Dom St Gayan 2007 Gigondas

27 Sep 2012 by Jancis Robinson

From €12.30, £15.95, $24, 189 Swedish krone, 180 Danish krone, 3,560 yen

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This week has been unusually low on French wine recommendations but here is a sure-fire winner, a special, attractively mature southern Rhône wine for those who like their reds to be long on comfort and character. And, quite apart from anything else, Gigondas is one of the world's prettiest wine villages, one that for once truly can be described as 'nestled', in this case in the lee of the fantastically craggy Dentelles de Montmirail shown below in an image on the official Gigondas website.

Like more and more wines I come across nowadays, Dom St Gayan 2007 Gigondas is high in alcohol (the label says 15%), but it doesn't taste hot or aggressive. (Yesterday morning in fact I tasted more than 40 Baroli from the 2008 vintage whose average alcohol level was 14.5% but I hardly encountered a single example that tasted excessively potent.)

Clearly this is not a wine to be sipped lightly as an aperitif. It is a serious accompaniment to food, but the tannins are so delightfully evolved that it should go with quite a wide range of foods. As it happens, thanks to Dom St Gayan's exclusive UK importer, Rhône and Loire specialist Yapp, both Julia and I tasted this separately recently and here are our two notes:

JR: Lovely mature herbs and spices on the nose. Pretty dry finish but with masses of fruit, a bit of tar, black roasted flavours but no excess sweetness and, remarkably, the alcohol is not too obvious. Long and comforting. GV

JH: Rich, sweet, very convincing fruit, both black and red. Inviting. A nice amount of chew and freshness to balance that fruit. Delicious and the alcohol not at all intrusive. Still tastes very youthful and primary but definitely not simple. Long and full-bodied.

We both scored it 16.5 and thought it would provide delicious drinking over the next five years. It's made by Jean-Pierre Meffre of Gigondas from 80% Grenache with 15% Syrah, 4% Mourvèdre and 1% Cinsault fermented in cement and aged in old oak. Most of the vines are said to be 50 years old, with some almost twice as old as this. It certainly tastes very comfortable in its own skin, so to speak.

I'm delighted to see how widely available it is throughout Europe, the US and Japan, and thought it worth mentioning that it is also reasonably widely available in half bottles. You can see from our tasting notes search that Dom St Gayan has performed consistently well in my tastings - except for their special bottling In Nomine Patris 2010, which I found A Bit Much.

See my report on 2007 Rhône in general.

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