David Reynaud 2009 Crozes-Hermitage

25 Jan 2011 by Richard Hemming
From £18.99, $16.99, €15.99

Find this wine

I may be biased, but there does seem to be a craze for Crozes at the moment. My first taste of Jaboulet's Domaine de Thalabert made a strong impression in the early years of my wine career, and I have been enamoured with the appellation ever since.

David Reynaud has been making wine here since 2002, under the Dom de Bruyères label, prior to which his grapes had been sold to the Tain l'Hermitage co-operative. This week's bottle, however, is not from Bruyères, despite its very similar label. The Bruyères fruit is sourced from Reynaud's parent's vineyards and is oak aged. This wine is unoaked, and comes from younger vines (up to 15 years of age) that belong to Reynaud himself, plus some contributions from a friendly neighbour.

The soils are a mix of clay and chalk, with pebbles lending good drainage. The grapes were grown organically, then hand-picked at a yield of 40 hl/ha, and hand-sorted. The winery is gravity fed, and fermentation plus maceration with daily punch-down took 32 days in cement tanks.

The lack of oak gives particular expressiveness to the nose, which has that captivating violet and smoked-meat fragrance so typical of Syrah in this style. The bright purple colour hints at the concentration to follow – not that this is heavyweight, nor astringent. In fact, the tannins have a wonderful finely ground, powdery texture that integrate beautifully with medium body and moderate acid. Black bramble fruits are juicy but not overripe on the mid palate, giving way to a lengthy, savoury finish of black pepper and olives. It's appetising, compelling stuff, finely chiselled and expertly balanced. All that you could hope for at this price, I think.

If this one is anything to go by, 2009 does indeed look like a stellar vintage for the northern Rhône (about which you can read more in Northern Rhône triumphs in 2009). I'd expect this one to keep well for ten years, although it would be a bit of a shame to lose any of that scrumptious primary fruit.

To avoid a mix-up, note that 'Les Croix' and 'Cuvée Georges Reynaud' are from the Dom des Bruyères and thus aren't the same as the David Reynaud Crozes, despite his making all three. Online searches seem frequently to confuse each with the others. In the UK, the wine is imported by Liberty Wines, and is available through DeFine Food & Wine. In France, it is sold by La Vin En Tête, Caves St Clair and by the bottle at Café Les Deux Moulins in Paris. In New York, you can buy it via Chambers Street Wines and Wine Therapy.

Find this wine