subtle vanilla, with some decent heft and intensity, this solid Viognier is more fresh and crisp on the palate, displaying juicy acidity and an overall focused, clean feel. It should be consumed over the following 1-2 years.



2010 Domaine de la Janasse Côtes du Rhône Rosé

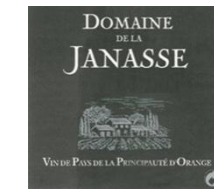
90

This estate has fashioned an outstanding Rose in 2010 and the Domaine de la Janasse Côtes du Rhône Rosé, while still showing solid freshness and purity, leans more towards the richer side of the spectrum. Showing upfront, beautifully fresh notes of rose, cherry, and flowers that lead to a medium-bodied, round, yet perfectly balanced palate, this is not exactly suited for quaffing on a hot summer day, but the balance and sheer drinkability is admirable. It will be very versatile on the dinner table, and I would serve bottles, with food, over the coming year.



2008 Domaine de la Janasse Vin de Pays de la Principauté d'Orange 87

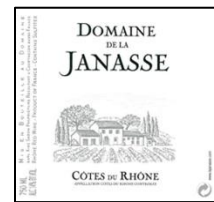
The 2008 Domaine de la Janasse Vin de Pays de la Principauté d'Orange, a blend of mostly Merlot and Syrah, is a straight forward, rustic drinker that shows loads of meaty black fruits, herbs, and tobacco aromas, a medium-bodied, supple palate, and a clean finish. Delicious and uncomplicated, drink this solid value over the coming year or two.



2009 Domaine de la Janasse Vin de Pays de la Principauté d'Orange 90

A serious value and showing more richness and depth than the '08, the 2009 Domaine de la Janasse Vin de Pays de la Principauté d'Orange, 40% Merlot, 40% Syrah, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 10% Grenache, delivers brilliant aromas of cassis, blackberry, spice, loamy earth, and leaf tobacco on the nose. While not overly complex, the purity and freshness is certainly notable. Medium to full-bodied and very well put together on the palate, with an upfront, fleshy, soft profile, solid purity of fruit, and sweet tannin, this drinks way beyond its

humble Vin de Pays classification and would be a perfect house red for drinking over the coming year or two. In all of the commotion over the latest and greatest, these over delivering, brilliantly made Vin de Pays and Côtes du Rhône should not be missed!



2009 Domaine de la Janasse Côtes du Rhône

89

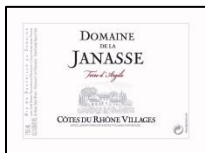
A very classy, elegantly styled Côtes du Rhône, the 2009 Domaine de la Janasse Côtes du Rhône is a destemmed blend of 50% Grenache, 20% Syrah, 10% Mourvèdre, 15% old vine Carignan, and 5% Cinsault that's age for 6 to 9 months in vat. Very fresh, pure and with lovely raspberry and darker styled fruit, licorice and spice characteristics, this medium-bodied, focused wine shows a straight, light texture, fine tannin and plenty of length on the finish. It should drink beautifully for 4-6 years.



2010 Domaine de la Janasse Côtes du Rhône

88-91

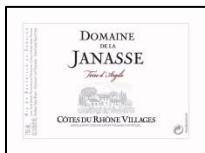
Tasted out of foudre, the 2010 Domaine de la Janasse Côtes du Rhône, mostly Grenache but with small amounts of Syrah, Mourvèdre, Cinsault, and Carignan, shows a peppery, mineral, and dark fruited profile with beautiful purity, good concentration, and chewy tannin and structure. Possibly outstanding, this should be a serious value and have a solid 5-8 years of longevity.



2009 Domaine de la Janasse Cotes du Rhone Villages Terre d'Argile 91

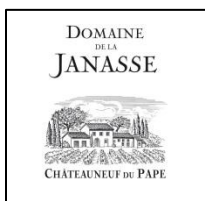
A ripe, modern styled Cotes du Rhone that comes from pebble and clay soils located north of the town of Courthézon, the 2009 Terre d'Argile is a blend of equal parts Grenache, Syrah, and Mourvèdre that has the Syrah and Mourvèdre aged in small barrels (1/3 new) and the Grenache in vat. Despite the stint in oak, it is more the upfront, powerful ripeness that gives this

cuvée its modern slant, as the oak is barely discernable. Displaying first-rate aromatics of ripe blackberry, licorice, loamy earth, spice cabinet, and hints of minerality, this medium to full-bodied, fleshy wine delivers gorgeous levels of texture, a balanced, clean feel, and ripe tannin on the finish. Very well done and a solid combination of upfront fruit and underlying balance and poise, this should continue to shine for upwards of a decade.



2010 Domaine de la Janasse Cotes du Rhone Villages Terre d'Argile 91-93

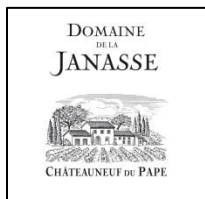
It's always a good sign with the first word in my notes is Wow! and the 2010 Domaine de la Janasse Cotes du Rhone Villages Terre d'Argile looks to be the best vintage of this cuvée yet! Showing serious and intense aromas, this full-bodied, uncommonly rich Cotes du Rhone has layers of texture, brilliant concentration, and a very long finish. It should be approachable on release, but benefit from short to mid-term cellaring. Exciting stuff.



2009 Domaine de la Janasse Châteauneuf-du-Pape 94

A brilliant bottle of wine (the best base cuvée out there?), the 2009 Domaine de la Janasse Châteauneuf-du-Pape is a mostly destemmed blend of 80% Grenache, 10% Syrah, and 10% Mourvèdre that's aged 80% in vat, and 20% in 1/3 new French oak. It delivers straight-up gorgeous aromas of blackberry and raspberry jam, creamy licorice, spice, and underbrush to go with a full-bodied, awesomely textured and yet focused palate. This beautifully fresh, balanced Châteauneuf-du-Pape is well built and loaded with sweet tannin on the finish; while

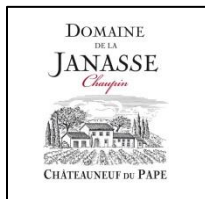
approachable now due to the wealth of fruit, it should age effortlessly for 15+ years.



2010 Domaine de la Janasse Châteauneuf-du-Pape 93-96

The 2010 Domaine de la Janasse Châteauneuf-du-Pape, tasted out of foudre, might just eclipse the stunning '07 and '09! Showing gorgeous purity and freshness, with awesome fruit, spice, flowers, licorice, and roasted meat characteristics that are paired with a thrilling, full-bodied, perfectly proportioned palate, this brilliant Châteauneuf-du-Pape has serious richness, a seamless texture, and very fine tannin. It should be approachable on release, but have 15-

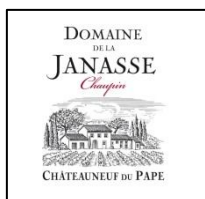
20 years of longevity.



2009 Domaine de la Janasse Châteauneuf-du-Pape Cuvée Chaupin 96

From a cool, late ripening vineyard located in the northern portion of the AOC and vines planted in 1912, the prodigious 2009 Domaine de la Janasse Châteauneuf-du-Pape Cuvée Chaupin is 100% Grenache in '09, with 30% aged in 1/4 new French oak and the rest in vat. It yields a decidedly voluptuous profile with decadent black fruits and raspberry that are intermixed with underbrush, fresh-snipped flowers, licorice, and edgy minerality. Showing brilliant concentration and richness, perfect balance, and incredible freshness, this classic

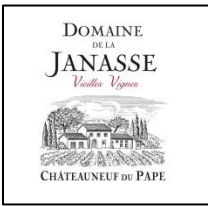
Chaupin is up there with the crème de la crème of the vintage and should drink beautifully for 15+ years.



2010 Domaine de la Janasse Châteauneuf-du-Pape Cuvée Chaupin 96-98+

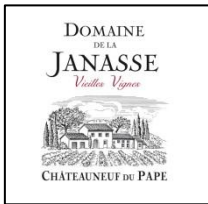
As with the estates other '10, the 2010 Domaine de la Janasse Châteauneuf-du-Pape Cuvée Chaupin, tasted out of foudre, shows uncommon purity and freshness. Exhibiting captivating notes of fresh underbrush, flowers, violets, spice, licorice, and wet stone-like minerality that's supported by perfectly ripe blackberry fruit, the wine is full-bodied and elegant on the palate, possessing thrilling levels of fruit, awesome focus and freshness, and a classically styled, very long finish that highlights ripe tannin. Brilliantly done, this should be a very long lived bottle of

wine with a huge drink window.



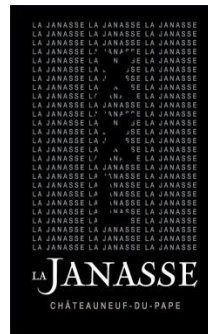
2009 Domaine de la Janasse Châteauneuf-du-Pape Vieilles Vignes 97

More smoky and dark fruited than the Cuvee Chaupin, the 2009 Domaine de la Janasse Châteauneuf-du-Pape Vieilles Vignes, from four separate parcels of varying soil types, possesses the same level of freshness and purity. A blend of 85% Grenache, 10% Syrah, 3% Mourvedre, and 2% assorted varieties, with 25% of the blend aged in small barrels (40% of which are new) and the rest in vat, it exhibits an absolutely thrilling array of blackberry, licorice, roasted meats, dark chocolate, and smoke aromas on the nose. While there's serious ripeness here, it stays amazingly fresh and vibrant, never seeming thick or heavy. Every bit as solid on the palate, this full-bodied, powerful, yet elegant Châteauneuf-du-Pape is unctuously textured and possesses a seamless, silky profile, with masses of sweet tannin on the finish. Unquestionably one of the top 2 or 3 wines in '09, this can be consumed now, or cellared for a decade or longer. Thrilling stuff and hats off to Sabon family!



2010 Domaine de la Janasse Châteauneuf-du-Pape Vieilles Vignes 97-100

The 2010 Domaine de la Janasse Châteauneuf-du-Pape Vieilles Vignes should be one of the top wines in the vintage. Displaying a profound aromatic array of dark fruits, crème de cassis, chocolate, licorice, and spice, all with amazing clarity and freshness, this serious Châteauneuf-du-Pape is full-bodied and perfectly built, showing a seamless, focused profile, thrilling levels of concentration, and a classic, very long and structured finish. It should benefit from 5-7 years of bottle age, and have over two decades of longevity. Classic, utterly brilliant stuff and I can't wait to try this from bottle!



2007 Domaine de la Janasse Châteauneuf-du-Pape Cuvee XXL 99

Deep and layered, with decadent, chocolaty black fruits, crushed flowers, fruit cake, meat juice, and licorice, the 2007 Domaine de la Janasse Châteauneuf-du-Pape Cuvee XXL is one stunning bottle of wine! Seemingly richer and more compact than the straight Vieilles Vignes (certainly not as upfront and approachable currently), yet still showing superb purity and freshness, the wine is full-bodied and stunningly concentrated and rich on the palate, boasting a thick, chewy texture, perfect balance, and a blockbuster finish. While there is a wealth of sweet fruit on the palate, there's also serious structure, loads of depth and plenty of ripe tannin on the finish. I followed this bottle for two days and it was as good on the second day as the first, giving me some confidence on how it will develop. No doubt, this is a profound bottle of wine that is a treat to drink now; however, I would plan on giving bottles a minimum of 8-10 years in the cellar before consuming.



2010 Domaine de Marcoux Châteauneuf-du-Pape Blanc 93

One of the top 4-5 whites in the vintage, the 2010 Domaine de Marcoux Châteauneuf-du-Pape Blanc, 70% Roussanne and 30% Bourboulenc that's aged all in steel and with no malolactic fermentation, shows a solid mix of crisp, juicy characteristics and richer, more texture driven qualities. Possessing loads of juicy pear, citrus, and melon on the nose, this gains richer notes of buttered toast, and more tropical notes with air. Medium-bodied and gorgeously balanced on the palate, with rocking acidity as well as a rich texture and solid length on the finish, this superb white will without question drink well for 2-3 years. While I have not tried any aged examples of this wine, I do not see any reason this will not also age gracefully and show well at age 8 and beyond either.



2010 Domaine de Marcoux Côtes du Rhône 89

This estate fashioned a polished, delicious Côtes du Rhône in '10, and the wine is a blend of 80% Grenache and 20% Mourvèdre that's aged all in tank, seeing no oak. Pretty, elegant and with perfumed notes of lavender, flowers, garrigue, and sweet cherry and raspberry fruit, the wine is medium-bodied, supple, beautifully balanced and straight up delicious. Despite the easygoing profile, this should easily drink well for 5-7 years.

2009 Domaine de Marcoux Lirac La Lorentine 89

More open and complex than the '10 (as well as compared to how it showed a year ago), the 2009 Domaine de Marcoux Lirac Lorentine is a blend of equal parts Grenache, Syrah, and Mourvèdre that's aged all in concrete. Showing a solid perfume of red fruits, crushed flowers, leather, spice, and a wet stone/river rock-like minerality, the wine is beautifully fresh and elegant on the palate. Medium-bodied with a light, deft texture, excellent balance, and a clean finish, this delicious red should continue to shine for another 4-6 years.



2010 Domaine de Marcoux Lirac La Lorentine

89



Aged all in concrete and an even split of Grenache, Syrah, and Mourvèdre, the 2010 Domaine de Marcoux Lirac Cuvée La Lorentine is a beauty. Showing a transparent ruby red color, the wine delivers an elegant profile with sweet raspberries, cherries, spice, flowers, and mineral aromas and flavors, medium body, and a light, supple, and classy texture. Leaning towards the lighter, more nuanced and delicate (dare I say burgundian) side of the spectrum, this is beautifully balanced and has solid length on the finish. It should benefit from 1-2 years in the cellar, and drink well for 5-7.

2009 Domaine de Marcoux Châteauneuf-du-Pape

92



An elegant, feminine styled Châteauneuf, the 2009 Domaine de Marcoux Châteauneuf-du-Pape is a blend of 80% Grenache, 10% Mourvèdre, 7% Syrah, and 3% Cinsault. Aged all in tank, the wine delivers a perfumed bouquet of raspberry, crushed flowers, lavender, and subtle garrigue to go with a fresh, poised, and silky palate. Medium-bodied and upfront and accessible, this will be a charmer and should drink beautifully for up to a decade.

2010 Domaine de Marcoux Châteauneuf-du-Pape

91-93+



Certainly up there with, and possibly eclipsing the .09, the 2010 Domaine de Marcoux Châteauneuf-du-Pape, tasted from multiple lots, should be a fuller, richer version of the .09 with more dark fruits, garrigue, and floral characteristics, full body, pure fruit, and a solid 15 years of longevity. With the final blend being mostly Grenache, with smaller Mourvedre and Syrah components, that's all aged in tank and large oak casks, the wine always leans towards the more elegant, seamless, and pure style of Châteauneuf and this is no exception.

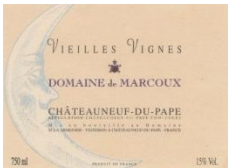
2009 Domaine de Marcoux Châteauneuf-du-Pape Vieilles Vignes 95



The limited production 2009 Domaine de Marcoux Châteauneuf-du-Pape Vieilles Vignes is a stunning expression of pure Grenache that's made in a seamless, elegant style. A blend of 97% Grenache and the rest assorted varieties that's aged all in a mostly older barrels, the wine yields massively perfumed aromatics of framboise, crushed raspberries, garrigue, incense, and sweet spice on the nose. Very fragrant and with good complexity, it's medium to full-bodied and builds incrementally on the palate, showing a seamless, silky texture, sweet fruit, an overall elegant character, and very fine grained tannin on the finish. While upfront and approachable, this gains weight and depth in the glass. It should continue to evolve for 4-5 years, and have 15+ years or more of prime drinking.

2010 Domaine de Marcoux Châteauneuf-du-Pape Vieilles Vignes

95-98+



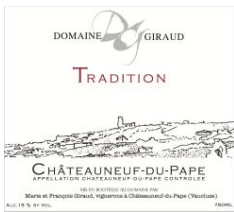
Always a co-fermented vineyard blend from Gallimardes, les Esquierons, and Charbonnières, the 2010 Domaine de Marcoux Châteauneuf-du-Pape Vieilles Vignes delivers huge, garrigue-laced aromatic display of crème de cassis, raspberry, smoked earth, wet stone, and crushed flowers on the nose. No doubt a big wine, with a powerful, concentrated feel, this maintains an overall sense of balance and purity. Given the concentration and amount of fine-grained tannin on the finish, this should be an incredibly long-lived wine that will benefit from 3-4 years of bottle age and drink well for 25+.

2010 Domaine Giraud Châteauneuf-du-Pape Blanc Les Gallimardes

92



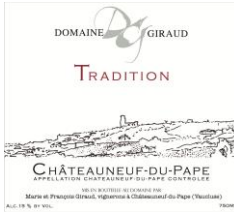
The 2010 Domaine Giraud Châteauneuf-du-Pape Blanc Les Gallimardes is a traditional blend of equal parts Roussanne, Grenache blanc, Clairette, and Bourboulenc that has only the Roussanne aged in oak, with the rest brought up all in stainless steel. Coming all from the Les Gallimardes lix-dit in the southern portion of the AOC, the wine delivers a decidedly fresh, crisp profile with notions of pear, honeydew, and lavender on the nose, a medium-bodied, beautifully balanced palate, and a subtle richness that builds on the finish. Excellent acidity keeps this focused and fresh. As with most Châteauneuf Blancs, this will deliver the goods over the coming 2-3 years, however, I think this has the stuffing and acidity to age as well.



2009 Domaine Giraud Châteauneuf-du-Pape Tradition

92

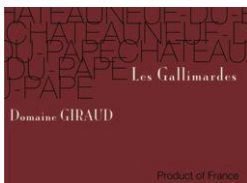
A fantastic base cuvee, the 2009 Domaine Giraud Châteauneuf-du-Pape Tradition is a blend of 60% Grenache, 35% Syrah, and 5% Mourvèdre, with the Grenache and Mourvèdre aged all in enamel coated tanks, and the Syrah in smaller Bordeaux barrels. Open and perfumed on the nose, the wine delivers loads of sweet raspberry, wild flowers, and red currant-like characteristics to go with a medium to full-bodied, richly fruited palate. The finish shows a solid dose of tannin, and this outstanding red should benefit from a year or three in the cellar, and drink well for a decade.



2010 Domaine Giraud Châteauneuf-du-Pape Tradition

91-93+

Possessing loads of potential and a decadently ripe profile, the 2010 Domaine Giraud Châteauneuf-du-Pape Tradition will most likely eclipse the '09. Showing thick blackberry liqueur, licorice, and meaty characteristics on the nose, the wine is very rich and full on the palate, while at the same time holding on to a balanced, fresh feel. There's real depth here and this will most likely benefit from short to mid-term cellaring and age gracefully for 10-12 years.

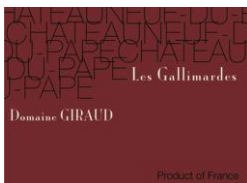


2009 Domaine Giraud Châteauneuf-du-Pape Les Gallimardes

95

Always a powerful wine, the 2009 Domaine Giraud Châteauneuf-du-Pape Les Gallimardes is a rock star in the vintage and is showing every bit as good out of bottle as it did out of tank. A blend of 90% tank aged, very old vine Grenache and 10% barrel aged Syrah, the wine yields straight-up fantastic, classic aromas of red fruits, black currant, licorice, rolled stones, and subtle wild flower-like notes on the nose. This is followed by a powerful, rich

wine that's loaded with sweet fruit, a full, concentrated mid-palate, and sound structure on the finish. There's a lot of ripeness here, but the wine stays fresh and light on the palate. It should drink superbly over the coming 15 years.

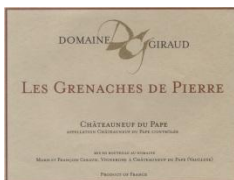


2010 Domaine Giraud Châteauneuf-du-Pape Les Gallimardes

93-96+

A big, yet thrilling barrel sample, the 2010 Domaine Giraud Châteauneuf-du-Pape Les Gallimardes, a blend of 90% Grenache and 10% Syrah, with the Grenache aged in Cement and the Syrah in barrel, offers up a decadent, sweet profile of jam-like blackberry, raspberry, licorice, flowers, and rolled stone aromas and flavors. Full-bodied, concentrated, and mouth filling on the palate, with a rich, thick texture, sweet fruit,

beautiful acidity, and a long finish, this has just a wealth of fruit and texture, as well as a decidedly youthful, fresh, yet full throttle personality. As with most 2010s, this will benefit from 2-3 years of bottle age and should drink well for 15+ years.

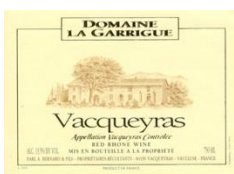


2010 Domaine Giraud Cuvée les Grenaches de Pierre

94-97

Much more dense and compact than the Les Gallimardes (which never seems to hold anything back), the 2010 Domaine Giraud Châteauneuf-du-Pape Cuvée les Grenaches de Pierre is 100% tank aged Grenache that comes from 100-year-old vines and the sandy soils of La Crau and plots near Pignan. The wine is stunningly put together and is a gorgeous, pure expression of Grenache, showing loads of minerality, violets, licorice,

garrigue, and wild flower characteristics to go with black berry and cassis-like fruit. Full-bodied, pure, layered, and very well balanced, with ripe, sweet tannin and a powerful, yet restrained profile, this should be given 3-5 years in the cellar, and have upwards of 15+ years of longevity.

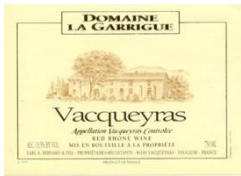


2009 Domaine La Garrigue Vacqueyras

91

Always a solid wine, the 2009 Domaine La Garrigue Vacqueyras (80% Grenache, 10% Syrah, 5% Mourvèdre, and 5% Cinsault aged all in concrete) delivers a textbook array of sweet red fruits, garrigue, red licorice, and flowers on the nose, with notable complexity and excellent freshness. Oozing Provencal character, with a medium-bodied, fresh, focused texture, good acidity, and loads of pure fruit, this outstanding Vacqueyras can be

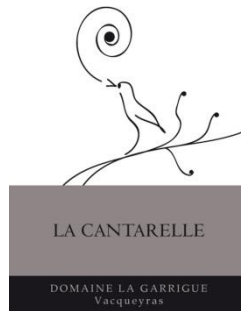
consumed now, or cellared for 5-8 years.



2010 Domaine La Garrigue Vacqueyras

89-92

Possessing a textbook profile of plum sauce, blackberry, flowers, toasted spice, and cured meats, the 2010 Domaine La Garrigue Vacqueyras is medium to full-bodied, voluptuously textured, and shows an overall fresh, pure feel. Still youthful and jam-like at this stage, it should flesh out with 2-3 years of bottle age, and emerge as an outstanding Vacqueyras that will drink well for 8-10 years.



2009 Domaine La Garrigue Vacqueyras La Cantarelle

93

Even better than the straight '09 Vacqueyras is the fantastically good 2009 Domaine La Garrigue Vacqueyras La Cantarelle. From a single plot of 80 to 100-year-old vines and a blend 85% Grenache and 15% Syrah, aged all in concrete tank for 18 months, it carries a much more serious, mineral driven profile with pure cherry and raspberry fruit characteristics intermixed with smoked earth, roasted meats, licorice, and crushed rock aromas on the nose. Full-bodied and beautifully concentrated on the palate, with a rich, seamless texture, beautiful ripeness, and masses of ripe tannin, this beauty needs another 2-3 years of bottle age, and should drink beautifully for 10-12+ years.



2010 Domaine La Garrigue Cotes du Rhone Cuvée Romaine

91

A perennial over achiever and a wine that makes me struggle to think of a better value, the 2010 Domaine La Garrigue Cotes du Rhone Cuvée Romaine is a predominantly tank-aged blend of 65% Grenache, 25% Mourvèdre, and 10% Syrah. Showing a vibrant, semi-transparent purple color, the wine delivers a beautifully nuanced bouquet of ripe black cherry and blackberry fruit that is balanced by garrigue, lavender, pepper, and underbrush-like qualities. Much more feminine and elegant than past vintages, but arguably equal in quality, it shows a medium-bodied, balanced profile with good acidity, solid purity, and a classic, clean finish. I put this into a lineup of Châteauneufs and it easily

held its own. Buy this by the case and drink it over the coming 5-8 years.

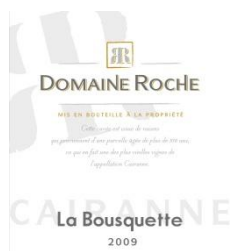


2009 Domaine Roche Cotes du Rhone Villages Cairanne

91

The brilliant 2009 Domaine Roche Cotes du Rhone Villages Cairanne is a blend of 70% Grenache and 30% Syrah that aged in mostly cement, with a small portion in older barrels. Made by the young Romain Roche, who recently inherited the 15 ha of the domaine from his parents, with Philippe Cambie consulting, the wine delivers a decadent array of licorice-laced cherry fruit to go with notions of roasted meats, spice, cigar, and earthy

minerality on the nose. Upfront and supple on the palate, with a round, fleshy, medium to full-bodied mouth feel, excellent balance, and an overall „drink me now“ personality, this rocking value should be purchased by the case, and consumed over the coming 3-5 years.



2009 Domaine Roche Cotes du Rhone Villages Cairanne La Bousquette

92

Even better, with a more serious, concentrated feel, the 2009 Domaine Roche Cotes du Rhone Villages Cairanne La Bousquette is a blend of 85% Grenache and 15% Carignan, from vines averaging over 100 years in age, and is aged all in concrete tanks for 18 months. Sporting pure, focused aromatics of black cherry and crème de cassis-like fruit, smoked herb, toasted spice, and lavender aromas on the nose, the wine is full-bodied and seamless on the palate, possessing a supple, mouth-filling texture that stays light and airy, gorgeously pure fruit, and a long, decadent finish. Seriously impressive, this, along with the straight

Cairanne bottling, is a fantastic wine, as well as a crazy value, that should drink well for 3-5 years. Don't miss these wines!

ANDEZON

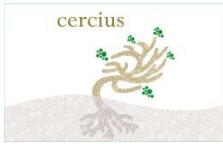


2010 Les Vignerons d'Estézargues Côtes du Rhône Domaine d'Andézon 92

Easily the best vintage of this to date, the 2010 Les Vignerons d'Estézargues Côtes du Rhône Domaine d'Andézon is a tank and cement aged blend of 90% Syrah and 10% Grenache. Sporting a deep purple color as well as fantastically good aromas of pure blackberry, licorice, lavender, crushed flowers, and wet stone-like minerality on the nose. Very pure and clean,

with superb richness and complexity, the wine is medium to full-bodied and beautifully textured on the palate, possessing a full, rich mid-palate, excellent balance, juicy acidity, and ripe tannin on the finish that adds additional cut and edge to all the fruit. Straight up delicious and a joy to drink, this is an awesome value that should delight for 3-5 years.

cercius



2010 Michel Gassier Côtes du Rhone Villages Visan Cercius 91

A thrilling white, as well as an unbelievable value, the 2010 Michel Gassier Côtes du Rhone Villages Visan Cercius, a blend of Grenache Blanc and Sauvignon that's aged on lees and all in concrete tank, delivers a perfumed, intense array of melon, grapefruit, green herbs, and brilliant wet stone-like minerality on the nose. Showing some real edge and cut to the

aromas, the palate fleshes out and shows a medium+ bodied, textured, and full feel, beautiful purity of fruit, and brilliant acidity that carries the finish. Extremely versatile on the dinner table, this outstanding white should be purchased by the case load and consumed over the coming 1-2 years.



2010 Michel Gassier Costières-de-Nîmes Nostre Pais 91

A seriously impressive white, the 2010 Michel Gassier Costières-de-Nîmes Nostre Pais, a partially barrel fermented blend of 90% Grenache blanc, 5% Roussanne, 5% Viognier, displays a beautifully fresh, pure bouquet of citrus-driven fruits, subtle floral notes, and serious minerality with loads of crushed stone and wet rock-like characteristics. More richness and depth comes through on the palate where the wine shows fantastic balance, a rich, full mid-palate, juicy acidity, and a classic, clean finish. Top-flight stuff and while I think this should be consumed in its first year or two of life, it might have an interesting aging profile.



2009 Michel Gassier Costières-de-Nîmes Lou Coucardie Blanc 91

More rich and full, the 2009 Michel Gassier Costières-de-Nîmes Lou Coucardie Blanc is a blend of 70% Roussanne, 20% Grenache Blanc, and 10% Viognier that's fermented and aged, on lees, for 5 months in large 500-liter French oak barrels. Upfront and rich on the nose, with ripe peach and pineapple styled fruits, subtle honeycomb, licorice, and crème, the wine delivers a mouthful of fruit on the palate, yet maintains fantastic focus and edge with

racy acidity and a long, clean finish. While I recommend drinking over the next couple of years, a recent bottle of '06 was still drinking very well, so this wine can age.



2010 Michel Gassier Costières-de-Nîmes Nostre Pais 91-93

Tasted out of barrel, the 2010 Michel Gassier Costières-de-Nîmes Nostre Pais shows loads of promise, with outstanding aromas of violets, potpourri, and assorted black and blue fruits, a medium to full-bodied, concentrated palate, and excellent balance. More rich and fleshy than the '09, this should be approachable on release and aged beautifully for a decade.



2009 Michel Gassier Costières-de-Nîmes Nostre Pais 92

A completely brilliant red, the 2009 Michel Gassier Costières-de-Nîmes Nostre Pais is a blend of 35% Grenache, 25% Carignan, 20% Mourvèdre, 15% Cinsault, and 5% Syrah, that's aged for 6 months in French oak barrels. While just bottled at the time of the tasting, you wouldn't

know it as the wine sports upfront, beautifully perfumed aromas of rolled stones, licorice, roasted meats, and anise on the nose. This is followed by a textured, supple wine that maintains an overall sense of balance and freshness. More minerality shows on the finish, and this top-notch red should continue to shine for 5-7 years.



2009 Michel Gassier Costières-de-Nîmes Lou Coucardie

93

A rich, substantial, and serious red, the 2009 Michel Gassier Costières-de-Nîmes Lou Coucardie is a blend of 60% Mourvèdre, 30% Grenache, and 10% Syrah that was aged for close to 18 months, on lees, in French oak barrels. The wine exhibits a deep, inky color as well as brilliant, rich aromatics of crème de cassis, spice, graphite, chocolate, and earth.

While decidedly rich and leaning into the decadent realm, this stays beautifully fresh and focused. Full-bodied on the palate and structured, with layers of fruit and texture, impressive balance, and a classic, clean finish, this superb wine can be enjoyed now, but should evolve positively for 2-4 years, and have 10-12 years or more of prime drinking.

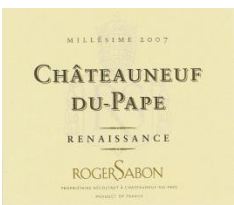


2010 Michel Gassier Costières-de-Nîmes Lou Coucardie

92-94

A rock solid barrel sample, the 2010 Michel Gassier Costières-de-Nîmes Lou Coucardie is meaty and very rich, showing loads of Mourvèdre character with tree bark, truffle, and meaty characteristics giving way to gorgeously pure dark fruit. Full-bodied and with serious concentration, a powerful, rich texture, and a chewy, structured finish, this serious wine should be given a handful of years in the cellar, and then consumed over the following 12-

15 years.

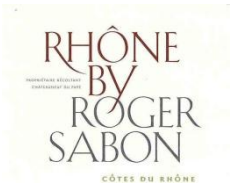


2010 Roger Sabon Châteauneuf-du-Pape Blanc Renaissance

92

An outstanding white that should not be missed is the 2010 Roger Sabon Châteauneuf-du-Pape Blanc Renaissance. A blend of mostly Roussanne, but with some Clairette, Bourboulenc, and Grenache Blanc, that's aged all in neutral oak vats, the wine shows pure, fresh aromatics of ripe peach and melon notes give way to edgy minerality and subtle green almond with air. On the palate, the wine is medium to full-bodied, with a mouth filling, rich texture, excellent acidity, and a classic, dry finish. Upfront and approachable, this

has the acidity and freshness to age. I would drink bottles in the first 2-3 years, or cellar for a decade.



2010 Roger Sabon Côtes du Rhône

89

A tank aged blend of 80% Grenache, 10% Syrah, and 10% Cinsault, the 2010 Roger Sabon Côtes du Rhône is always solid, and the '10 is no exception. Delivering an easy going feel, with plenty of polish, the wine carries loads of raspberry and cherry styled fruit blended with touches of spice and crushed flowers on the nose. The fruit is front and center here, and on the palate, the wine is medium-bodied, softly textured, and shows good purity on the finish. This should be a solid value and have a 2-4 year drink window.

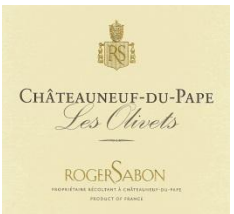


2010 Roger Sabon Lirac

88-90

Tasted as a barrel sample, the 2010 Roger Sabon Lirac (70% Grenache and the rest Syrah, Mourvèdre, and Carignan) sports a deep, semi-opaque purple color as well notions of violets, pepper, crushed stone, and predominantly blacker styled fruits. Medium-bodied and elegant, with fine tannin and good length, this is a solid Lirac meant for consuming over the

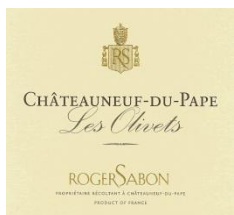
coming 4-6 years.



2010 Roger Sabon Châteauneuf-du-Pape Les Olivets

89-91

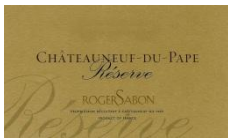
Showing solid cherry and black styled fruit, loads of minerality, good acidity, and an overall fleshy, medium-bodied, balanced personality, the 2010 Roger Sabon Châteauneuf-du-Pape Les Olivets should be an excellent, possibly outstanding bottle of wine. This cuvee is normally the most approachable of the Châteauneufs and this vintage is no exception. It should have up to a decade or so of longevity.



2009 Roger Sabon Châteauneuf-du-Pape Les Olivets

91

Very approachable and ready to go, the 2009 Roger Sabon Châteauneuf-du-Pape Les Olivets is loaded with red currant and crushed berry fruit-like qualities as well as copious spice, garrigue, olive, and flowers on the nose. Medium-bodied and friendly on the palate, with good richness and an upfront, lush profile, this is straight-up delicious now, but should shine for up to a decade.



2010 Roger Sabon Châteauneuf-du-Pape Cuvée Réserve

92-94

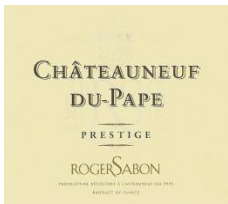
More rich and round than the '10 Les Olivets, the 2010 Roger Sabon Châteauneuf-du-Pape Cuvée Réserve looks to be a beauty. Showing loads of richness and texture, as well as beautiful concentration, medium to full body, vibrant acidity, and a blockbuster finish, this should benefit from 2-4 years of cellaring and then drink well for a decade after that.



2009 Roger Sabon Châteauneuf-du-Pape Cuvée Réserve

93+

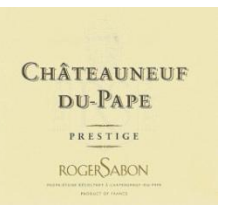
A notable step up from the '09 Les Olivets and more deep and layered, the 2009 Roger Sabon Châteauneuf-du-Pape Cuvée Réserve (70% Grenache and the rest Syrah and Mourvèdre) possesses stunning aromatics of framboise, mulled black cherry, red licorice, and touches leather. More garrigue and red fruit emerges from this medium to full-bodied beauty with air, and the wine possesses loads of texture and fruit that's focused beautifully by fine tannin on the finish. This gets more and more impressive with air and I think has some upside potential. While there's no harm in drinking now, I would give bottle 2-3 years in the cellar. I think it will easily have 10-15 years of prime drinking.



2010 Roger Sabon Châteauneuf-du-Pape Cuvée Prestige

94-96

Aged in a combination of new and old foudre, the 2010 Roger Sabon Châteauneuf-du-Pape Cuvée Prestige, tasted out of barrel, is loaded with promise and it's always a good sign when the first word in my notes is "Wow." Possessing brilliant aromatics of raspberry, crème de cassis and spice, the wine is very fresh and pure on the palate, showing perfect balance, loads of ripe tannin, and a dense concentrated, yet elegant feel. As with the Cuvée Réserve, this will take a handful of years to fully hit its stride, and should have a very long life.



2009 Roger Sabon Châteauneuf-du-Pape Cuvée Prestige

94

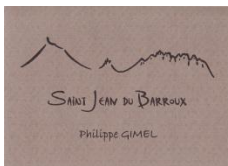
The most complex and complete of the '09s, the 2009 Roger Sabon Châteauneuf-du-Pape Cuvée Prestige is a thrilling wine that blends concentration and power with a sense of balance and elegance. Showing gorgeous aromas of cherry pit and currant fruits, white pepper, spice, and leather on the nose, the wine is full-bodied and perfectly balanced on the palate, delivering a mouth filling, silky texture, fantastic concentration, and loads of finely polished tannin on the finish. The overall purity and balance allows this to drink well now, but bottles should be given 2-3 years and then consumed over the following 15+ years.



2009 Roger Sabon Châteauneuf-du-Pape Le Secret des Sabon

97

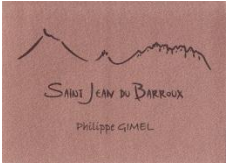
Aged all in demi-muid, the tiny production 2009 Roger Sabon Châteauneuf-du-Pape Le Secret des Sabon is up there with the top 4-5 wines of the vintage. Showing awesome aromatics of framboise, licorice, garrigue, spice, flowers, graphite, and huge minerality and crushed stone, this is a thrilling on the palate with a deep, full-bodied feel, superb focus, and boatloads of underlying structure and tannin. As is normal with this estate, despite the overall size, this still maintains an underlying sense of balance, and dare I say, finesse. This needs time; bottles should be given 5-6 years in the cellar, and it should have 2 decades of evolution. Gorgeous stuff!



2007 Saint Jean du Barroux Côtes du Ventoux Blanc La Montagne

91

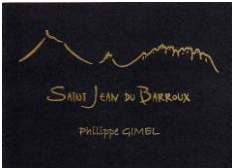
Meaning "The Mountain", the 2007 Saint Jean du Barroux Côtes du Ventoux Blanc La Montagne, a blend of 34% Grenache Blanc, 33% Bourboulenc, and 33% Clairette, tastes more like a serious Châteauneuf-du-Pape Blanc than a Côtes du Ventoux with copious amount of minerality, stone fruits, peach, fennel, and honeycomb aromas on the nose. Deep, layered, and pure, this impressive Côtes du Ventoux Blanc is still drinking beautifully (no small feat at 5 years after the vintage) with notable freshness, pure fruit, and a focused, clean finish. Not tired in the least, I don't see any reason this won't continue to evolve gracefully for another decade.



2007 Saint Jean du Barroux Cotes du Ventoux l'Argile

94

A totally brilliant blend of 75% Grenache, 15% Syrah, 5% Carignan, and 5% Cinsault that's aged all in enamel and concrete tank, the 2007 Saint Jean du Barroux Cotes du Ventoux l'Argile (formerly known as L'Oligocène) is stunningly perfumed and represents the essence of Provence! Delivering sweet wild berry fruit, crushed flowers, exotic spice, underbrush, fennel, and incense on the nose, this medium to full-bodied, impeccably put together Cotes du Ventoux possesses a powerful, yet elegant and light texture, beautiful freshness, and a blockbuster finish that's framed by masses of very fine, polished tannin. I purchased a single bottle to review, and am wishing I'd bought 2 cases. Thrilling stuff and it should continue to impress for 5-8 years, if not longer. Hats off to Philippe Gimel for this stunning effort!



2006 Saint Jean du Barroux Cotes du Ventoux La Pierre Noire

94

The estate's top cuvee and much more reserved, dense, and seemingly serious than the l'Argile, the 2006 Saint Jean du Barroux Cotes du Ventoux La Pierre Noire - 85% Grenache and 15% Syrah, from incredibly low yields and aged all in concrete - yields classy aromas of black currant, crushed stone, graphite, spice, and spring flowers on the nose. Slow to unwind (I followed the bottle for multiple days), this possesses a medium to full-bodied, powerful, yet elegant texture with very polished tannin, solid mid-palate concentration, and a classically styled, clean, dry finish. Whereas the l'Argile is ready to go now, I think this will benefit from 1-2 years of bottle age, and drink well for a decade or longer. Superb stuff and this estate needs to be on every southern Rhône lover's radar.

Jeb Dunnuck's **RR**
THE RHONE REPORT