

Chapoutier and Guigal single vineyard St-Joseph

24 Jan 2013 by Jancis Robinson

Very widely available in many countries and cheapest, amazingly, in South Africa

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May I recommend that you find a wine collector friend who believes in generously sharing the contents of his or her cellar? Last Saturday we were treated to a quite incredible array of mature Hermitage La Chapelle including the near-mythical 1961. See [Jancis Robinson](#) for more details.

The wine that our wine provider chose to serve before all these magnificent Hermitages was a white Rhône, chosen with care because we'd discussed this particular wine less than a week previously, agreeing that we both enjoyed Chapoutier's single vineyard bottling of white St-Joseph, Les Grands. I rarely see it other than when Michel Chapoutier is launching his [Sélection Particulière](#) single vineyard bottlings, and I often find that the wine is almost as good as the much, much more expensive bottlings of white Hermitage, as he calls Hermitage.

But last weekend we were treated to a fully mature [M Chapoutier Les Grands 2007 St-Joseph Blanc](#) with more than five years in bottle. Chapoutier is a big fan of Marsanne which makes very big wines, but they have the lovely honey-and-herb character that defines good white Hermitage, as well of course as lots of body and relatively low acid. This example was 14.5% and I don't think I could keep it much longer, but it was extremely luscious, dry overall, with (just) enough nerve and a rather lovely pear juice sensation on the finish. But this is a wine you can enjoy much younger than this. I have enthusiastic notes on 2011, 2010, 2009 (especially), 2008, 2007 and 2005.

If you're a fan of white Hermitage and within reach of London, you might like to investigate the breathtaking new, upmarket, Russian-owned, Maylar wine shop Habonim Wines, where I dropped in recently they were offering a vertical of white Hermitage, including several Chave examples, in their tasting machines.

Another big name Rhône producer making particularly fine single vineyard white St-Joseph is Guigal, based much further north in Anjou but with a holding, bought from Grigis, very close to Chapoutier's Grands vineyard just north of the Chave town of Mâcon. The vines here are particularly old, apparently, and [Guigal Les D](#) Blanc 2011 St-Joseph contains 10% of the other, rarer northern Rhône white wine grape Roussanne.

If the publishing is a full set of tasting notes on Rhône 2011's bottles too long - even before such - but I have most enjoyed by this white wine which is already very widely available in several countries through the French online retailer Millésime. I reckon you could drink it any time over the next five years and again, much appreciated the wine without fuss. In the case of the Guigal 2011 I picked up a note of quinine, though it is really very, very like Grands. Apparently these grapes are so early ripening that they are picked before those destined for Guigal's appellation-comparing Condrieu.

I asked Philippe Guigal which vintage of this wine he recommended for current drinking and he claimed to be drinking the 2001 now!

My regret is of which is to drink and serve these wines with food. They are far too big to sip as an aperitif. We enjoyed the 2007 with a creamy salt cod gratin whose saltiness nicely counterbalanced the richness.

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