

Pierre Gaillard 2009 and 2010 St-Joseph Rouge

30 Dec 2011 by Jancis Robinson

From 9.80 Swiss francs, €9.90, £13 (plus tax) \$24.99, NZ\$40.50, Can\$33.75 and Aus\$48 a bottle

[Find the 2009](#)

[Find the 2010](#)

This bargain combines two of my current obsessions: the exciting quality of the 2010 vintage in the Rhône Valley (south as well as north this time - see our [650 reviews of 2010 Rhônes](#)) and the increasing number of really serious wines made in the extensive and variable St-Joseph appellation.

Jean-Louis Chave, for instance, who admits that quality and style of wines varies so much that to the consumer 'St-Joseph means nothing', is so worried about the escalating price of the Hermitage for which he is most famous that he feels an almost moral obligation to work on the quality of his St-Joseph 'because these are the sorts of wines that people can afford to drink'. He is accordingly recuperating some of the best sites in the southern half of the appellation around Mauves and Tournon. Chapoutier and Paul Jaboulet Aîné are also putting real effort into their top red, and white, St-Josephs.

Pierre Gaillard, who once worked for Marcel Guigal, is based in Malleval in the northern half of the appellation and owns 10 hectares of St-Joseph vineyard and also makes a fine Condrieu (especially in 2010), Cornas, Côte Rôtie - and a Banyuls way down in Roussillon. His daughter Jeanne now has her own label and father and daughter have their own Crozes-Hermitage. Jeanne also makes a cuvée of St-Joseph called La Relève that sells for about 10% more than the regular bottling highlighted here.

Along with François Villard and Yves Cuilleron, he is also part of the Vins de Vienne team responsible for a wide range of well-priced, ambitious northern Rhône wines found in restaurants throughout France.

He is relatively keen on new oak but handles it well - perhaps because of his experience at Guigal, suggests John Livingstone-Learmonth in his excellent *The Wines of the Northern Rhône*. He makes this basic cuvée of red St-Joseph by blending Syrah from his various plots, mainly on the granite that characterises the best St-Josephs, as well as some bought-in grapes, according to www.domainespierregaillard.com, and also produces one, often rather oaky, cuvée from his steepest site Clos de Cuminaille, and another, Les Pierres, blended from his best sites. **Pierre Gaillard, Les Pierres 2010 St-Joseph** is absolutely lovely, but quite a bit more expensive than the **Pierre Gaillard 2010 St-Joseph**, which I was so impressed by, I could almost have taken it for a Côte Rôtie. It has what I described as 'nose-tickling black pepper' on the nose, as many northern Rhône reds do, but shows none of the leanness that sometimes accompanies this phenomenon. I loved its polish and verve and could imagine drinking it with great pleasure over the next five years. The 2010 regular cuvée of red is currently being offered en primeur in the UK by Bancroft, H2Vin and Noel Young, from £116 a dozen bottles in bond. One French merchant is offering it at €18 a bottle.

I also loved the regular bottling of **Pierre Gaillard 2009 St-Joseph** from a vintage that was obviously riper, more precocious and less 'classic' than the 2010s. (In general 2009 is relatively more successful in the northern than the southern Rhône - see our [650 reviews of 2009 Rhônes](#).) This 2009 is widely available by the bottle on many markets. It has a little more flesh and less pepper than the 2010 but is a thoroughly charming wine to drink over the next four years.

Prices are generally much lower for the 2009s than for the [coulure](#)-reduced 2010 vintage. The prices given above are for the 2009 vintage of the regular Gaillard St-Joseph Rouge, with the Swiss price a complete steal. I thoroughly recommend both vintages even if they differ in style.

