





**ERIC SOLOMON**  
SELECTIONS

PLACE OVER PROCESS



## The Wine Advocate #179 (October 2008)

*Producer Highlight: Domaine Giraud (Chateauneuf-du-Pape)*



*“Brilliant oenologist, Philippe Cambie, has completely resurrected this estate, where he is now turning out some of the most extraordinary wines of the appellation, with the old vine Les Grenaches de Pierre an outstanding clone of Rayas. That’s not surprising in view of the fact that it comes from the pure sandy soils near Rayas.”*



### 2006 Chateauneuf du Pape Tradition

**Rating: 90**

The dark ruby-colored 2006 Chateauneuf du Pape offers a delicious combination of strawberry and black cherry fruit interwoven with tobacco leaf, licorice, and spice. Opulent, round, medium to full-bodied, and generous, it should drink well for 7-8 years.

### 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape Tradition

**Rating: (90-93)**

The deep ruby/purple, full-bodied 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape offers gorgeously sweet notes of charcoal, black raspberries, cherries, licorice, and a hint of high class cigar tobacco. It should age effortlessly for 12-15+ years.



### 2006 Chateauneuf du Pape Cuvee les Gallimardes

**Rating: 90+**

The meaty, backward, tannic 2006 Chateauneuf du Pape Les Gallimardes exhibits plenty of garrigue, roasted meat, lavender, herb, and spice characteristics. With outstanding power and depth, it is atypically backward and foreboding for a 2006 Chateauneuf du Pape. Nevertheless, a balance has been struck between the wine's structure and depth of fruit. It should evolve beautifully, but it requires several years of bottle age. Anticipated maturity: 2011-2025.

### 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape Cuvee les Gallimardes

**Rating: (91-94)**

The 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape Les Gallimardes possesses a distinctive Provencal character filled with garrigue, roasted meat, kirsch, lavender, pepper, and spice characteristics. Built for the long haul, it is a big, structured, substantial, beefy, masculine, full-bodied Chateauneuf du Pape without the charm of its two siblings. This impressively endowed 2007 requires 3-4 years of cellaring, and should keep for two decades or more.



### 2006 Chateauneuf du Pape les Grenaches de Pierre

**Rating: 95**

A candidate for wine of the vintage is the 2006 Chateauneuf du Pape Les Grenaches de Pierre. The essence of kirsch liqueur in that Rayas/Chateau Lafleur style, this wine has great intensity, full-bodied power, a seamless, silky integration of acidity and tannin, and a massive but light to the touch mouthfeel, this stunningly brilliant wine tastes like the Musigny of Chateauneuf du Pape. Drink it over the next 12-15+ years.

### 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape les Grenaches de Pierre

**Rating: (94-96+)**

An extraordinary expression of old vine Grenache grown in sandy soils is the 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape Les Grenaches de Pierre. The two wines it most closely resembles are Rayas and the Barroche Pure, another 100% Grenache from a nearby sandy vineyard. Its deep ruby color reveals less saturation than the other two cuvees, and the nose offers up extraordinary scents of kirsch liqueur, sandy, loamy soil, pepper, and raspberries. Smelling like either a great vintage of Chateau Lafleur or Chateau Rayas, this is a fabulous wine. Kudos to Philippe Cambie for capturing the terroir and elusive quality of old vine Grenache that seemingly hits heights in Chateauneuf du Pape unequaled anywhere else in the world. Very full-bodied and broad with silky tannins, and ethereal to taste, this is a monumental example of Grenache to drink over the next 15+ years.



**ERIC SOLOMON**  
SELECTIONS

PLACE OVER PROCESS



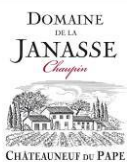
## The Wine Advocate #179 (October 2008)

*Producer Highlight: Domaine de la Janasse (Chateauneuf-du-Pape)*



*“Young Christophe Sabon, with his sister by his side and his father in the background, is doing as great a job turning out terrific wines as any vigneron in the world. With nearly 200 acres of vineyards, 45 of them old vines situated in Chateauneuf du Pape, there is enormous potential, all of it being exploited. The 1998s, 1999s, 2000s, and 2001s were all fabulous at this estate, the 2003s were slightly irregular as well as tannic, the 2005s were great, the 2006s are fabulous, and the 2007s may be the sine qua non of all his vintages. The white wines are not to be missed as they are some of the freshest, most perfumed, lively whites of Southern France. The value picks represent remarkable bargains. The bottled 2006 low end wines are all in the marketplace. While they are*

*not quite at the level of the 2007s, there are some gorgeous choices for consumers. Janasse’s 2007 Chateauneuf du Papes are outrageous, all of which performed brilliantly despite having just completed their malolactics after 11 months of fermentation. With all of the excitement over the 2007s, readers should not forget just how great Janasse’s 2006s have turned out. They are performing as well as they did last year, perhaps even better.”*



### 2006 Chateauneuf du Pape Cuvee Chaupin

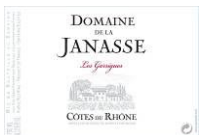
**Rating: 95**

The 2006 Chateauneuf du Pape Chaupin’s deep ruby/purple hue is followed by a phenomenal nose of black cherry liqueur, melted licorice, incense, asphalt, truffles, and a hint of earth. This dense, full-bodied effort is a candidate for wine of the vintage. Consume it over the next 12-13 years.

### 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape Cuvee Chaupin

**Rating: (95-99)**

I have had so many terrific examples of the Chateauneuf du Pape Chaupin that it’s hard to say the 2007 is the finest of all, but it is truly an amazing, old vine Grenache cuvee. Just under 20,000 bottles were produced from sand and clay soils. This inky/purple-colored wine reveals exquisite aromatic fireworks consisting of creme de cassis, black raspberries, licorice, incense, and spice, awesome fruit, major concentration, and a serious finish of close to a minute. For a wine of such enormous size, it is remarkable for its overall equilibrium and freshness.



### 2006 Cotes du Rhone les Garrigues

**Rating: 92**

Another marvelous wine is the 2006 Cotes du Rhone Les Garrigues, which again comes across like a top Chateauneuf du Pape. The old vine Grenache provides wonderful sucrosite as well as gorgeous black cherry notes intermixed with raspberries, pepper, and soil undertones. It is a sensational full-bodied red to enjoy now and over the next 7-8 years.

### 2007 Cotes du Rhone les Garrigues

**Rating: (91-94)**

Another knock-out is the 2007 Cotes du Rhone Les Garrigues, which comes from a parcel just outside of the estate holdings in Chateauneuf du Pape. It is one of the most concentrated 2007s produced, tipping the scales at a natural 16.3% alcohol. Made from mostly old vine Grenache, it could easily be mistaken for a Chateauneuf du Pape. The explosive bouquet of kirsch liqueur, sandy, loamy soil, spring flowers, pepper, and spice is followed by an opulent, super-concentrated, rich wine that should be purchased by the case. It should drink well for a decade or more. It is one of the most extraordinary Cotes du Rhones I have ever tasted.



### 2006 VDP Terre de Bussiere

**Rating: 88**

The 2006 Vin de Pays Terre de Bussiere exhibits plenty of tannin and earth, along with abundant fruit, medium body, and good spice.

### 2007 VDP Terre de Bussiere

**Rating: 89**

Quality soars with the well-made 2007 Vin de Pays Terre de Bussiere, a blend of 65% Merlot and the rest Syrah and a dollop of Grenache. Its deep ruby/purple color is followed by abundant aromas of fruit, camphor, cassis, white chocolate, and berries offered in an opulent, full-bodied, lush style. It's hard to beat this wine for the price.



### 2007 Vin de Pays d'Orange

**Rating: 88**

The red wines begin with Sabon's delicious, surprisingly exuberant, medium to full-bodied 2007 Vin de Pays d'Orange, which is primarily Syrah with smaller quantities of Cinsault, Grenache, and a few other varietals. Its exhibits a deep ruby color, loads of fruit, little complexity, but a terrific texture and headiness.



### 2006 Chateauneuf du Pape

**Rating: 93**

The dense purple-colored 2006 Chateauneuf du Pape, 80% foudre-aged Grenache and 20% Syrah and Mourvedre aged in small barrels, offers a beautiful bouquet of blackberries, roasted meats, sweet herbs, and new saddle leather. Full-bodied and super-concentrated with no hard edges, it should drink beautifully for 12-15 years.

### 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape

**Rating: (93-96)**

The 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape is Sabon's finest example of this cuvee I have yet tasted. It boasts a fabulous blue/purple color as well as a gorgeous nose of creme de cassis, kirsch, licorice, incense, and spice. Deep, full-bodied, and multilayered with excellent purity, depth, and length, it should drink beautifully for 20 years.



### 2006 Chateauneuf du Pape Cuvee Vieilles Vignes

**Rating: 96**

The Chaupin is slightly eclipsed by the profound quality of the 2006 Chateauneuf du Pape Vieilles Vignes. Inky/blue/purple, with massive aromatics, an unctuous texture, and superb length on the palate, it is enormously endowed for a 2006. Very pure for a 2006, with sweet tannins as well as amazing length, it will benefit from several years of cellaring, and drink well for 20-25 years.

### 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape Cuvee Vieilles Vignes

**Rating: (98-100)**

The 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape Vieilles Vignes is one of the vintage's most compelling wines. Most of the fruit for this offering comes from the estate vineyards in La Crau, and it is usually a blend of 80% Grenache (aged in tank and foudre) and the rest equal parts Syrah and Mourvedre that are kept in small barrels. Approximately 5,000-6,000 bottles are produced. It is hard to say whether this is the finest wine Christophe Sabon has made since taking over for his father, but what a profoundly great effort! It is an elixir of Chateauneuf du Pape with an inky/blue/purple color and an extraordinary nose of kirsch liqueur, black raspberries, licorice, truffles, graphite, and spice. The wine boasts enormous richness, incredible harmony, and a finish that lasts more than a minute. It is one of the most outrageously rich, concentrated, and perfect Chateauneuf du Papes I have ever tasted at this stage of development. It should last for 30+ years.



### 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape Blanc

**Rating: 91**

The 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape Blanc is a blend of 30% barrel-fermented Roussanne, 30% Clairette, and 40% Grenache Blanc. It is a full-bodied white offering plenty of heady floral notes intermixed with tropical fruits, an exuberant personality, and fine acidity.

### 2006 Chateauneuf du Pape Cuvee Prestige Blanc

**Rating: 93**

The 2006 Chateauneuf du Pape Cuvee Prestige Blanc is also a top-notch effort, displaying notes of honeysuckle and rose petals, full-bodied flavors, crisp acidity, and little evidence of wood.

### 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape Cuvee Prestige Blanc

**Rating: (92-94)**

The 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape Cuvee Prestige Blanc is a 100% barrel-fermented (no new oak) Roussanne-dominated cuvee. Unfortunately, Sabon only makes 75 cases of this beauty, clearly one of the two or three finest white Chateauneufs of the appellation.



### 2007 Cotes du Rhone

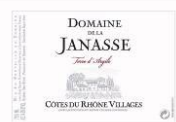
**Rating: 88**

A real beauty, the dark ruby/purple-colored 2007 Cotes du Rhone reveals loads of deep black cherry fruit, medium body, and a silky smooth style. It is a delicious bistro-styled red for shrewd consumers seeking lots of personality and fruit in a low-end package.

### 2007 Cotes du Rhone Blanc

**Rating: 89**

The 2007 Cotes du Rhone Blanc, a blend of 10% Viognier, 10% Roussanne, 15% Bourboulenc, 15% Clairette, and 50% Grenache Blanc, reveals lovely white currant and honeyed citrus notes in its perfumed nose. It possesses delicious, heady fruit, medium body, and gorgeous freshness as well as vivacity. These wines do not last long, but they are excellent examples of dry whites that are meant to be drunk in their first 1-2 years of life.



### 2006 Cotes du Rhone Villages Terre d'Argile

**Rating: 90**

The outstanding, deep plum/ruby-tinged 2006 Cotes du Rhone-Villages Terre d'Argile reveals beautiful aromas of crushed rocks, blue and black fruits, roasted meats, and abundant spice, pepper, and earth. It should drink well for 5-6 years.

### 2007 Cotes du Rhone Villages Terre d'Argile

**Rating: (91-93)**

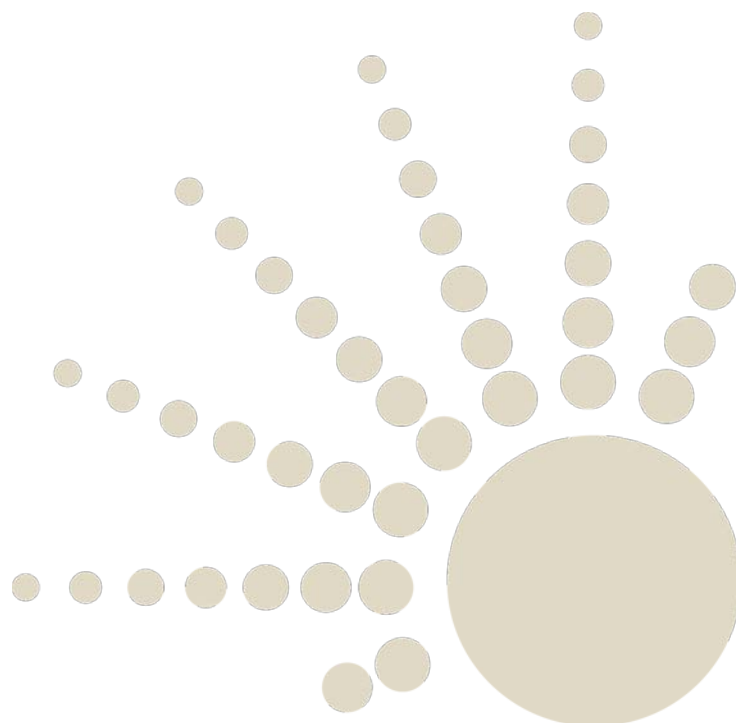
The blockbuster 2007 Cotes du Rhone-Villages Terre d'Argile, which comes from red clay soils, is a blend of 75% Grenache and 25% Mourvedre. A deep ruby/purple color is accompanied by aromas of black raspberries, blueberries, freshly grilled mushrooms, truffles, camphor, and spice. Full-bodied, deep, silky, and layered, it is an incredible example of a Cotes du Rhone-Villages.



### 2007 Viognier VDP

**Rating: 89**

Most Viogniers tend to be slightly flabby and fat, so it always amazes me how a vin de pays such as Janasse's 2007 Viognier Vin de Pays can be so fresh and lovely, filled with minerality, honeysuckle, lychee nut, and tropical fruit characteristics. This serious white reveals crisp acidity as well as medium body.





**ERIC SOLOMON**  
SELECTIONS

PLACE OVER PROCESS



## The Wine Advocate #179 (October 2008)

*Producer Highlight: Domaine de Marcoux (Chateauneuf-du-Pape)*



*"I'm always interested in what sisters Sophie and Catherine Armenier are doing at this biodynamically farmed vineyard, one of my favorite estates. Not surprisingly, they have produced extraordinary wines in 2007 as well as 2006s that are nearly as good. As most vigneronns do, the Armeniers attribute the greatness of the 2007 vintage to both the drought that lasted from late spring through the end of September as well as the cooler than normal temperatures that were followed by three weeks of ferocious Mistral winds in September. Without any serious heat spikes, the Mistral seemed to concentrate the grapes, with the cooler weather causing very intense aromatics."*



### 2006 Chateauneuf du Pape

**Rating: 92**

The stunning, deep ruby/purple-hued 2006 Chateauneuf du Pape exhibits black fruits, licorice, incense, and hints of grilled meats and garrigue. While not as explosively aromatic or full as the 2007, the full-bodied, velvety textured, big, substantial 2006 is a top success for the vintage. Drink it over the next 15 years.

### 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape

**Rating: (92-94)**

The dense ruby/purple-hued 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape's gorgeous bouquet of crushed blackberries and black currants intermixed with a smorgasbord of spring flowers, truffles, licorice, and honeysuckle is followed by a full-bodied, velvety-textured wine with excellent freshness and vibrancy for a wine of such extraordinary fruit depth, body, and intensity. It should be drinkable in 3-4 years, and last for two decades or more.

### 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape Blanc

**Rating: 88**

One of the finest white Chateauneufs is made by Domaine de Marcoux. The 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape Blanc is not as stunning as their 2006, a fact that was refreshingly acknowledged by the Armeniers. Nevertheless, it is an excellent blend of 60% Roussanne, 30% Bourboulenc, and 10% Clairette and Grenache Blanc. Aromas of honeyed grapefruit, quince, white currants, and citrus are accompanied by a medium-bodied, Chablis-like style (as opposed to the Burgundy grand cru-like style of the 2006). It should drink nicely for 2-3 years.



### 2006 Chateauneuf du Pape Vieilles Vignes

**Rating: 95**

One of the vintage's blockbusters is the 2006 Chateauneuf du Pape Vieilles Vignes, with even higher alcohol (16.2%) than the 2007. It offers lovely notes of black fruits, truffle oil, roasted meats, beef blood, black raspberries, abundant kirsch, and a hint of roasted Provencal herbs. On a much faster evolutionary track than the 2007, it is a layered, multi-dimensional effort displaying a finish that lasts nearly 60 seconds. Some unresolved tannins in the finish suggest this wine should be cellared for 2-3 years, and consumed over the following two decades.

### 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape Vieilles Vignes

**Rating: (96-98)**

The 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape Vieilles Vignes is a 4,000-bottle cuvee produced largely from old vine sites in Les Gallimardes, Charbonniere, La Crau, and occasionally, Esquironns. In most vintages, this offering includes 98% Grenache, and it usually tips the scales at 15+% alcohol. The opaque purple-colored 2007 reveals an extraordinary nose of black truffles, acacia flowers, black raspberries, blackberries, licorice, incense, and camphor. Full-bodied and extraordinarily intense with perfect balance as well as superb freshness, this profound effort requires 3-4 years of bottle age, and should keep for 20-25 years after its release next year.



### 2007 Cotes du Rhone

**Rating: 88**

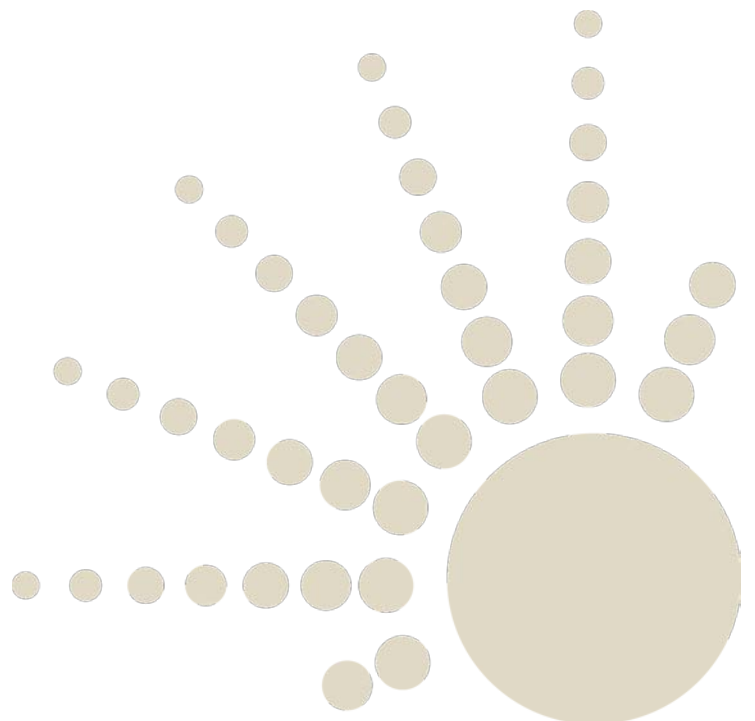
Two good value picks from Marcoux include the 2007 Cotes du Rhone, a combination of 97% Grenache and 3% Mourvedre and Cinsault. It offers deep black cherry fruit, roasted herb, and loamy soil characteristics presented in a medium-bodied, juicy, elegant format. Enjoy it over the next 2-3 years.



### 2007 Domaine Lorentine Lirac

**Rating: 89**

Two good value picks from Marcoux include the Lirac offerings. They continue to be a work in progress, and the 2007 Lirac Domaine La Lorentine is the finest example yet produced. There are only 7,000 bottles of this 50% Grenache and 50% Mourvedre and Syrah blend. It exhibits elegant, juicy blue and black fruits intermixed with notions of earth and spring flowers. Medium-bodied, fresh, and lively, it is best consumed over the next 3-4 years.





**ERIC SOLOMON**  
SELECTIONS

PLACE OVER PROCESS



## The Wine Advocate #179 (October 2008)

*Producer Highlight: Domaine Roger Sabon (Chateauneuf-du-Pape)*

RS

*“Proprietor Jean-Jacques Sabon and the other younger family members are taking these wines to even greater quality heights than previously attained. The new vintages possess updated, more polished labels, but more importantly, the wines continue to go from what were very strong efforts in the past, to even deeper concentration, complexity, and depth. All four cuvees are now routinely outstanding, with the top two offerings, the Cuvee Prestige and the limited production Le Secret des Sabon, compelling Chateaux. As with many estates, the 2007s exhibit the vintage’s succulent, juicy, incredibly pure fruit and tremendous freshness and vivacity, all packed into substantial, full-bodied wines with surprisingly high alcohols given their vibrancy. One might expect such greatness in 2007 in Chateauneuf du Pape, but the Sabons have also hit the heights in the excellent 2006 vintage.”*



### 2006 Chateauneuf du Pape Cuvee Prestige

**Rating: 93**

The dense ruby/purple-colored, full-bodied 2006 Chateauneuf du Pape Cuvee Prestige offers up notes of licorice, kirsch liqueur, lavender, and spice box. It is a superbly concentrated, opulent, flamboyant wine to drink now and over the next 15+ years.

### 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape Cuvee Prestige

**Rating: (92-95)**

The 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape Cuvee Prestige’s opaque purple color is accompanied by a lovely bouquet of creme de cassis, kirsch, licorice, smoke, new saddle leather, roasted meats, and lavender. Full, deep, and exceptionally pure, it is a superb effort that should drink well for 20-25+ years.



### 2006 Chateauneuf du Pape le Secret de Sabon

**Rating: 96**

The inky/purple-hued, enormously endowed 2006 Chateauneuf du Pape Le Secret des Sabon is a monster of massive concentration and power. It reveals a suppleness to the tannins as well as a more evolved, accessible personality than the 2007, but, wow, it should keep for 20-25 years.

### 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape le Secret de Sabon

**Rating: (96-100)**

Reminiscent of a hypothetical blend, stylistically speaking, of a 1990 and 1998, the opaque plum/purple 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape Le Secret des Sabon is off the charts. There are only 2,000 bottles of this limited cuvee, from a parcel of 100+ year old vines in the famed La Crau sector. Enormously powerful notes of grilled herbs, roasted meats, creme de cassis, blackberries, charcoal, and truffles emerge from this massive, super-concentrated 2007. A tour de force in winemaking, this is old vine intensity at its greatest and purest. Give it 5-6 years of bottle age, and drink it over the following three decades.



### 2006 Chateauneuf du Pape Cuvee Reservee

**Rating: 91**

The 2006 Chateauneuf du Pape Cuvee Reservee exhibits beautiful sweet black cherry fruit, a full-bodied, powerful mouthfeel, and a layered texture. Consume it over the next 12-15 years.

### 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape Cuvee Reservee

**Rating: (90-93)**

The dark ruby/purple-tinged 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape Cuvee Reservee is one of the finest yet made by the Sabons.

Deep ruby/purple with notes of root vegetables, figs, tobacco leaf, roasted meats, kirsch liqueur, and black currants, this is a broad, deep, substantial, long, heady Chateauneuf that should evolve for 15 or more years.



**2006 Chateauneuf du Pape les Olivets**

**Rating: 90**

The succulent, Provencal 2006 Chateauneuf du Pape Les Olivets possesses loads of black cherry fruit, spice, and garrigue, a roasted meatiness, and firmer tannins than in 2007. It should drink well for 10-12 years.

**2007 Chateauneuf du Pape les Olivets**

**Rating: (90-92)**

The 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape Les Olivets is Provencal, displaying notes of roasted herbs, licorice, sweet black cherries, and pepper. Filled with seductive fruit and glycerin as well as a heady, long finish, it should be enjoyed over the next 10-12 years.

