

Domaine de Puech Chaud 2001 Languedoc, Rostaing

27 Sep 2004 by JR

I have been an admirer of René Rostaing's particularly gentle, classically 'feminine' style of Côte Rôtie since the early 1980s and am delighted that over the years he has managed to add to his vineyard holdings in this extraordinary appellation. More recently he, like so many northern Rhône vigneron, has been broadening his range to produce Viognier and Syrah grown outside the boundaries of the local appellations. (See [inside information](#) and your turn on purple pages for an appreciation of his Les Lézardes bottlings.)

But like an increasing number of northern French wine producers, he has seen the potential of the Languedoc Roussillon and has bought a tiny domaine on limestone in Langlade just west of Nîmes within the capacious Coteaux du Languedoc appellation. Initially he worked very closely with Roc d'Anglade whose wines are based on Grenache rather than Syrah. Puech Chaud, made in tiny quantities since 1999, is the result. It is relatively (though by no means extortionately) expensive for a Coteaux du Languedoc but has northern Rhône fingerprints all over it in terms of sophistication of winemaking. Full of top quality Syrah fruit it is richly expressive, thoroughly winning, from a great vintage and ready to drink any time between now and 2007. I suppose my greatest term of praise for wines such as this is 'almost burgundian', which might sound confusing after all this talk of the Rhône, but I find Rostaing's Côte Rôtie has an almost burgundian delicacy to it, while this wine can boast burgundian richness.

I was surprised to track it down at its lowest price on the excellent website of Magnum Fine Wines, a fine wine specialist based in a tiny office above London's Pall Mall. The wine is £14.95 from Magnum Fine Wines (www.magnum.co.uk), £16.58 from Languedoc scouts AB Vintners (www.abvintners.co.uk), a bit more from James Nicholson of Ireland and 23 euros from Okhuysen of Haarlem in Holland. The wine costs quite a bit more (what does happen to wines shipped over the Atlantic?) from Kensington Wine Market of Calgary, Canada and the Rare Wine Company of Sonoma.