

LAY & WHEELER
FINE WINE MERCHANTS SINCE 1854

Rhône



2019 VINTAGE



Using this Brochure

We're thrilled to present the latest releases from the Rhône Valley, mostly from the 2019 vintage, but with some notable late releases included.

Grapes & Maps

There are great similarities and differences between the north and the south, which are easier to understand with grapes and maps. Both are featured here.

Prices

At the time of print, all prices are up to date, and quoted in bond. Any changes will be reflected on our website.

Instagram

An increasingly effective way to keep up with our growers is via Instagram, where pictures and videos abound, and we encourage you to follow your favourites.

@laywheeler

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Juan Trujillo Andrades, www.truliphoto.com with the exception of those detailed below:

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Pictured on the front cover is Even Bakke from Clos de Trias.



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Vintage Report

Another roaring success

When I put 2019 in the context of recent vintages in the Rhône, it's hard to come to any other conclusion than this: it's another roaring success.

It's the fifth-in-a-row of excellent vintages here, and I'd even say it's truly outstanding in Châteauneuf-du-Pape.

Excitingly, the vintage sees a brilliant showing from both colours. Both reds and whites share the common themes of ripe fruit flavours and a lifting freshness which gives them poised frames and huge charm.

Many have the stuffing for the long haul, but this vintage is particularly strong in offering wines that will drink well from their youth.

The growing season - the story of well-timed rain

Like the rest of France, 2019 was a hot, dry summer in the Rhône. This kept a check on yields, but happily, volumes came in at around average or just below for many, including those growers in the south who were badly hampered by mildew in 2018 and coulure in 2017.

In the north, they didn't see a drop of rain in June or July. A welcome downpour in early August brought twice the average rainfall for that month. This, unquestionably, saved the vintage, according to Pierre Rostaing.

It stopped the vines shutting down through heat-stress and drought, and brought about uniform ripening. In the warm September conditions that followed, phenolic ripeness and sugar levels rose quickly.

This, in turn, necessitated a rapid harvest. Many growers explained that decisive action was absolutely key to unlocking the best from



the vintage. Caroline Frey at Jaboulet hired extra pickers and rented huge cool rooms to store the fruit in as she threw everything at bringing the grapes in as quickly as possible.

Similarly in the south, fortunately-timed rain in mid-September helped with the maturity of the Grenache, and as a result, this variety plays a starring role in the vintage. It certainly likes the heat, but this boost of water brought about precision and seamless ripening in the variety.

Overall, it was a fairly straightforward season with well-timed rain that brought in a beautiful harvest.

But one notable exception I must mention in 2019 is Crozes-Hermitage. Growers faced considerable stress here when a violent hail storm tore through the vineyards in June. It dashed yields, and volumes were dramatically down here, so there is little wine to go around.

The wines - quality all round

"Rich, integrated, mineral, and expressive," said Stéphane Robert of Domaine du Tunnel, when he described the reds in the north. They are fruity and silky, full-bodied but balanced.

The whites, particularly in Condrieu, are less rich than the 2018s, and have a refined freshness about them. They are well-worth seeking out in 2019.



Growers in the south, particularly Châteauneuf-du-Pape, realise they have something pretty incredible on their hands in 2019. These wonderfully baroque wines, with their decadent Grenache, structured Mourvèdre, and balancing Syrah, have thrived in the vintage.

And with every warm year the growers here experience, the more they rely on lesser-known, late-ripening varieties, like Counoise and Carignan, which are increasing in importance, and interest. Several growers mentioned they would be replacing Grenache with these varieties when the time comes to grub-up old vines.

These varieties need sun, and they need a warm growing season, but heaven knows, they're getting these now. The southern Rhône's tradition of blending varieties may very well mean that, in spite of the warmth down here, the region is future-proofed against some of the challenges of global warming.

Tasting in the time of Covid

With every new pandemic-related restriction, I watched my window to visit the Rhône shrink, and finally disappear.

The growers, many of whom Lay & Wheeler has worked with for decades, were quick to react, and amazingly generous with their time and samples. We arranged Zoom meetings, shipped samples, and I soared along the Rhône Valley safely.

You'd have thought that tasting from the kitchen table would take some of the drama and unpredictability out of it. But one morning, battling with intermittent internet connections in Ampuis, repeatedly knocked out by the fierce wind, quickly dispelled that idea. It was a timely reminder of the power that Mother Nature wields in the Rhône.

The best this region has to offer

We've been thrilled to win the Decanter Retailer Award for Best Rhône range for the past three years, and in this vintage in particular, our wines show off the greatness of this region.

Between the precise, peppery Syrahs with their silky tannins in the north, the juicy Grenache blends in the south, and the sleek Viogniers and pithy Marsanne/Roussanne blends as you wind your way down the river, there are plenty of reasons to stock up.

I'm pleased to offer you the best this region has to offer.

Best wishes,

Catherine

Catherine Petrie, MW
Buyer
February 2021

White Grapes

Viognier

Viognier is the finest white grape planted in the Rhône, known for its astounding aromatics, full of honeysuckle, fantastic in youth, but also with the ability to age brilliantly. Its spiritual home is the Northern Rhône, where it's the only grape allowed in Condrieu, and sometimes co-fermented with Syrah in Côte-Rôtie.

Roussanne

With its russet-coloured berries ("roux" means russet in French), Roussanne produces elegant, aromatic wines when conditions allow. But it's not easy to grow: it ripens late, is prone to disease and becomes quite rich in warm years. However, when it's good, it's very, very good.

Marsanne

Marsanne is less sensitive than Roussanne, with which it is blended as the only two white grapes allowed in Saint-Joseph, Hermitage and Crozes-Hermitage. It's also the star in Saint-Péray. Full bodied and textured, it's critical in white Hermitage - so much that in Switzerland, it's known as *ermitage blanc*.



Red Grapes

Syrah

Syrah is the reigning grape in the Northern Rhône, where it's the only black grape allowed. In the south it is crucial in blends. It has an incredible capacity for expressing *terroir*, and it can range from meaty and leathery to elegant and silky. It is dramatic in the north, flamboyant in the south, and often staggeringly ageworthy.

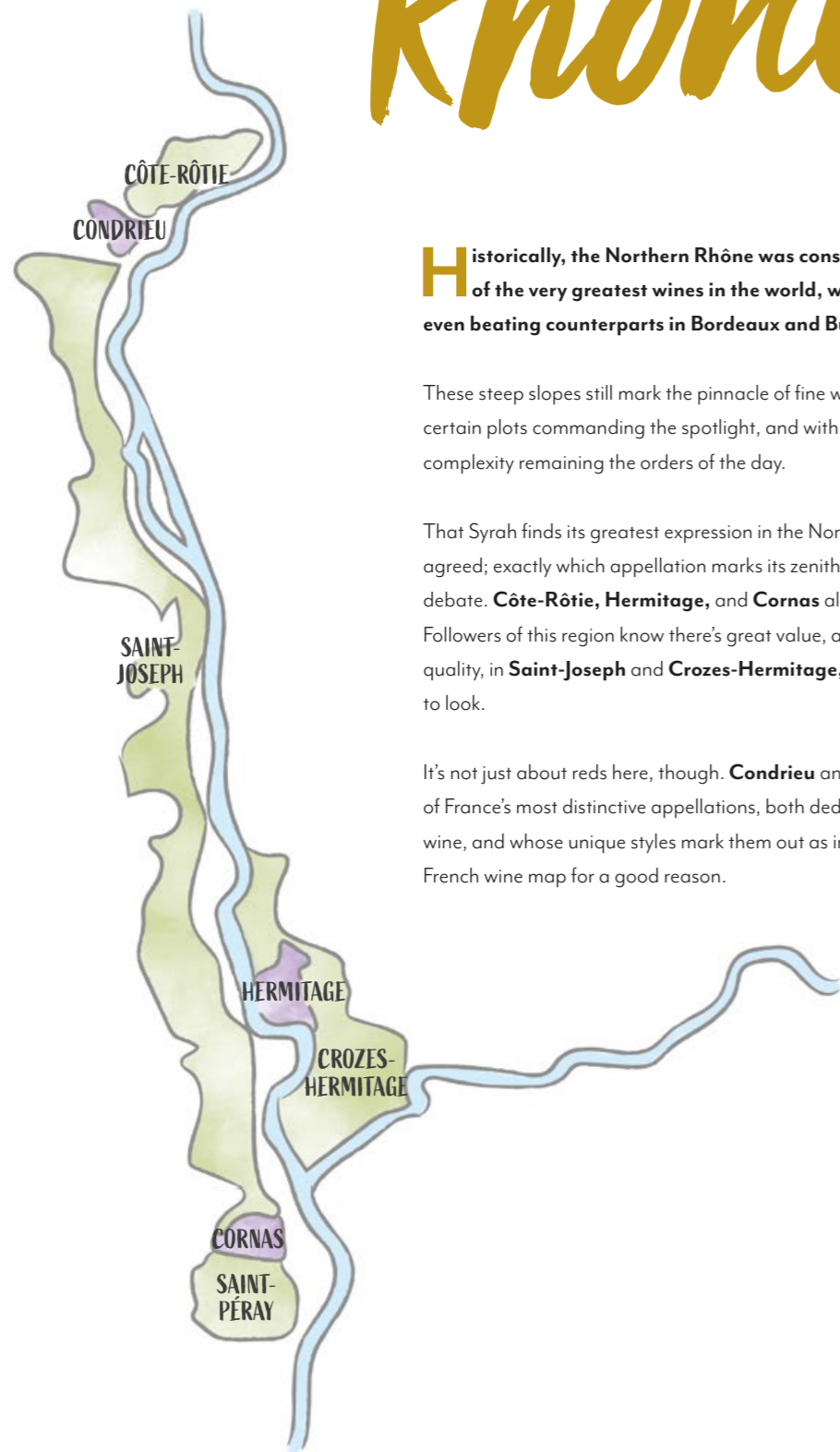
Grenache

Grenache is hard to grow, but the Southern Rhône growers persist, because it sings when it succeeds. It loves the sunshine, and produces red-fruited, rich, silky wines. With a little altitude, it is pure, with gorgeous fruit, and luxurious, lighter tannins. Blended with its counterparts, it shines.

Mourvèdre

Originally from Spain, where it's called Monastrell, this late-ripening black grape thrives in the heat, and is used sparingly in Southern Rhône blends for depth, colour, structure and spice.

Northern Rhône



Historically, the Northern Rhône was considered home to some of the very greatest wines in the world, with prices sometimes even beating counterparts in Bordeaux and Burgundy.

These steep slopes still mark the pinnacle of fine wine production, with certain plots commanding the spotlight, and with ageworthiness and complexity remaining the orders of the day.

That Syrah finds its greatest expression in the Northern Rhône is widely agreed; exactly which appellation marks its zenith is a source of heated debate. **Côte-Rôtie**, **Hermitage**, and **Cornas** all have their advocates. Followers of this region know there's great value, and ever-increasing quality, in **Saint-Joseph** and **Crozes-Hermitage**, if you know where to look.

It's not just about reds here, though. **Condrieu** and **Saint-Péray** are two of France's most distinctive appellations, both dedicated solely to white wine, and whose unique styles mark them out as important points on the French wine map for a good reason.



Côte-Rôtie

 SYRAH
(SOME VIOGNIER CAN BE ADDED, UP TO 20%)

 RED ONLY

This vividly named appellation is one of the most famous communes of the Rhône Valley.

The trick to understanding Côte-Rôtie is understanding its name, French for 'roasted slope'. Its sheer south-facing slopes, angled as steeply as 60 degrees in some places, catch the sun's rays at their fiercest angle. However its northerly position in the Rhône Valley, just south of Lyon, ensures a refreshing dip in nighttime temperatures, and these wines remain some of the most elegant, floral Syrahs you'll find.

Its dramatic escarpment is divided into the Côte Brune and the Côte Blonde. Côte Brune's mica-schist, clay and granite soils to the north tend to produce structured, concentrated wines, whereas the lighter granite, sand and limestone soils of the Côte Blonde to the south tend to express a finer, more elegant, opulent style of Syrah. As well as identifying the two halves of the appellation, Côte Brune and Côte Blonde are also *lieux dits* within them.

Often parcels from the two are blended, but in many cases, outstanding plots can be vinified and bottled separately. There's no official hierarchy here, but the range of styles across the region is vast. It is a relatively small appellation with world-wide renown; there is subsequently fierce competition. You won't find many *vignerons* sitting on their laurels here: quality is generally high across the region.

At their best, these wines might just be the most seductive in the world. They offer up complex aromas of dark berries, floral spice, and freshness on the finish. What sets them apart is their purity and aromatic precision. They have the requisite components for fine old age, but many are tempting in their floral youth.



Domaine Garon

Kévin & Fabien Garon

 @kevin.garon

The Garon family have been landowners in Ampuis for more than 500 years, but it wasn't until 1982 that they started tending to the neglected vines on their land.

Jean-François and Carmen Garon released their first cuvée in 1995. Jean-François observed, with little irony, that "it wasn't bad for the vineyards to rest a hundred years between plantings."

In 2000 they were joined by their two sons, Kévin and Fabien, who have since taken over the running of the domaine. They have added to the two hectares of Côte-Rôtie vineyards with other appellations, but the Côte-Rôtie cuvées remain at the heart of their range.




Although they are not certified organic, they work in that vein, and almost all the work in the vineyard is done by hand or by horse.

The brothers spend every moment they can in the vineyards and cellar. Indeed, it was telling that my Zoom meeting with Kévin took place whilst he was in the winery. Simply no time to waste in the office!

The wines are mostly destemmed and aged in a mix of new and older French oak. They use very gentle extraction techniques, preferring a long maceration (up to six weeks) to draw out the phenolic complexity.

Sybarine comes from vines very close to the cellar. Its granite soils make for an open, refined, and silky Côte-Rôtie, and is the earliest drinking of the four Garon cuvées. **Triotes** comes from four neighbouring *lieux dits* on the Côte Blonde with a high proportion of white schist in their soils, making for an intense, savoury, and long expression.

Les Rochins, first isolated in 2003, comes from the Côte Brune's darker soils. The vines were replanted in 1980 and 2001, and their youthful vigour produces a juicy wine, with a rounded balance. 30% whole bunch in the 2019 adds silkiness and depth. And finally, there's the **Lancement**, one of the finest sites of the Côte Blonde, producing a wine of huge elegance and subtlety, although you'll want to tuck it away for a few years before pulling the cork.

	 Bottle	 Case	 Drink
2019 Côte-Rôtie Sybarine	£28	£168 per 6	2022-2032
2019 Côte-Rôtie Les Triotes	£32.50	£195 per 6	2022-2034
2019 Côte-Rôtie Les Rochins	£57	£342 per 6	2024-2036
2019 Côte-Rôtie Lancement	£89	£534 per 6	2024-2038



Domaine Michel et Stéphane Ogier

Stéphane Ogier

@coterotie_stephaneogier

If you visit Ampuis, you can't miss this domaine. Its large cellar is just off to the left as you enter the village from the Lyon road.

In fact, this is just one of the three modern, well-equipped cellars that Stéphane Ogier uses to make his impressive range of wines. With 45 hectares in the Northern Rhône, he needs every inch of them to match his ambitious, but hugely impressive range.

Domaine Ogier is now one of the largest in the region. Whilst vines have been in the family for many generations, the domaine's story is only a recent one. Stéphane's father had farmed a few hectares of vines, along with lots of other crops: fruits and vegetables for the local market.

But in 1983, when Stéphane was six years old, his father decided to focus on winemaking: it seemed like fun, and he was fairly certain he had some good *terroir* on his hands. After all, he's been selling his grapes to Chapoutier and Guigal for years.

So Stéphane grew up in the vineyards, learning with his father, and as soon as he was old enough, took himself to Beaune to study winemaking. He was back at his father's domaine by 1997, and threw himself into the family business with an enthusiasm and determination that remains fully ignited today.

Back then, Côte-Rôtie was half the size it is today. But even as it has grown, mechanisation remains only marginal in this environment. The steep slopes require a lot to be done by hand, particularly for *vignerons* like Stéphane who see the key to dealing with increasingly dry years as working the soils.

His Burgundian education is reflected in his wines, which display considerable finesse. In recent years he has stepped away from any new oak in his reds, whilst increasing the use of whole bunch fruit.

Like many, he was relieved with the August downpour, and ranks 2019s extremely highly. He sees the reds as having slightly firmer tannins than 2018, and with subsequently greater ageing potential. And for him, it is clearly the best recent vintage for whites.

He has made one very savvy investment in the South, so that he can produce a brilliant value Côtes du Rhône, **Le Temps Est Venu**, from vines near Cairanne. It delivers fantastically juicy, lightly grippy length, with an abundance of sweet red fruit flavours, thanks to the 60% Grenache in the blend.

Under **La Rosine** - a Vin de Pays label from vineyards near Ampuis - he makes an impressive white from Viognier, powerful and spicy, and a floral and dark-berried Syrah. These two wines are both great introductions to his Northern Rhône range.

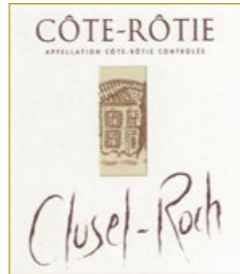


Further up the range his **Condrieu La Combe de Malleval** is further evidence he is just as good at making whites as he is reds. Ginger-spiced, aromatic, and gorgeously rich.

Saint-Joseph Le Passage is a creamy, dark, cassis-drenched Syrah with plenty of focus, and a precursor to his consistently brilliant **Côte-Rôtie Mon Village**. Stéphane made his name with Côte-Rôties: his single vineyard 'crus' are released at a later date, but this accomplished blend is worth stocking up on.

When you consider these are made by one of the world's leading winemakers of the moment, these are a set of seriously good value wines.

	£ Bottle	Case	Drink
2019 Viognier de Rosine, VDP des Collines Rhodaniennes	£16	£96 per 6	2021-2024
2019 Condrieu La Combe de Malleval	£31	£186 per 6	2021-2026
2019 Côtes du Rhône Le Temps Est Venu	£10	£60 per 6	2021-2024
2019 Syrah La Rosine, VDP des Collines Rhodaniennes	£15.50	£93 per 6	2021-2026
2019 Le Passage, St Joseph	£19	£114 per 6	2022-2031
2019 Côte-Rôtie Mon Village	£38	£228 per 6	2023-2034



Maison Clusel Roch

Gilbert Clusel, Brigitte Roch, & Guillaume Clusel

@maisoncluselroch

Guillaume Clusel is making exceptionally good wines these days. His parents, Gilbert Clusel and Brigitte Roch, had begun the domaine in 1989 with little more than the vines planted by Gilbert's grandfather before the Second World War.

Since then, the domaine has won many followers for its unique style of Côte-Rôtie. You will not find deeply coloured, densely ripened wines with inscrutable tannins at this address. Instead, you might wonder sometimes whether you've just poured yourself a Pinot Noir instead of a Syrah.

This is particularly surprising when you know their Côte-Rôtie vineyards are on the Côte Brune, often associated with muscular, powerful wines. But through decades of organic farming (since 2002 in fact, rare in this appellation), picking fairly early, when the grapes still have their fruit acidity, and at least 30% whole bunch fruit in most of the cuvées, the wines remain elegant, fine boned, and chiselled.

With gradual investment in a modern cellar, Guillaume and his parents have built up their vineyard holdings to 18 hectares. One useful recent addition has been five hectares inherited from Guillaume's grandfather in 2018, which has bolstered the production of **Les Schistes**: a classic Côte-Rôtie blend. It's their signature wine, and a window onto their elegant style.

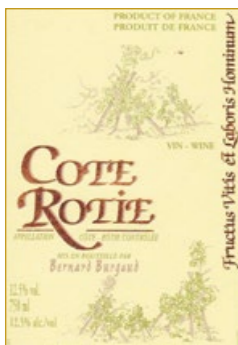
La Viallière is frequently Guillaume's favourite of the single vineyard Côte-Rôties; a position it maintains in 2019. Its stony soils and highly-regarded mid-slope position mean it is much respected amongst local growers. It produces wines with evident finesse, but also notable substance.

Les Grandes Places is typically the most powerful of the Clusel Roch Côte-Rôties. It is perched high up on the slope, above Viallière. Not only is it spectacularly well-located, but the vineyard is particularly special for the family as Guillaume's great grandfather planted the vines in 1935. The wine is intense, and often unyielding in youth, but with time in the cellar will capture the essence of this domaine in the glass.

These wines are built around freshness and finesse, where Burgundian refinement meets Syrah's natural muscle, making for understated, but long-lived and complex wines.

And don't miss the odd-one-out here, **Coteaux du Lyonnais Traboules**, which is made from 100% Gamay grown on granite soils. It has that juicy, refreshing style we associate with Beaujolais Cru. But here, in the Northern Rhône, it has a grippy, savoury note too. Brilliant value.

	£ Bottle	Case	Drink
2019 Coteaux du Lyonnais Traboules	£9.50	£114 per 12	2021-2024
2019 Côte-Rôtie Les Schistes	£35	£210 per 6	2023-2033
2019 Côte-Rôtie La Viallière	£52	£312 per 6	2024-2035
2019 Côte-Rôtie Les Grandes Places	£70	£420 per 6	2024-2040



Domaine Bernard Burgaud

Bernard & Pierre Burgaud

Pierre Burgaud has only recently taken over the reins at his family domaine. In fact 2020 will be his first vintage in sole charge. 2019 is therefore the last vintage he and his father, Bernard, have made together, before Bernard's retirement.

And it's clear from the brilliant 2019 that this classic Côte-Rôtie domaine, which has just 4.5 hectares all exclusively within the appellation, is in safe hands, and a successful change of generation is underway.

The domaine makes just one wine. It is a blend of two parcels from the Côte Blonde and two from the Côte Brune. Pierre jokes that he likes not having to rush around to tend vines in other appellations. All they do here is Côte-Rôtie, pure and simple.

All the fruit is destemmed, and undergoes a fairly brief maceration with some focussed extraction: 10 days, with up to four punch downs a day. The four elements of the wine are blended straight after alcoholic fermentation and racked into barrel, where it spends the next 15 months. It's traditional winemaking at its unfussy best.

But that's not to say the wine is in any way old-fashioned. Bernard had studied in Beaune, and when he came back to the family domaine in the 1980s, he introduced a small amount of new oak to the *élevage*. It brings a glossy complexity to the wines, and remains as successful a tactic today. The 2019 was aged in 20% new oak.

Their 2019 **Côte-Rôtie** is powerful but balanced, with plenty of gusto on the mid-palate. The nose is laden with aromas of violets and tapenade, smoke and spice. Its silky tannins and sappy acidity let the sweet fruit core slowly unfurl. This is a paradigm for Côte-Rôtie's capacity for purity.

£ Bottle 🍷 Case 🍷 Drink

2019 Côte-Rôtie

£32

£192 per 6

2022-2038



Domaine Rostaing

Pierre Rostaing

The generational handover from maverick René to diligent Pierre couldn't have gone better. René built up the domaine's reputation with his appellation-defining wines before retiring in 2014.

Since then, Pierre has continued to make wines that long-time fans of the domaine love, and has brought a certain appeal for new buyers, too, with his nuanced touch and, let's face it, a string of excellent Northern Rhône vintages under his belt.

The secret to the domaine's enduring popularity is its simple recipe: old vines from some of Côte-Rôtie's finest sites, a high proportion of whole bunch vinification, long macerations, and restrained use of new French oak.

It is this combination of long maceration and whole bunch fruit that imbues the wines with long-chain tannins: the small polyphenols begin to polymerise during vinification, and continue to do so in bottle, so that the mouthfeel is both structured and silky. It is the perfect backdrop for the pungent aromatic intensity of the old vine fruit.

Their cuvée **Ampodium** (the Latin name for Ampuis) is one of the most famous Côte-Rôtie blends. It draws from 15 *lieux dits* around Côte-Rôtie.

The three single vineyard Côte-Rôties, **La Landonne**, **Côte Blonde** and **Côte Brune**, are some of the most sought-after in the region. Their distinctive characters are handled much like the crus of Burgundy, and it's clear that Pierre's training with Dominique Lafon in Meursault before joining his father chimes with René's ambitions for Côte-Rôtie.

Indeed, continuing his father's work, Pierre has added one more wine to the range, **La Viaillère**, from a half hectare parcel just north of La Landonne. It is home to 80-year-old vines planted by his grandfather.

Their **Condrieu La Bonnette** is one of the few you will find that is vinified and aged entirely in stainless steel, seeing no oak at all. Pierre seeks above all else texture in his Condrieu, and this wine has become a classic in its own right.

£ Bottle 🍷 Case 🍷 Drink

2019 Condrieu La Bonnette

£42.50

£255 per 6

2021-2024

2019 Côte-Rôtie Ampodium

£42

£252 per 6

2023-2033

2019 Côte-Rôtie La Viaillère

£77

£462 per 6

2024-2035

2019 Côte-Rôtie La Landonne

£86

£516 per 6

2025-2039

2019 Côte-Rôtie Côte Blonde

£95

£570 per 6

2026-2040

2019 Côte-Rôtie Côte Brune

£155

£930 per 6

2026-2040



Domaine Bott

Graeme & Julie Bott

@graemejuliebott

Domaine Bott is a young domaine; their first vintage was only 2016. But in this short time they have blossomed into one of the most promising producers in the Northern Rhône.

Their story is unlike most: they do not come from a long line of *vignerons* who have worked these backbreaking slopes for generations. Domaine Bott is very much a first generation venture.

Graeme is a New Zealander, who arrived in Côte-Rôtie in 2010, where he met Julie, a native of the Northern Rhône. They met whilst working at Domaine Ogier, fell in love, got married, and bought a house.

The truth is, they hadn't been planning to start a domaine. But when they discovered the garden of their house on the hillside of Vérin was actually prime Condrieu AOC, a plan was hatched.

In just a short time this hard-working and talented couple have built up an impressive 6.5 hectares. At the top end they are making precise and pure examples of **Côte-Rôtie** and **Condrieu**: wines that deserve cellaring.

2019 is the first release made from the vines they planted themselves in the garden that started it all off: **Condrieu Lieu Dit l'Aleau**. They like to pick their whites early, and Graeme and Julie have captured the freshness of just-ripened Viognier with its silky texture in this stunning debut. Just 934 bottles have been made.

And you shouldn't miss out on their brilliant Vin de Pays wine: **First Flight**. This Syrah is fast becoming one of our favourites, offering density and precision of fruit without demanding lengthy ageing. The 2019, with its silky tannins and smooth frame, will disappear all too quickly.

Saint-Joseph offers a step up in complexity, whilst the jewel in their crown is the strictly limited **Côte-Rôtie**, produced in tiny quantities.

Perhaps the wine that needs the most explanation here is the **Seyssuel Kamaka**. The name may sound unfamiliar. Don't worry, we'd never tried a Seyssuel either. It comes from vines planted just a 10 minute drive from Ampuis. The soils here are made up of schist and gneiss and Julie says they look shiny when the sunlight catches them. There's no granite here, on the other side of the river, and the Syrah is floral and pinot-esque, with an elegant texture. Kamata is the Maori word for rock or stone, and a nod to Graeme's Kiwi origins.

These wines offer fantastic value for money: pure, expressive, and delicious.

	£ Bottle	Case	Drink
2019 Condrieu	£35	£210 per 6	2021-2024
2019 Condrieu Lieu Dit l'Aleau	£56	£336 per 6	2021-2026
2019 First Flight Syrah	£14	£84 per 6	2021-2026
2019 Saint-Joseph	£20	£120 per 6	2022-2028
2019 Seyssuel Kamaka	£35	£210 per 6	2022-2030
2019 Côte-Rôtie	£48	£288 per 6	2024-2035

Pictured: Graeme Bott of Domaine Bott.

Image kindly supplied by Domaine Graeme & Julie BOTT.



Condrieu

VIOGNIER

WHITE ONLY

This tiny appellation of just 260 hectares (of which less than 200 hectares is planted) is home to just one grape: Viognier. It is without a doubt where the variety reaches its fullest potential.

The vineyards are so steep here, that much is grown on stakes, and little in the vineyard is mechanised.

The granitic soils at the heart of the appellation around Chavanay produce wines with an explosive fruitiness, but also an intense minerality. Sandy and loess soils further down the slopes make a lighter, charming expression.

The 2019s are full, apricot-drenched, and wonderfully perfumed with white flowers and peaches. Great Condrieu can be spectacularly beautiful in its youth, but the best can age with grace, if you can resist their charms.



Domaine André Perret

André & Marie Perret

 @andre.perret

Mild mannered André Perret makes some of the appellation's finest examples. His Condrieus are appellation-defining wines, and have earned him loyal followers over the years.

His are prime examples of Condrieu that can age with great style. From the 2019 harvest onwards he is joined by his daughter, Marie, who is freshly back from globe-trotting adventures, making wines in Chile and California. She seems just as enthusiastic about their home appellation as her father.




They explained that in 2019 it was vitally important to pick quickly in Condrieu. Viognier, if left unchecked, can reach woozy heights. André is happy that he can now leave Marie in charge of the cellar whilst he goes out to the vineyards at harvest, making sure their fruit arrives in its best condition.

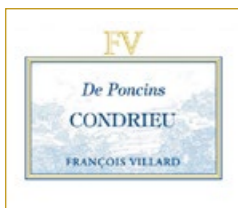
Their straight **Condrieu** is absolutely benchmark: rose scented, with some rich pineapple notes, and ginger spice. Intense but light-footed. And the **Coteau de Chéry** from 70 year old vines is a full-bodied, dramatic, and spectacularly good wine in 2019.

They also have five hectares of vines in St Joseph from which they produce a few wines, including **Saint-Joseph Les Grisières** which comes from old vines grown on the steep slopes in the north of the appellation. It is dark, hedgerow-scented, slightly wild and completely delicious.

And finally, 2019 is the second, and sadly last iteration of their **Vin de France**. It comes from a plot of very old (100 years+) vines found just 200m from the appellation boundary of St Joseph. It is a blend of local varieties like Marsanne, Roussanne and Viognier, with the striking addition of a Savoyard grape variety: Jacquère. Usually, this variety is found on the Alpine slopes, and makes salty, mineral, vibrantly high-acid wines.

Virtually extinct in the region now, it had once been planted here and there in the Northern Rhône, often used to make sweet wines. These old vines might be some of the last that remain. The vineyard belongs to an elderly neighbour who wants to build a house up there. André has pleaded with her to reconsider, but to no avail. And so, 2019 is the last in this short, but brilliant series, of unusual, but unusually good, white Vin de France wines made by the Perrets. The 2019 is lower in alcohol and lighter in body than the 2018, with a distinctly salty twist thanks to the Jacquère.

	 Bottle	 Case	 Drink
2019 Vin de France	£14	£84 per 6	2021-2025
2019 Condrieu	£29	£174 per 6	2021-2027
2019 Condrieu Coteau de Chéry	£36.50	£219 per 6	2021-2030
2019 Saint-Joseph Les Grisières	£21	£126 per 6	2022-2030



Domaine François Villard

François Villard

@villard.francois

This is the story of a self-made man. That his name is now a reference point for top class Condrieu is testament to his hard work, vision, and skill.

His parents were farmers, and he grew up around 30km east of Condrieu. He first trained as a cook, ending up working in the hospital kitchen in Vienne. Not, perhaps, the most auspicious start.

But whilst cooking here he used his spare time to do his sommelier exams, and was soon head over heels for the world of wine, spending every spare moment visiting growers and tasting wines.

In 1988 he bought some land in Condrieu. He says you could buy amazing sites back then for next to nothing. By the following year he had planted his first two hectares, and since then has never looked back.

He now has over 40 hectares of vines, with 7.5 in Condrieu, from which he makes four cuvées. They are some of the most focussed, pure and complex expressions of the appellation.

He has been practicing organic viticulture for many years, but has only recently applied for certification.

Condrieu Les Terrasses du Palat is a blend of parcels around Chavanay and Vérin. It is the fruitiest, most approachable Condrieu that François makes.

Le Grand Vallon, meanwhile, comes from parcels in the south of the appellation, in St Pierre de Boeuf. The east/north-east aspect makes this site cooler than many, and its granite and gneiss soils adds superb mineral tension to the wine.

The **DePoncins** is in Saint-Michel-sur-Rhône, just south of Château Grillet, where the quartzite mica-schist soils make wines of length and finesse.

These wines tread the fine line between richness and freshness with poise and panache.

	£ Bottle	Case	Drink
2019 Condrieu Les Terrasses du Palat	£28.50	£171 per 6	2021-2026
2019 Condrieu Le Grand Vallon	£32	£192 per 6	2021-2027
2019 Condrieu DePoncins	£35	£210 per 6	2021-2027



Saint-Joseph

🍇 SYRAH, ROUSSANNE, MARSANNE

🍷 RED & WHITE

Saint-Joseph is one of the longest, narrowest appellations in France. It runs around 50km, from Chavanay in the north, to Guilhaud in the south. Or effectively, from Condrieu in the north to Cornas in the south. Around the towns of Tournon and Tain the landscape is dramatic, as St Joseph and Hermitage face each other down across the river.

It's arguably one of the fastest improving appellations in France right now, home to a host of high quality producers intent on raising its status.

Much of the appellation is so steep it is terraced. Given how hard the granite soils are to work here, it's remarkable how well-priced the wines remain.



Domaine Courbis

Laurent & Dominique Courbis

📷 @domainecourbis

Winemaking has been the Courbis family's life, and business, since 1587, according to patriarch Maurice. But it wasn't until 1980 that the family began bottling the wines under their own name.

Today, Maurice's sons, Laurent (the winemaker) and Dominique (who tends to the vines), make wines in five appellations. The domaine is situated in Saint-Joseph, from which they make the gorgeous **Saint-Joseph La Cotte Sud**: silky and refined, with a beautiful dark fruit centre.

Their **Cornas** cuvées are, though, perhaps the most interesting part of this domaine. Fragrant, floral, fruity, and refined, the **Champelrose** is a compelling blend from the granite slopes at the heart of the appellation. It is exceptionally good value.

The two single vineyard wines produced in limited quantities, **Les Eygats** and **La Sabarotte**, step up the intensity and precision, with new oak to support the beautiful fruit.

The grapes are all fully destemmed, and the wines' style is silky and ripe. Laurent is another winemaker who spoke of the importance of picking quickly in 2019. Their tactics have paid off: these are delicious wines.

The modern, polished style of Domaine Courbis belies the historic roots of the family, and it has long been considered one of the top concerns in the Northern Rhône. It is the perfect example of modern vinification meeting classic viticulture and *terroir*.

	£ Bottle	🍷 Case	🍷 Drink
2019 Cornas Champelrose	£22.50	£135 per 6	2021-2030
2019 Saint Joseph Les Royes	£24	£144 per 6	2022-2030
2019 Saint Joseph La Cotte Sud	£28	£168 per 6	2022-2031
2019 Cornas Les Eygats	£33	£198 per 6	2023-2034
2019 Cornas La Sabarotte	£43	£258 per 6	2023-2036



Domaine des Pierres Sèches

Sylvain Gauthier

@sylvain.gauthier07

Sylvain Gauthier is a Northern Rhône rising star. He trained in Beaune and worked at Domaine de Tunnel and Chapoutier before establishing his own domaine in 2007, high above the river valley in Cheminas.

Investment, expansion, and dedication to quality are all running full steam ahead at this domaine. He christened his new cellar with the 2019 vintage, and has added a number of single vineyard cuvées to the range.

His **Saint-Joseph** is a blend of many parcels dotted around the southern end of the appellation. Sylvain intelligently handles his fruit: the young vine bunches are destemmed, while the older vines' stems are kept intact, combining them to produce a highly juicy, perfumed style.

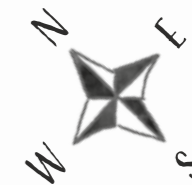
Saint-Joseph Revirand Vieilles Vignes is a new cuvée in 2019, made from 50+ year old vines grown on a south-facing slope. It has a salty grip, and expresses the purity of fruit that Syrah is capable of in the best hands. Elegant and structured for the long-haul.

His **Saint-Joseph Blanc** is a breath of fresh air: he blocks the malolactic fermentation to keep the freshness, and the wine has a salty length and a balanced frame.

There is an exciting determination at this young domaine. The future is bright.

	🍷 Bottle	🍷🍷 Case	🍷 Drink
2019 Saint-Joseph Blanc	£22	£132 per 6	2021-2027
2019 Saint-Joseph	£23	£138 per 6	2021-2028
2019 Saint-Joseph Revirand Vieilles Vignes	£35	£210 per 6	2022-2030

Hermitage



🍇 SYRAH, ROUSSANNE, MARSANNE

🍷 RED & WHITE

When we look at price lists from the turn of the century at Lay & Wheeler, Hermitage rivals that of the Bordelais First Growths as the most expensive. Whilst Bordeaux price increases have since been vertiginous, Hermitage has risen gently over the years, and in comparison now offers some of the best value for truly fine wine on the market.

Its quality is most clearly understood in its immense ageing ability. These wines often deserve decades in bottle.

The appellation has just 136 hectares of vines (versus, for example, Château Lafite, which is nearly 100 hectares alone). It is split into 20 different *lieux-dits*, many of which are vinified and bottled separately. It is here that many argue Syrah reaches its zenith.

The small amount of whites made on the famous hill are world-class wines; rich and powerful, they are serious wines that capture *terroir* and vintage character with singular brilliance.





M. Chapoutier

Michel Chapoutier

@m_chapoutier

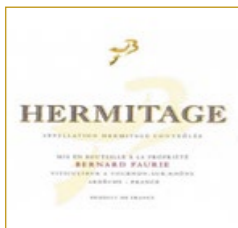
Chapoutier is a behemoth of the Northern Rhône. Yet in spite of its size, Michel Chapoutier has maintained the soaring quality here without compromise.

Michel took over the family business in 1988, and quality began to accelerate upwards as fast as the domaine grew in size.

As well as expanding around his base in Tain l'Hermitage, he has also added holdings in the south of France, Alsace and Australia. Yet in spite of the domaine's size, Michel still apparently tastes every sample, flown in from around the world to his home.

He is now joined by daughter Mathilde to help share the work. Their **Ermitage** wines, both red and white, remain some of the most sought-after and highly respected in the appellation, and the 2019s have already seen huge demand since their release last year.

	£ Bottle	Case	Drink
2019 Ermitage Le Méal Blanc	£121	£726 per 6	2021-2032
2019 Ermitage Les Greffieux	£86	£516 per 6	2025-2040
2019 Ermitage Le Pavillon	£184	£1,104 per 6	2025-2042
2019 Ermitage l'Ermitage	£205	£1,230 per 6	2026-2045



Domaine Bernard Faurie

Bernard Faurie

Bernard Faurie is the *vigneron* who can't retire. Every year he mentions this might be his last. Indeed, he handed over most of his vineyards to his daughter years ago.

But out of his humble cellar in Tournon, which can only fit a few barrels, he continues to craft one of the most soulful and exciting wines on our list.

Some of his vines are over 100 years old now, and he makes the wine just the way three generations before him have. His **Hermitage Cuvée Assemblage** is a blend of Greffieux, Méal, and Bessards. It always displays a playful floral aroma from barrel, with violets and spiced cassis fruit. But Bernard says his Syrahs like to have some age, and this will need a few years in the cellar before approaching.

It will be well worth it when you do.

	£ Bottle	Case	Drink
2019 Hermitage, Cuvée Assemblage	£60	£360 per 6	2024-2045



Maison Paul Jaboulet Aîné

Caroline Frey

@caroline_frey

Jaboulet's vinous history stretches back centuries, and its flagship wine, **Hermitage La Chapelle**, is an icon.

After generations in the Jaboulet family, this venerable house was bought by the Frey family in 2006, proprietors of Bordeaux Third Growth Château La Lagune and Champagne's Billecart-Salmon.

It wasn't clear when the acquisition took place whether this was the beginning of the end, or a new start. After decades of supremacy, La Chapelle had slipped down the leaderboard in the late 1990s and early 2000s: an outstanding old *terroir* that was underperforming.

But under Caroline Frey's management, the Jaboulet name, and **La Chapelle** in particular, have returned to the top table where they belong.

All 120 hectares of the domaine holdings are organically certified, and Caroline is increasingly using biodynamic treatments. She believes it helps enormously with soil health and moisture, which is becoming an increasing concern with every dry vintage that roasts the steep slopes of Hermitage.

Sadly their **Crozes-Hermitage** plots were badly hit by hail in June, and so **Domaine du Thalabert** is only running at around 25% of normal production, which is a shame given what a bargain it always is.

But the better news is, 2019 has produced Hermitage wines of density and purity, with delicious fruit juiciness and gorgeously fluid, silky tannins.

The secret to success in 2019 was speed. Caroline saw that the maturity of the grapes was climbing steeply at harvest time. She enlisted more pickers than ever before, and a team of 100+ were sent out to save the vintage.

She rented large cold-store fridges, usually used by local farmers for their fruit before market. The grapes were stored here overnight. This meant the berries reached the tanks in a chilled and pristine condition, but more importantly, meant the pickers could go as quickly as possible: there was no bottleneck at the winery for processing fruit as it came in.

It was all over in 15 days. That is quite a remarkable feat, considering the number of parcels, the steepness of the slopes, and the high temperatures the pickers endured in 2019. And hats off to them: the 2019s are outstanding.

It is a hard won and stunning success story.

	£ Bottle	Case	Drink
2019 Crozes-Hermitage, 'Domaine de Thalabert'	£	£ per 6	2022-2030
2019 Crozes-Hermitage, 'Domaine de Roure'	££	££ per 6	2022-2033
2019 Hermitage, 'La Maison Bleue'	££	££ per 6	2024-2034
2019 Hermitage, 'La Chapelle'	££££	££££ per 6	2025-2050



Domaine Marc Sorrel

Guillaume Sorrel

The Sorrels have Hermitage running in their veins. Marc Sorrel made excellent wines from his superbly situated parcels on the legendary hillside throughout his career, with a well-deserved reputation for producing some of the finest, and longest-lived wines of the appellation.

His son, Guillaume, joined him for many years of fruitful collaboration. 2019 marks Guillaume's first vintage going solo after his father's retirement.

It is clear he's adapting to the challenges of increasingly warm years with small changes in the vineyard, and the 2019s show these wines are on an upward trajectory. In these conditions, working the soils is essential to keep them moist. This saw the high proportion of old vines finish out the season in style, particularly after the very welcome early August rain.

The reds are all made with 100% whole bunch fruit, and make for profound Syrahs with big structures and powerful intensity. The whites have an oily density and a rich length.

The **Crozes-Hermitages** are a brilliant introduction to Guillaume's style. The **Hermitage Rouge Classique** is a step up, with a fine balance but a powerful, dark, and decadent length.

Although only produced in only tiny quantities, the rich and waxy **Hermitage Blanc** and **Les Rocoules** are worth seeking out. They are both made from 100% Marsanne from very old vines.

Le Gréal is the flagship and the pinnacle of the estate. It comes from 100-year old vines, farmed organically, in two of the Hermitage hillside's greatest spots. 90% comes from Le Méal, with the rest coming from Les Gréffieux, there's also 10% coplanted Marsanne in the blend, which adds elegance and floral lift.

Guillaume's first solo vintage sees him starting from an already high bar. He intends on raising it even higher, as he shifts this domaine up a gear with the 2019s. Powerful, textured, ageworthy, and intense.

	£ Bottle	Case	Drink
2019 Crozes-Hermitage Blanc	£27	£162 per 6	2021-2026
2019 Hermitage Blanc	£79.50	£477 per 6	2022-2032
2019 Hermitage Blanc Les Rocoules	£137.50	£825 per 6	2022-2035
2019 Crozes-Hermitage Rouge	£24	£144 per 6	2022-2030
2019 Hermitage Rouge Classique	£79.50	£477 per 6	2023-2035
2019 Hermitage Le Gréal	£137.50	£825 per 6	2025-2050



Maison Delas Frères

Claire Darnaud

Delas is one of the most prolific producers of the Northern Rhône. It was formed in 1835 and has steadily grown to produce wines from almost every appellation in the region.

In the 1970s it merged with Champagne Deutz, and both were subsequently bought by Louis Roederer in 1993. Claire Darnaud joined as technical director in 2010 and has steered the wines to great heights over the past ten years.

They own 30 hectares of their own vines, which are farmed organically, including 10 hectares in Hermitage and 18 hectares in Crozes-Hermitage. They also buy grapes through many long-standing contracts with like-minded growers to bolster their production.

Claire is a master of her craft: she is careful never to use more than 40% new oak, her wines are some of the most refined you'll find around here

Amongst her whites, the **Condrieu Clos Boucher** is a favourite. It comes from a site very near to Château Grillet, and shows great opulence and purity, but at a fraction of the price of its famous neighbour. **Hermitage Blanc Domaines des Tourettes** comes from three superbly well-placed plots: L'Ermite, La Tourette and Le Sabot.

They offer very good value in **Hermitage Domaine des Tourettes** and for a step up, there's the superb **Hermitage Les Bessards**, a powerful Syrah from the vineyard's granite soils.

But the sweetest spot on this list is their **Crozes-Hermitages: Domaine des Grands Chemins** for no-nonsense, great value, fruit-driven Syrah, and **Le Clos** for an amplified fragrant style.

	£ Bottle	Case	Drink
2019 Condrieu Clos Boucher	£44	£264 per 6	2021-2025
2019 Hermitage Blanc Domaine des Tourettes	£59	£354 per 6	2021-2032
2019 Crozes-Hermitage, Domaine des Grands Chemins	£22	£132 per 6	2021-2029
2019 Crozes-Hermitage Le Clos	£33	£198 per 6	2023-2034
2019 Hermitage Domaine des Tourettes	£53	£318 per 6	2024-2037
2019 Hermitage Les Bessards	£116	£696 per 6	2025-2029
2019 Côte-Rôtie La Landonne	£141	£846 per 6	2025-2039

Crozes-Hermitage

SYRAH, ROUSSANNE, MARSANNE
RED & WHITE

Crozes-Hermitage is one of the most commercially successful appellations of the Rhône. It is relatively large (around ten times the size of Hermitage), produces both red and white wines, and offers excellent value.

Crozes surrounds Hermitage on three sides (the fourth is the Rhône river itself). And whilst it does undeniably offer good value, it is not a uniform appellation, and picking your way carefully is wise.

June 2019 brought a vicious hail storm to the region, and vast swathes of it were badly hampered, although those vineyards closest to Hermitage itself got off more lightly. Volumes of some cuvée are therefore considerably down on usual.



Domaine Alain Graillet
Alain, Maxime & Antoine Graillet

Alain Graillet is one of the most respected winemakers working in the Rhône today, and his delicious, food-friendly wines have been restaurant-list favourites for years.

Before establishing his own domaine he had trained with Jacques Seysses at Domaine Dujac in Burgundy. He brought back ideas and techniques for crafting beautifully evocative wines from the Syrahs of his home region, when he established the domaine in 1985.

Since 2008 his sons Maxime and Antoine have joined him, and together they continue to deliver on Alain's vision: to produce wines that are at once exceptional quality, but that remain sensibly-priced. They produce a small amount of wine in Saint-Joseph and Hermitage, but it is without doubt their **Crozes-Hermitage** that captures this aim the best.

After an absence, it's great to have this domaine back on the list.

🍷 Bottle 🍷🍷 Case 🍷 Drink

2019 Crozes-Hermitage

£20

£240 per 12

2021-2029



Domaine du Colombier

Florent & David Viale

Brother Florent and David own nearly 17 hectares in the Northern Rhône. The family has grown grapes since the start of the twentieth century, but used to sell all the fruit from Hermitage to Guigal and all their Crozes-Hermitage to Ogier.

Since 1991 they have been bottling their own wines and over the past three decades the style has evolved. Today the brothers are making some very stylish wines these days that are particularly good value.

The style is for quite meaty, muscular Syrah, with plenty of fruit underneath. The whites are well balanced, and the low amount of new oak used at the address means the wines have a very natural fruit expression.

The brothers do make a straight **Crozes-Hermitage** in both colours, but we dive straight in with their Cuvée Gaby, which is a selection of their favourite *tonneaux* (the large format barrels they like to use for ageing).

Both their **Hermitage** blanc and rouge are some of the best value on the market, and lack none of the punch you'd expect from this lauded appellation.

	£ Bottle	Case	Drink
2019 Crozes-Hermitage Blanc, Cuvée Gaby	£21	£126 per 6	2021-2027
2019 Hermitage Blanc	£46	£276 per 6	2022-2032
2019 Crozes-Hermitage, Cuvée Gaby	£21	£126 per 6	2021-2029
2019 Hermitage	£45	£270 per 6	2023-2034



Domaine Rousset

Stéphane Rousset

Stéphane's grandfather started this domaine in 1956. A large sign on the road points to 'Cave Rousset' making it sound like it might be a *négociant* or co-operative.

But the truth couldn't be further from it; this is an old-fashioned family domaine, with a very old-fashioned sign, it turns out.

Stéphane is the tenth generation of *vignerons* in his family, and has worked alongside his father, Robert, for many years. Domaine Rousset remains a small affair, with just 11 hectares, a smattering of which lie in St Joseph, but the heart of which lies in Crozes-Hermitage.

Their classic **Crozes-Hermitage Rouge** comes from vineyards between 120-300 metres high, and delivers wonderfully crunchy fruit, and a lively freshness, whilst the famous south-facing schist-terraced **Les Picaudières** produces an age worthy, expressive, sumptuous wine.

The wines are all 100% destemmed and aged in a combination of stainless steel tanks and oak barrels. Fortunately for them, the hailstorm in June left them only lightly ruffled. It was most severe in the south of the appellation, and they are just north of Tain l'Hermitage, and so escaped the worst.

	£ Bottle	Case	Drink
2019 Crozes-Hermitage Rouge	£13.50	£81 per 6	2021-2028
2019 Crozes-Hermitage Les Picaudières	£18	£108 per 6	2022-2030

Cornas

SYRAH
RED ONLY

Cornas is the most southerly of the major Northern Rhône red appellations. It's out-dated reputation for rustic, tannic wines has been shed, and it has emerged as a source of seriously exciting Syrah.

It shares the granitic soils of further north, but with its slightly warmer microclimate, the reds continue to be powerful wines. Abandoned parcels have been brought back from the dead since the 1980s, and high altitude plantations are now coming into their own in warmer years. Modern-day Cornas is Syrah to get excited about.

Winemaking and viticulture here outpaces prices; and now the vineyards have been rejuvenated, it's clear the *terroir* is superb quality: in short, these are brilliant wines for the money.



Domaine Alain Vogé

Lionel Fraisse

@domainealainvoge

It was with great sadness we learned that Alain passed away in autumn 2020. Although he had long since handed over responsibility to Albéric Mazoyer, and then Lionel Fraisse in 2018, he remained at the heart and soul of the domaine.

It was his home, and he passed through the vineyards and cellar everyday. 2019 was the last vintage he participated in, and it is clear the domaine's team feels his loss keenly

It is no exaggeration to say that he helped re-establish the appellations of Cornas and Saint-Péray on the international wine scene. It wasn't just the hard work and skill he exerted during his career that helped establish the domaine, but Lionel explains that his foresight has given it a bright future.

Alain planted vines at high altitudes in Cornas which had previously been declassified into Côtes du Rhône blends, but now, with maturity and warmer temperatures, are blended into **Cornas Les Chaïlles** - one the estate's signature wines. The rest of the blend comes from the lower slopes at the heart of Cornas. It is a fruit-driven style with density and finesse.

The other signature cuvée is **Cornas Les Vieilles Vignes**, which as the name suggests, comes from old vines which are planted further up the slope (from 250-400m). Small amounts of whole bunch fruit add freshness and silkiness.

2019 is so highly rated at the domaine that it was an easy decision for them to make **Les Vieilles Fontaines**, which comes from their favourite *lieux dits*. In weaker vintages it is blended into the Vieilles Vignes, but in years like 2019 it is given the spotlight.

Alongside their impressive reds, the domaine makes wonderful still whites from Marsanne. **Saint-Péray Ongrie** is a mouth-watering white, with Marsanne's satisfying and refreshing bitterness matched to fresh, ripe fruit.

Their pithy sparkling wine, **Les Bulles d'Alain**, is unlike anything else we have on our list. It is lively, dry, refreshing, and refined. If you're in the mood for bubbles, but don't want the weight of a Champagne, this is the perfect option, and a smart price too.

	£ Bottle	Case	Drink
2016 Saint-Péray, Bulles d'Alain (Sparkling)	£18	£108 per 6	2021-2025
2019 Saint-Péray, Ongrie	£23.50	£141 per 6	2021-2026
2019 Cornas Les Chaïlles	£30	£180 per 6	2022-2032
2019 Cornas, Les Vieilles Vignes	£45	£270 per 6	2023-2035
2019 Cornas, Les Vieilles Fontaines	£73	£438 per 6	2024-2040



Domaine Thierry Allemand

Thierry Allemand

This quiet, humble vigneron has earned cult status for his profoundly soulful Cornas. He is one of the few living winemakers who can genuinely be referred to as a legend.

The domaine is small, less than five hectares, and the low yields means only tiny volumes are released. With insatiable demand from the market these low-interventionist wines are rare to have first access to.

His Cornas **Les Chaillots** and **Reynard** 2018s will be released later this year.

Saint-Péray

🍷 ROUSSANNE, MARSANNE

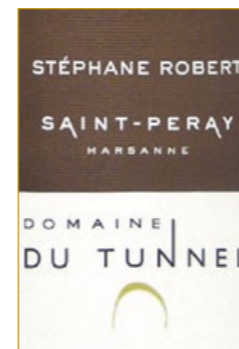
🍷 WHITE ONLY

Saint-Péray is somewhat of a hidden gem.

It is small in size (under 90 hectares), and until recently was regarded as a source of simple sparkling wines and little else.

But in the past decade the appellation's dry white wines have given us a very good reason to turn here.

The soils here are a combination of granite and limestone, and the wines carry that pithy, chalky freshness of calcareous soil in their lively, elegantly structured bodies.



Domaine du Tunnel

Stéphane Robert

This is a hotly tipped domaine. Stéphane Robert is rightly regarded as a rising star amongst top class Rhône producers, and his wines have caught the eye of many wine critics.

He only started his domaine in 1996, beginning in his mid-twenties and slowly added parcels over the years. He now has ten hectares of his own vines, in Cornas, Saint-Péray and Saint-Joseph.

The domaine is named after the James-Bond like cellar, which is found in a converted railway tunnel. It is spread over two levels, meaning much of the work in the cellar can be done by gravity.

The whites, such as the **Saint-Péray Marsanne** and **Roussanne** are detailed expressions of each variety. The **Saint-Péray Cuvée Prestige** comes from 100 year old Marsanne vines and 40-50 year old Roussanne vines, whilst the **Pur Blanc** is a single parcel of Marsanne vines.

Stéphane describes the reds in 2019 as “rich, integrated, mineral, and expressive”. The fruit had reached perfect maturity at harvest time. He has 18 parcels in Cornas, which he vinifies all separately. 15 are blended into the classic **Cornas**, and three go into the **Vin Noir**: 100-year-old vines in Champelrose, Eygats, and Combe.

Pur Noir is only ever a single parcel, and only ever made in the best years. The parcel changes each time, depending on his preference. In 2019 it is drawn from Eygats, and only three barrels were made.

His **Saint-Joseph** is in short supply, but if you can secure some you'll find it is one of the finest examples. What Stéphane describes as “gourmand”.

Stéphane's wines have a fruity intensity, unadorned by oak influence. They are some of the most *terroir*-expressive wines on the list, and deserve every bit of hype they now enjoy.

	🍷 Bottle	🍷 Case	🍷 Drink
2019 Saint-Péray Marsanne	£19	£114 per 6	2021-2026
2019 Saint-Péray Roussanne	£24	£144 per 6	2021-2028
2019 Saint-Péray Cuvée Prestige	£25.50	£153 per 6	2021-2028
2019 Saint-Péray Pur Blanc	£35	£210 per 6	2022-2032
2019 Saint-Joseph	£27	£162 per 6	2021-2028
2019 Cornas	£34	£204 per 6	2022-2034
2019 Cornas Vin Noir	£45	£270 per 6	2023-2036
2019 Cornas Pur Noir	£92	£552 per 6	2025-2040

Southern Rhône

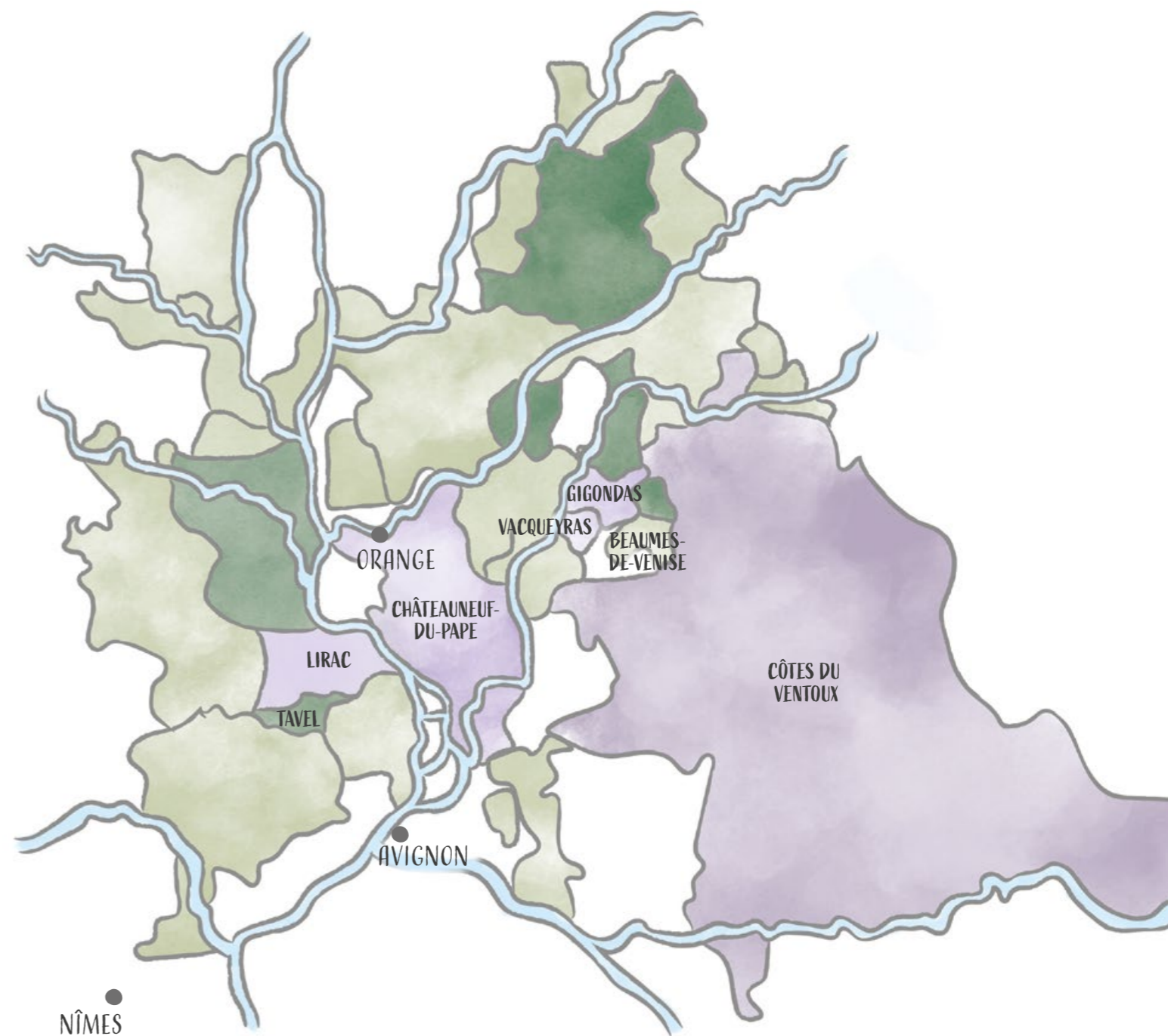
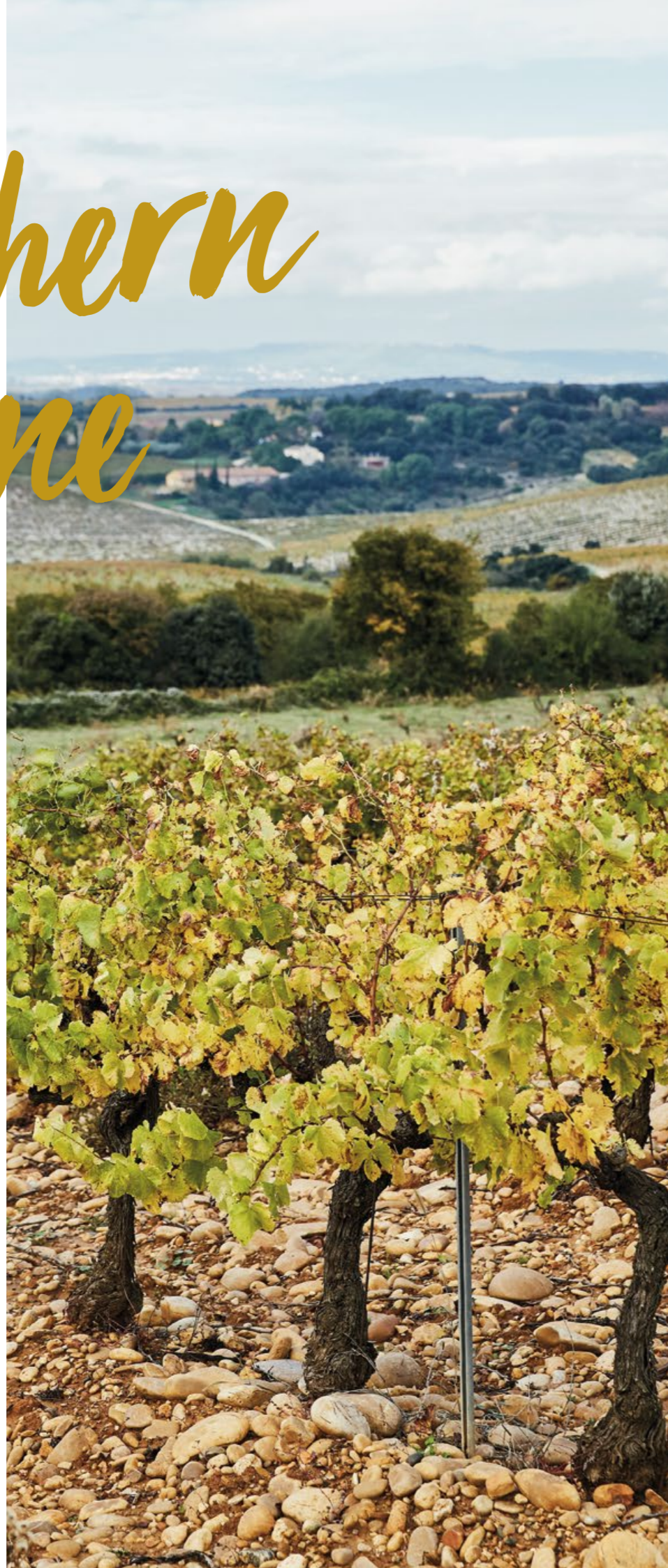
Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Vacqueyras, Gigondas: these are just some of the wonderful wines made in the Southern Rhône.

It is also home to the vast majority of **Côtes du Rhône** wines, which are sourced from the vineyards that expand outwards as the river approaches the Mediterranean Sea.

The Impressionist movement found the scenery here an infinite source of inspiration. The landscape is dotted with picturesque villages and dreams of our unlikely summer holidays this year.

The warm Mediterranean climate is perfect for the heat-loving Grenache, and essential for late ripening varieties like Mourvèdre. The surprisingly diverse topography means a wide range of styles if made here. The high altitude rugged vineyards of the **Côtes de Ventoux** off to the east and the pebble-strewn gentle hills of **Lirac** that lie on the right bank of the river couldn't be more different.

Yet the wines of the region do share that sun-kissed sweetness of ripe fruit, rich bodies, and robust tannins in common. They also share in common brilliant value for money. Even the top wines of Châteauneuf are modest in comparison to prices seen in other comparable appellations further north in France.



Châteauneuf-du-Pape

🍷 GRENACHE, MOURVÈDRE, CINSAULT, COUNOISE, SYRAH, PIQUEPOUL NOIR, TERRET NOIR, BRUN ARGENTÉ (LOCALLY KNOWN AS 'VACCARÈSE'), MUSCARDIN, BOURBOULENC, CLAIRETTE, CLAIRETTE ROSE, GRENACHE BLANC, GRENACHE GRIS, PICARDAN, PIQUEPOUL BLANC, PIQUEPOUL GRIS, ROUSSANNE

🍷 RED & WHITE

This is one of the most famous and recognisable appellations in France, with its gnarled old bush vines and pudding stone pebbles.

The wines, in their distinctive embossed bottles, are admired for their deep fruited baroque structures, often built around Grenache, but with any number of the 18 permitted varieties in their blend to temper that variety's natural exuberance. With bottle age the wines develop leather, spice and dried fruit characters.

The best are ripe yet refined, and offer the most elegant tannins in the Southern Rhône. It's a large appellation, and home to thousands of producers. We work with a shortlist of our favourites: some well-known names whose wines are reference points for the appellation, and some others you'll only find here. Each has its own style and appeal.

The 2019 Châteauneufs have already caused a buzz with the critics, and it's shaping up to go down as one of the best recent vintages in the region, with wines built for the long term.



Domaine Giraud

Marie & François Giraud

@domaine_giraud

Sister and brother team Marie and François make some of the more elegant and charming Châteauneufs on our list.

The family can trace their history in Châteauneuf back over many centuries, but the domaine itself was only established relatively recently by their parents. Pierre and Mireille had started working some vineyards in the mid-1970s, but sold their grapes to the local co-operative until 1998 when they started bottling the wines themselves.

Since Marie and François joined them, and then took over, the domaine has come on leaps and bounds. The vines are carefully debudded early in the spring to make sure yields remain low, and the fruit is now all destemmed and carefully sorted at the winery (things Marie says her father thinks are crazy, but then who also can't deny how improved the wines now are).

They have been certified organic since 2008, and the old vine roots dig down six to seven metres into the soils. Ten years ago they bought some vines in neighbouring Lirac, the other side of the river from Châteauneuf, which Marie describes as being 45-minutes-by-tractor away. It's the only mode of transport she uses to get there, so the only measure she can give.

This wine is so juicy and vibrant. Its 60 year old vines grown in sandy soils produce a bright, fresh, aromatic red, lighter in body than some Southern Rhône's. Superb value, and everything you want from an everyday red.

In Châteauneuf itself, they make a super blended wine, **Châteauneuf-du-Pape Tradition**, drawn from 50-80 year old vines grown across the various soil types found in the appellation. There is so much freshness and energy in this 2019, bursting with salty red berries.

Les Gallimardes comes from the southern part of the appellation, from vines well over 100 years old grown in the iconic pudding stone vineyards. Marie commented that the old vines are coping particularly well with the hot dry summers, with the deep roots still able to access water even in a drought. It wasn't made in 2018, but is back in style in 2019.

Les Grenaches de Pierre is another top cuvée, named in honour of their father, made from vines planted in 1901 in the sandy soils next to Château Rayas. It is as good as it sounds.

	£ Bottle	£ Case	Drink
2019 Lirac	£13	£78 per 6	2021-2026
2019 Châteauneuf-du-Pape Tradition	£26.50	£159 per 6	2022-2032
2019 Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Les Gallimardes	£57	£342 per 6	2023-2035
2019 Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Les Grenaches de Pierre	£60	£360 per 6	2023-2035



Domaine Bois de Boursan

Jean-Paul Versino

The domaine has been in the hands of the Italian Versino family since 1955, with third generation Jean-Paul now at the helm.

He takes great pride in continuing to create classic, traditional Châteauneuf-du-Pape, with the belief that vinifying with stems and ageing the wine for extended periods in large oak *foudres* gives his wine its unique character.

As a result, Bois de Boursan is an exemplary old-school Châteauneuf, particularly his **Châteauneuf-du-Pape Tradition** cuvée. There is nothing flashy or opulent here, just wines with great character. **Cuvée Félix** is a blend of the estate's oldest vines, and includes 30% Mourvèdre in the blend.

£ Bottle 🍷 Case 🍷 Drink

2019 Châteauneuf-du-Pape £21 £126 per 6 2022-2032

2019 Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Cuvée Félix £41 £246 per 6 2023-2035



Domaine La Barroche

Laetitia & Julien Barrot

@domainelaborroche

Domaine La Barroche is one of a host of impressive Châteauneuf-du-Pape producers who have emerged on the scene here over the past few decades.

Ironically, it's also one of the oldest properties, though it wasn't until the Barrot family purchased it in the 1970s that its future changed course.

It was when Julien Barrot took over in 2002 that things started to look up. He and his charming sister Laetitia have since cultivated it into one of the most successful estates in the Southern Rhône.

They have 15 hectares in Châteauneuf-du-Pape with an average vine age of 65 years. But from lesser-known Châteauneuf-de-Gadagne, just to the south, they make the irreverent **Liberty**, unconstrained by any of Châteauneuf's restrictions, which is peppery and fragrant.

Laetitia describes the 2019 Châteauneuf-du-Papes as rich and tannic, with tobacco and leather aromas already emerging in their complex profiles. This is certainly the case in **Cuvée Julien Barrot** (until recently called 'Signature').

Pure comes from one-hundred-year-old Grenache vines planted in the sandy soils near Château Rayas. In 2019 it has intense minerality and saltiness.

£ Bottle 🍷 Case 🍷 Drink

2019 Liberty £16 £96 per 6 2021-2029

2019 Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Cuvée Julien Barrot £30 £180 per 6 2022-2032

2019 Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Pure £80 £480 per 6 2024-2035





Domaine du Vieux Télégraphe

Daniel and Frédéric Brunier

@vieuxtelegraphe

This venerable estate has long been seen as a benchmark of the appellation.

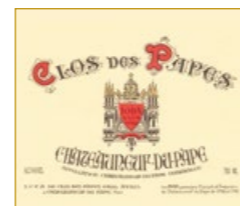
Brothers Daniel and Frédéric Brunier took over the family domaine from father Henri. Their prized parcel on La Crau is considered one of the top sites in the region. It is on a small rise, between Châteauneuf du Pape, Bédarrides and Courthézon. Its soil is carpeted in the famous *galets roulés* (pudding stones), which insulate the vines and aid drainage.

The **Vieux Télégraphe Châteauneuf-du-Pape** is one of the most traditional and classically styled, and a huge success story in 2019. There is an uncommon complexity about its aroma, that encompasses sweet red fruits, but also dried herbs and spices.

Piedlong, meanwhile, comes from the highest point of the appellation. This wine can sometimes feel a little earthy and rustic, but this 2019 it is pure finesse, with sweet strawberry fruit and silky tannins. It's a strong contender for the best price to quality ratio on the list.

2019 is a terrific year for this estate.

	£ Bottle	Case	Drink
2019 Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Piedlong, Frédéric et Daniel Brunier	£29	£174 per 6	2022-2032
2019 Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Domaine du Vieux Télégraphe	£39.50	£237 per 6	2023-2035



Domaine du Clos des Papes

Vincent Avril

@paulvincentavril

Clos des Papes is at once quintessentially Châteauneuf, and also completely unique. It is for that reason it is regarded so highly, not just amongst fans of the appellation, but by fine wine drinkers around the world.

Vincent follows his father, and grandfather before him, at this superb estate. He studied in Beaune, and trained at Château Mouton-Rothschild before returning home to Clos des Papes. 2019 will be his 34th vintage at the domaine.

His unwavering commitment to the highest standards (he won't let anyone else do the winemaking) is the secret to his success. His style is to work with low yields in the vineyards, completely destem the fruit, co-ferment varieties, and age exclusively in old oak *foudres*.

He is a passionate vinophile. It is impossible to visit without Vincent opening old vintages, inviting you for lunch, and spending hours discussing all his favourite wines from around the world. His personal cellar is a treasure trove of delights, and great wines are clearly a source of huge pleasure for him.

It is testament to his skills that his own wines make up the treasures of many other collectors' cellars.

He is uninterested in creating super cuvées, or even in isolating single parcels. Instead, he makes just one red and one white, which he considers the best expression of this appellation.

His **Châteauneuf-du-Pape Blanc** is fruity and floral in youth, but will develop a nutty, salty, savoury intensity with age. And his **Châteauneuf-du-Pape Rouge** is an outstanding wine, one of the most complex and nuanced you will find. They have already met with huge demand and only a few bottles of each remain.

	£ Bottle	Case	Drink
2019 Châteauneuf-du-Pape Blanc	£46	£276 per 6	2022-2036
2019 Châteauneuf-du-Pape	£59	£354 per 6	2023-2038
2019 Châteauneuf-du-Pape (magnums)	£121	£363 per 3	2024-2040



Famille Perrin

Jean-Pierre et François Perrin and family

@familleperrin

Château de Beaucastel is one of the most recognisable fine wines in the world.

The estate is famous for using all original 13 grape varieties permitted for Châteauneuf-du-Pape (those 13 were recently increased to 18), and for the high proportion of the late ripening Mourvèdre that makes up part of its blend.

The Perrin family makes truly superb wines from their 110 hectare vineyard situated in the north of the appellation. And their **Châteauneuf-du-Pape Blancs** are as worthy of attention as the reds, particularly the **Roussanne Vieilles Vignes**, which might just be the most famous wine in the Southern Rhône.

The Perrins make other wines in the surrounding appellations, and one of particular distinction is the **Gigondas, Domaine du Clos des Tourelles**, that stole the show in 2019. It comes from old Grenache vines planted in the heart of the village. It has gorgeously sweet, poised red fruits on the nose. It is an outstanding Gigondas, quite possibly my favourite Southern Rhône of the vintage.

	£ Bottle	Case	Drink
2019 Coudoulet de Beaucastel Blanc, Château de Beaucastel, Côtes du Rhône	£16	£192 per 12	2021-2026
2019 Châteauneuf-du-Pape Blanc, Château de Beaucastel	£49	£294 per 6	2022-2032
2019 Roussanne Vieilles Vignes, Château de Beaucastel	SOLD OUT		2023-2036
2019 Coudoulet de Beaucastel, Château de Beaucastel, Côtes du Rhône	SOLD OUT		2022-2030
2019 Gigondas, Domaine du Clos des Tourelles	£36.50	£219 per 6	2022-2032
2019 Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Château de Beaucastel	£47.50	£285 per 6	2023-2036



Domaine de la Vieille Julienne

Jean-Paul Daumen

@vieillejulienne

Jean-Paul Daumen is one of the finest winemakers we know, and one of the kindest, too. He possesses a philosophy of winemaking akin to that of an artist.

Unlike many neighbours, he won't sell the wines until they are in bottle, hence why this listing is one vintage behind the rest.

But it would be a mistake to overlook this biodynamic domaine because it is out of sync. These wines are made with an attention to detail that is manifestly clear in their balanced, supple, and charming frames. We love the Burgundian lilt in these sweetly scented Grenache-based wines.

For starters, there's the **Côtes du Rhône Lieu-dit Clavin**, which is so much more than your average Côtes du Rhône. It comes from the vines that surround the cellar, sitting just beyond the northern border of Châteauneuf.

His **Châteauneuf-du-Pape Les Trois Sources** and **Les Hauts-Lieux** are both well worth the wait. Hugely intense and perfumed, they will benefit from further ageing. And his **Cuvée Réserve** is one of the most sought-after wines in the region.

His 2018s are, of course, scarce. The vintage saw yields reduced by half thanks to the challenges of the growing season. But the resulting wines show none of this strife: they are confidently some of the finest on our list, and have already won huge praise from critics.

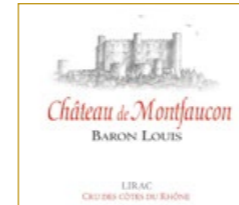
	£ Bottle	Case	Drink
2019 Côtes du Rhône Lieu-dit Clavin Blanc	£17.50	£105 per 6	2021-2025
2018 Côtes du Rhône Lieu-dit Clavin	£18.50	£111 per 6	2021-2030
2018 Châteauneuf-du-Pape Les Trois Sources	£45	£270 per 6	2024-2038
2018 Châteauneuf-du-Pape Les Hauts-Lieux	£59	£354 per 6	2024-2038
2018 Châteauneuf-du-Pape Cuvée Réserve	£199	£1,194 per 6	2024-2043

Lirac

🍇 CINSULT, GRENACHE, MOURVÈDRE, SYRAH, COUNOISE, CARIGNAN, BOURBOULENC, CLAIRETTE, GRENACHE BLANC, ROUSSANNE, AND MANY MORE

🍷 RED & WHITE

Lirac lies on the opposite side of the Rhône river from Châteauneuf-du-Pape. Its name was once associated with cheap, generic wines, but thanks to the industrious work of growers like Château de Montfaucon, the appellation is enjoying a boom. Indeed, many growers from neighbouring Châteauneuf have invested here seeing the quality of the wines far outpace the price of land, meaning it sits at a great point on the quality-price continuum.



Château de Montfaucon

Rodolphe de Pins

@chateaudemontfaucon

This domaine has one of the most fascinating histories of any we work with. Wine has been made here since the Roman era, and the beautiful chateau was built in the eleventh century. Current incumbent Rodolphe de Pins' great great uncle (Baron Louis) bought the estate in 1880, who in turn handed it down to his niece, Rodolphe's grandmother.

But the reason it sits on this list is due to its exciting present. Rodolphe took over in 1995 and has spent 25 years reestablishing the name of the domaine, and raising the reputation of the Lirac appellation along the way.

Rodolphe knew he wanted to take over the family domaine from an early age, and went about gaining the very best experience, working at Vieux Télégraphe and Henschke in Australia before coming back home.

Comtesse Madeleine is his brilliant white, based on Marsanne, grown on limestone, and Clairette, whose vines are an impressive 140-150 year old. It is salty and mineral, refreshing and charming.

Meanwhile **Baron Louis**, their flagship red, is a testament to Rodolphe's efforts to preserve local traditions and old rare varieties. The base is a classic 50% Grenache. But the other half is made up of floral Cinsault, powerful Mourvèdre, fresh Counoise, and fruity Carignan. The good value for money here cannot be overemphasized.

🍷 Bottle 🍷 Case 🍷 Drink

2019 Comtesse Madeleine, Lirac

£14

£84 per 6

2021-2025

2019 Baron Louis, Lirac

£15.50

£93 per 6

2022-2029

Gigondas

PRINCIPALLY GRENACHE, SYRAH AND MOURVÈDRE, THOUGH MANY OTHERS ARE PERMITTED

RED

This is an appellation on the move.

Its vinous history stretches back to the Roman era, but in living memory, it is only in the past ten years that its star has risen.

Not far from Châteauneuf-du-Pape, it unsurprisingly shares many common varieties with its famous neighbour. But its higher altitude and subsequently greater diurnal difference give these wines a dramatic intensity that mark them out. They somehow seem to reflect the dramatic landscape they are grown in, where the jagged Dentelles de Montmirail tower above the sun-drenched, wild terraces.



Domaine la Bouïssière

Thierry & Gilles Faravel

High up in the foothills of Les Dentelles de Montmirail, brothers Thierry and Gilles Faravel have one of the most wonderful vineyard sites in the appellation.

This really is a family business: the brothers run the vineyard and winery, their sister the accounts, and their 86 year old mother their small wine shop in the village. When Thierry's father founded the domaine in the 1960s he built what Thierry describes as a "camping cellar": the first winery had no walls. It was just two tanks under a shelter, with electricity.

Things have moved on since then and when the brothers joined the domaine in the late 1980s the business began to grow. The size remains manageable though, with 19 hectares under vine across Gigondas, Vacqueyras and Beaume de Venise.

It is unquestionably their **Gigondas** that we reach for year after year. The classic blend is the priority of the domaine. These were the first vineyards planted by Thierry's father in the 1960s, and in 2019 it has aromatic intensity and is peppered with the scent of wild strawberries and dried herbs.

The cherry on the cake is a cuvée only made in better years: **Gigondas Le Font de Tonin**, which comes from the old vines planted on high altitude terraces. It has a high proportion of Mourvèdre in the blend, and is a decadent and delicious Gigondas.

There is something wonderfully wild about these wines. They are so evocative of the untamed hills of Gigondas, the Mediterranean sun, and the dramatic landscape that inspired the Impressionists.

£ Bottle Case Drink

2019 Gigondas £18.50 £111 per 6 2022-2032

2019 Gigondas, Font de Tonin £29.50 £177 per 6 2024-2034



Domaine du Cayron

Delphine, Cendrine & Roseline Faraud

Nestled in the tiny village of Gigondas at the base of the Dentelles de Montmirail, Domaine du Cayron is run by the fifth generation of the Faraud family, sisters Delphine, Cendrine and Roseline.

Theirs is a traditional domaine, producing ageworthy wines which epitomise Gigondas. So it was a surprise that they moved to a pneumatic press in 2015, a small nod towards modernisation.

They only make one wine: **Gigondas**, from well-situated vines nurtured through genuine hard work in the vineyard. Neither fined nor filtered, it's a classic Gigondas.

£ Bottle Case Drink

2019 Gigondas £19 £114 per 6 2023-2034

2019 Gigondas (magnums) £41 £123 per 3 2024-2036

Vacqueyras

🍷 THE REDS ARE PRINCIPALLY GRENACHE, SYRAH AND MOURVÈDRE, THOUGH MANY OTHERS ARE PERMITTED; AND THE WHITES CAN BE BOURBOULENC, CLAIRETTE, GRENACHE BLANC, MARSANNE, ROUSSANNE, AND VIOGNIER

🍷 RED & WHITE

Vacqueyras is another cru appellation, along with Gigondas and Beaume de Venise, which clings to the slopes of the Dentelles de Montmirail.

It is slightly lower and warmer than Gigondas. The reds from here can be big in structure and rich in alcohol. Its clay and limestone soils are perfect for Syrah, which loves it here, and the variety can bring a welcome freshness to the ripe Grenache.

Its limestone soils are also a happy home to many white varieties, and the chalky, pithy blends from here are charming and easy-drinking joys.



Domaine Le Clos des Cazaux

Jean-Michel & Frédéric Vache

This is a beautiful domaine, tucked out of the way facing the rocky slopes of Les Dentelles de Montmirail. Its atmospheric twelfth century cellar is still used today.

Charismatic Jean-Michel Vache is one of the most entertaining and passionate winemakers we know. He throws his boundless energy into his wines.

He has at his hands many old vine parcels, and from them makes the charming **Vacqueyras Blanc**, **Les Clefs d'Or**, which is peachy and bright, with salinity and dancing freshness. But the soul of the domaine sits with its reds.

Long maceration, extended *élevages* and no new oak give the wines their signature primal density. **Vacqueyras Cuvée des Templiers** is a big wine of dramatic tension, with a luscious, full body. And from neighbouring appellation **Gigondas** comes the **Cuvée de la Tour Sarrasine**, from gnarled old vines, which feels a little fresher.

These are full-bodied Southern Rhône classics that are at once ripe and fresh, with a huge intensity of berry fruit, the lift of *garrigue* aromatics, and spicy notes of freshly cracked pepper.

It goes without saying they are some of the best value wines we know.

	🇬🇧 Bottle	🍷 Case	🍷 Drink
2019 Vacqueyras Blanc, Les Clefs d'Or	£10.50	£63 per 6	2021-2024
2019 Vacqueyras, Cuvée des Templiers	£12	£72 per 6	2022-2029
2019 Gigondas, Cuvée de la Tour Sarrasine	£13.50	£81 per 6	2022-2030
2019 Gigondas, Cuvée de la Tour Sarrasine (magnums)	£27	£81 per 3	2023-2032

Côtes du Ventoux

🍷 THE REDS ARE PRINCIPALLY GRENACHE, SYRAH AND MOURVÈDRE, CARIGNAN, CINSAUT, THOUGH MANY OTHERS ARE PERMITTED; AND THE WHITES CAN BE BOURBOULENC, CLAIRETTE, GRENACHE BLANC, MARSANNE, AND ROUSSANNE, THOUGH MANY MORE ARE PERMITTED

🍷 RED & WHITE

This is a large and relatively undiscovered region to the east of Châteauneuf-du-Pape, up in the mountainous terrain as the southeastern corner of France crunches up into the Alps.

There is so much here still to discover, so many abandoned vineyards to resurrect, and so many *terroirs* still to plant.

80% of its production is still sent to the co-operatives, but a small number of inventive, boundary-pushing, maverick *vignerons* are starting to change that, and writing a new story for this hugely exciting region.



Clos de Trias

Even Bakkes

@_closdetrias_

You'll find no one more proud of their home, no one more in awe of their local landscape, and no one who will more fiercely defend and protect it than Even Bakke on Mont Ventoux.

Yet he comes from a very long way from here. Colorado via Norway are not two places you'd associate with winemaking. After spending 14 vintages working in California, he set off in search of his own domaine in these wild hills of southeastern France.

After three years, he finally found what he was looking for.

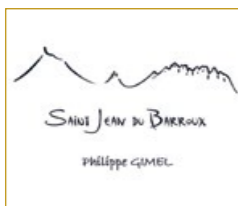
High up in the hills, Clos de Trias escapes many of the excesses of heat that its lower altitude neighbours experience, and these are some of the most individual and delicious wines being produced in the Southern Rhône today.

Even likes to age his wines in the cellar, often for many years before bottling. He tastes regularly, and makes ad hoc decisions to bottle when things are looking just right.

In February this year, he decided to bottle his **2015 Ventoux** red. It's a sumptuous blend of 80% Grenache Noir, topped up with Syrah, Cinsault, and Carignan.

Alongside these two wines he's also releasing a tiny amount of **2007 Ventoux** from library stock, and his **2012 Vieilles Vignes Rouge** in magnums. This wine completely sold out when we offered it in bottles last year.

	🍷 Bottle	🍷 Case	🍷 Drink
2015 Ventoux, Côtes du Ventoux	£13.50	£81 per 6	2021-2030
2007 Ventoux, Côtes du Ventoux (library release)	£17	£102 per 6	2021-2028
2012 Vieilles Vignes Rouge, Côtes du Ventoux (magnums)	£52	£156 per 3	2021-2032



Saint Jean du Barroux

Philippe Gimel

@philpegimel.sjb

Philippe Gimel is an ex-chemist. After he was bitten by the wine bug he spent a few years training with some of the best, including Château Pierre-Bise in the Loire and Château de Beaucastel in Châteauneuf-du-Pape.

It was whilst in the Loire that he met famous geologist Claude Bourguignon, and he quickly learned the integral importance of soil formation to wine quality.

After searching around for his very own patch of earth, he settled in the village of Barroux, high up in the mountainous terrain of the Ventoux.

He has an unusual approach to making wine: he makes three distinct cuvées from the same vineyards, but separating the fruit by bunch size. The larger, juicier bunches go into La Source, an easy-drinking wine with the intensity of fruit we've come to expect from this winemaker of enthusiasm.

L'Argile comes from smaller bunches, with about one-third stems added back in. He thinks when fully ripened, the stems become an integral part of the *terroir's* expression. And finally **La Pierre Noire** comes from smaller bunches still, where the fruit intensity and 90% stems make for a powerful and intense expression.

	£ Bottle	Case	Drink
2017 La Source, Ventoux	£10.50	£63 per 6	2021-2025
2016 L'Argile, Ventoux	£16.50	£99 per 6	2021-2029
2015 La Pierre Noire, Ventoux	£24	£144 per 6	2021-2032





Rhône

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