Rh□ne by Roger Sabon 2007 C□tes du Rh□ne Rouge

9 Dec 2008 by Jancis Robinson

From €7.50, $20 and £8.49

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Forgive another Rhône but I am somewhat obsessed by this gloriously appealing region at the moment. See 100 tasting notes on 2007s from the northern part published last Friday here, and see tasting notes on 300 southern Rhône 2007s here.

I must thank purple pager Jamie Hutchinson of The Sampler for introducing me to this wonderful bargain, which I tasted when I went along to this innovative Islington wine shop to meet his extremely friendly collie(?? apologies if I have completely mistaken the breed) Ivan and taste some iconic wines.

First, sincere congratulations to Sabon on the label, which is a typographical delight and a welcome change from the southern Rhône labelling norm. The image here, does not do it justice, but believe me that it is quite exceptionally stylish.

But of course it is not worth buying a wine on label alone. Even if this bottle looked like every other Côtes du Rhône I would be recommending it because the wine inside is just so invitingly delicious. Here's what I wrote then I tasted it in the store (where one customer was very bemused by my having a laptop and asked whether I was a particularly assiduous member of staff):

Roger Sabon, Rhône by Roger Sabon 2007 Côtes du Rhône Rouge 17 Drink 2008-10
Very elegant, typographically led label. Relatively lightweight and evolved on the nose and then with a wonderfully well-mannered, *echt,* herby palate that is absolutely ready to enjoy now. Great lift and really admirable complexity for £9.99. No enormous richness or alcohol but just the ticket to *drink!* So persistent....

This is so much better than many a lesser Châteauneuf-du-Pape – and wait till you taste Roger Sabon's Châteauneuf 2007! The wines are now being made by son-in-law Didier Negron (the love lives of their children must be *so* important for French vignerons) with enormous competence, as witness their Lirac too.

And the other great thing about this wine is how widely it is distributed. Wine-Searcher lists stockists in France, Belgium, Holland, the US and the UK today.

UK importer is Thorman Hunt, who assure me that the following UK merchants stock this wine:
The Sampler, London N1
Frank Stainton, Kendal
Quaff, Hove
Butlers Wine Cellar, Brighton
Cellar Door, St Albans
Hedley Wright, Bishop's Stortford and Hitchin
Lake Wines, Henley-on-Thames
David Roberts, Suffolk

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