

1999 Rh nes - tasting notes

26 Nov 2004 by JR

All reds unless otherwise stated. All prices in pounds sterling per case in bond, so duty of  14 and VAT at 17.5% should be added for UK buyers. Many of these wines are widely available but are noted under the name of the merchant making a special offer of them.

GV means good value

* means superior quality

** means outstanding quality

CS means cask sample

Gilles Barge, Ampuis C te R tie, Cuv e Duplessy CS  175

Less obvious nose than the Jamet though very very Syrah and utterly correct. More rigorous than the Jamet but clearly made from fully ripe grapes.

Ch de Beaucastel, Courth zon Ch teauneuf du Pape CS  225 ( 115 for six bottles)

Rich, smooth, seductive nose and then almost painfully taut tannins on the palate. It will certainly develop over the next seven to 10 years but leave it alone till then. Dom du Colombier, Mercuroi GV * Crozes Hermitage, Cuv e Gaby  80

Very deep crimson. A distinctly superior, concentrates Crozes. Heady, taut and intriguing. Much suppler and fuller than Perrin's. Hermitage  195

Extraordinarily gamey - almost as though this all-Syrah wine contained a substantial dollop of Mourv dre. Not my personal style of Hermitage; too rude, crude and open on the nose. Coudoulet de Beaucastel, JonquieGres Coudoulet Blanc (white)  78

Bit of spice on the nose of a relatively simple white wine. * Coudoulet C tes du Rh ne Rouge CS  90

A thoroughly enjoyable wine which inspired the following note: "briary - blackberries (with thorns too)" by which I think I meant it has a most appetisingly blend of juicy black fruit flavours with quite perceptible tannins. Chewy now but should be great fun from 2003. Pierre Dumazet, Limony GV * Vin de Pays Viognier (white)  65

Very heady and sumptuous on the palate. A real baby Condrieu as opposed to feeble fragrance and weak fruit (like so many Viogniers). This wine is already showing well. C tes du Rh ne, Cuve  du Zenith  95

Fine, positively rapier-like nose. Slightly subdued fruit, Condrieu (white)  180

Much more reticent than the Vin de Pays. Some hint of spice to come with an undertow of gooseberries or some other green fruit on the palate. This is a much more ambitious but less charming wine still showing a little astringence from its oak aging. For drinking in 2003? * Condrieu, C te Fournet (white)  215

Still extremely low key on the nose but intriguingly taut on the palate with a certain smokiness and real mineral twang. Dom Font Sane, Gigondas GV * Gigondas, Cuv e Fut e CS  110

Exciting wine with real richness and spice and less obviously oaky than the 1998. Jamet, Ampuis **C te R tie CS  210

Lovely, hedonistic wine with a come-hither scent then very correct, properly 'feminine' gentleness on the palate (as opposed to the Guigal thrust). No over-extraction and no new oak. Reverberation and length. To purr over. Robert Niero, Condrieu Condrieu (white)  150

Just white wine on the nose and palate at first although there is clearly a rich fan of flavour set to develop underneath. **Condrieu, Coteau du Chery (white) £185**

Very heady nose. Sweet and creamy on the palate but slightly lacking concentration.

Côte Rôtie, Cuvée Duplessy CS £175

Less obvious nose than the Jamet though very very Syrah and utterly correct. More rigorous than the Jamet but clearly made from fully ripe grapes.

Ch de Beaucastel, Courthézon Châteauneuf du Pape CS £225 (£115 for six bottles)

Rich, smooth, seductive nose and then almost painfully taut tannins on the palate. It will certainly develop over the next seven to 10 years but leave it alone till then. **Dom du Colombier, Mercuriol GV * Crozes Hermitage, Cuvée Gaby £80**

Very deep crimson. A distinctly superior, concentrates Crozes. Heady, taut and intriguing. Much suppler and fuller than Perrin's. **Hermitage £195**

Extraordinarily gamey - almost as though this all-Syrah wine contained a substantial dollop of Mourvèdre. Not my personal style of Hermitage; too rude, crude and open on the nose. **Coudoulet de Beaucastel, JonquieGres Coudoulet Blanc (white) £78**

Bit of spice on the nose of a relatively simple white wine. * **Coudoulet Côtes du Rhône Rouge CS £90**

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Very heady and sumptuous on the palate. A real baby Condrieu as opposed to feeble fragrance and weak fruit (like so many Viogniers). This wine is already showing well. **Côtes du Rhône, Cuveé du Zenith £95**

Fine, positively rapier-like nose. Slightly subdued fruit, **Condrieu (white) £180**

Much more reticent than the Vin de Pays. Some hint of spice to come with an undertow of gooseberries or some other green fruit on the palate. This is a much more ambitious but less charming wine still showing a little astringence from its oak aging. For drinking in 2003? * **Condrieu, Côte Fournet (white) £215**

Still extremely low key on the nose but intriguingly taut on the palate with a certain smokiness and real mineral twang. **Dom Font Sane, Gigondas GV * Gigondas, Cuvée Futée CS £110**

Exciting wine with real richness and spice and less obviously oaky than the 1998. **Jamet, Ampuis **Côte Rôtie CS £210**

Lovely, hedonistic wine with a come-hither scent then very correct, properly 'feminine' gentleness on the palate (as opposed to the Guigal thrust). No over-extraction and no new oak. Reverberation and length. To purr over. **Robert Niero, Condrieu Condrieu (white) £150**

Just white wine on the nose and palate at first although there is clearly a rich fan of flavour set to develop underneath. **Condrieu, Coteau du Chery (white) £185**

Very heady nose. Sweet and creamy on the palate but slightly lacking concentration.

Opulent nose if slightly reduced. A much more restrained example than Colombier's. **Châteauneuf du Pape, Les Sinards £125**

Relatively light in every sense. **Dom des RemizieGres, Mercurol Crozes Hermitage, Cuveé Particulière £75**

Excellent colour. Rigid. Very hard - ambition or lack of ripeness? **Saint Joseph £95**

Very rich, almost overripe fruit flavours on the nose. Strange youthful fizziness on the palate. **Hermitage, Cuvée Emilie CS £200**

Broad, full and spicy at first with great taut tannins on the palate. Not quite the magnificent monster one would hope for in a great Hermitage but good for relatively early drinking. **Hermitage Blanc (white) £185**

Seductively rich, oaky nose but not enough ripe fruit to withstand it on the palate. Some astringence. Mainly Marsanne with a light topnote of Roussanne.

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Perrin, Orange
GV Côtes du Rhône CS £65

(the Beaucastel family's negociant business)

Funkissimo. Sweet and relatively complicated for this appellation. Avoid at all costs if you like your wines squeaky clean. Drink from 2003. GV * Vacqueyras £110

Very sweet, spicy nose. Still youthful but with lots of character. Massive tannins, great personality and length. I'd keep this one till 2005 myself. _

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Ch des Tours, Sarriens

(owned by Emmanuel, nephew of the late Jacques Reynaud of Ch Rayas)

Dom du Cornilhac, Tournon Saint Joseph £85

Easy, gentle and relatively powerful. Could drink soon. Dom Daubrée, Tupin et Semons Côte Rôtie CS £179

Some whiff of oxidation on the nose and the finish is particularly tough and uncompromising. Judgement

reserved. Dom des Grands Devers, Valréas * Côtes du Rhône, Cuvée Syrah £49

Very deep colour, powerful varietal aroma and yet surprisingly delicate build. This is a particularly charming offering from vineyards around Valréas. Dom Les Hautes Cances, Cairanne * Cairanne Tradition CS £55

Very deep colour and outstandingly concentrated and herby on the nose and then really meaty impact on the palate. Sturdy but not uncomfortable tannins. Lots of development in prospect. ** Cairanne Vieilles Vignes CS £69 (£75 per 6 magnums)

Very very meaty/savoury again. Already voluptuous on the palate and so full of ripe fruit that the tannins are wonderfully well hidden. Drink over the next two or three years. A magnum candidate. * Cairanne, Cuvée Col de Débat CS £86 (£92 per 6 magnums)

Really dramatic wine with a particularly chewy finish. Extremely ambitious with lots of acid and tannin. For the very long haul. Much less fun at the moment than the wine above. Paul Jaboulet Aîné, Tain GV * Côtes du Ventoux, Les Traverses £34

Pale but good concentrated nose. A real hit of fruit for the money. Easy to drink now but will improve. *? Crozes Hermitage, Les Jalets £63

Very, very Syrah. A bit smudgy in impact. Easy drinking but not a standout. Saint Joseph, La Grande Pompée £91

My tasting sample was positively horsey. No. * Crozes Hermitage Blanc (white), Dom Raymond Roure £108

I look forward to tasting the red version of this for this Marsanne manages to combine a heady mayblossom aroma with unusual elegance on the palate. Great lift and vivacity, as well as length. This is a most unusual white wine to drink in 2002 and 2003. Dom Lionnet, Cornas Côtes du Rhône, Cuvée Syrah £59.50

Baby Cornas with a beguiling sweet start but still extremely jagged palate. May get there. Dom de la MonardieGre, Vacqueyras Vacqueyras, Réserve des Deux Monardes £69.50

Little bit lolly/confectionery on the nose though good build and excellent structure. Hot finish. Balanced? Dom Murinais, Beaumont-Montoux Crozes Hermitages, Les Amandiers £58

Foxgloves and acidity. Hard work. Ch Pesquié, Mormoiron * Côtes du Ventoux, Cuvée Terrasses £37

Excellent colour, very round and easy. Would make an excellent restaurant wine for current drinking even though there is a little chewiness underneath the lively, sappy fruit. Dom de Rochepertuis, Cornas Cornas Rochepertuis £120 (£124 per 6 magnums)

Spicy but also some unclean notes on the nose. Luscious fruit underneath. Judgement reserved. Dom Sainte Anne, St Gervais * Côtes du Rhône Villages £48

Very meaty savour on the nose but yet gentle and round with particularly ripe tannins on the palate. Should continue to develop for another 2-3 years. * Côtes du Rhône Villages, Cuvée Notre Dame £64

Scented, voluptuous nose - mainly Grenache. Very gentle, pleasurable palate even if on quite a low-key scale. Very well made. * Côtes du Rhône Villages, Cuvée St Gervais £69

A blend with more Mourvèdre which seems set for a much longer life than the wine above. Excellent colour. Sweet and gentle start followed up by quite big tannins. Unknit as yet but should get there in three years or so. Dom Stéphane, Tupin-Samons * Côte Rôtie, Vieilles Vignes £114

Excellent colour, lovely scent, real excitement, awful label. Both intense and tense in its concentration of flavours. Dom de la Tourade, Gigondas Gigondas, Font des Aieux CS £99

Spice and meat on the nose. Very full and intense. Evidence of the extra layer of flavour to be had in this

appellation but it will not be ready for a good five years. **Dom de la Vieille Julienne, Orange Les Fiefs de la Vieille Julienne, £29.50**

Slightly muddy look and taste. No rough edges but not outstanding. **Côtes du Rhône, Vieilles Vignes CS £49**

Seemed particularly concentrated but I tasted only a quarter of a mouthful. **Châteauneuf du Pape £114**

Relatively pale and simple. For early drinking. If you want this easy style of wine there is much better value to be had in the less famous appellations.

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