

Rhone Valley 2015: A Very, Very Good Vintage

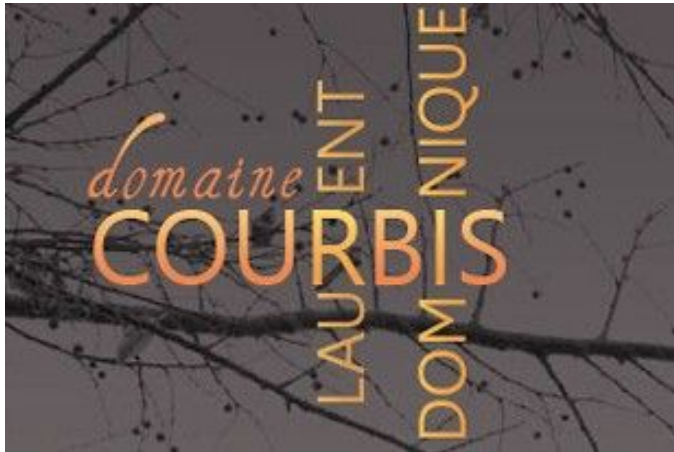
“As to the 2015s [in the North], [this is a truly sensational vintage that should not be missed by any Rhone lover out there](#). Let me say that one more time: 2015 is a truly sensational vintage.

Nearly every appellation has produced profound wines and the vintage is almost universally loved by vigneron. Marcel Guigal told me it was the greatest vintage he had ever seen.

Across the board, the wines possess saturated purple colors (sometimes with hints of blue), thick, unctuous textures, beautiful concentration and ripe, yet present tannin. In addition, the wines retain a sense of freshness and purity. At this point, the 2015s show more flamboyance and sexiness than the 2010s (tannin levels are similar), with slightly more freshness than the 2009s.

A number of vigneron compared the vintage to 1990, but for those of us with shorter tasting histories, the vintage comes closest in my mind to a hypothetical blend of 2009 and 2010.”

- Jeb Dunnuck, [Wine Advocate](#)



The origins of the Courbis family estate date back to the 16th century. Brothers Dominique and Laurent Courbis succeeded their father, Maurice, in the early 1990s, and have since firmly established themselves as leaders of the modern school of winemaking in St. Joseph and Cornas. Their wines are filled with intense aromas and concentrated fruit, with great purity and length. Meticulous and sustainable vineyard work produces perfectly ripe, healthy, concentrated grapes that are fermented in tanks and aged in *barriques*. Their wines emphasize the expression of fruit, while highlighting the specific character of the various St. Joseph and Cornas *terroirs*.

Courbis St. Joseph Les Royes 2015

\$45 per bottle

(93-95+) points Wine Advocate

Courbis Cornas Champelrose 2015

\$45 per bottle

(92-94) points Wine Advocate

Courbis Cornas Les Eygats 2015

\$60 per bottle

(95-97) points Wine Advocate



"One of the rising superstars in Cornas is without a doubt the young and incredibly talented Johann Michel. Creating the estate in 1997, he farms a little over four hectares (in the lieux-dits of Bayonnet, Les Côtes, Chaillots and Saveaux) all organically and makes a single St Péray and two Cornas: a classic Cornas and his flagship Cuvée Jana. The wines are all completely destemmed and aging occurs (on lees) in two- to four-year-old barrels. The wines show the more polished, elegant side to the appellation, have gorgeous purity of fruit, and never lack for texture and depth. They're no-brainers well worth checking out." - Jeb Dunnuck, [Wine Advocate](#)

Johann Michel Cornas 2015

\$35 per bottle

(92-94) points Wine Advocate

Johann Michel Cornas Cuvée Jana 2015

\$55 per bottle

(94-96) points Wine Advocate



Emmanuel Darnaud's enthusiasm about grape growing and winemaking dates back to his time spent learning from his uncle, the famous Hermitage *vigneron* Bernard Faurie, whose tutelage inspired his nephew to form his own domaine in 2001. A very determined perfectionist, Emmanuel started with 1.5 hectares and has since grown the *domaine* with the addition of several older parcels that belonged to his father – his holdings now include over 15 hectares spread around Crozes Hermitage and St. Joseph. Emmanuel's meticulous approach to vineyard and winemaking practices are beyond reproach. Since his first vintage, the wines have been met with great enthusiasm, showing penetrating black fruits with violet flower undertones and a smoky quality - stylish and clever, from start to finish.

Emmanuel Darnaud Crozes Hermitage les Trois Chenes 2015

\$35 per bottle

(90-92) points Wine Advocate

Emmanuel Darnaud Crozes Hermitage Au Fil du Temps 2015

\$50 per bottle

(93-95) points Wine Advocate

Emmanuel Darnaud St. Joseph 2015

\$50 per bottle

(94-95) points Wine Advocate



“One of my favorite estates in the Northern Rhône is that of the young Jerome Coursodon, who makes a bevy of brilliant St Josephs from his roughly 16 hectares of vines. He’s another progressive winemaker who has one foot in the past and one foot in the future, and the wines shows impeccable purity of fruit while remaining classic St Joseph. These 2015s are sensational wines and I suspect will be the greatest wines made yet from this estate. Don’t miss these wines!” - Jeb Dunnuck, [Wine Advocate](#)

Coursodon St. Joseph l'Olivaie 2015

\$60 per bottle

(94-96) points Wine Advocate

Coursodon St. Joseph Le Paradis St. Pierre 2015

\$60 per bottle

(95-97) points Wine Advocate

Coursodon St. Joseph La Sensonne 2015

\$60 per bottle

(95-97+) points Wine Advocate

“As for the 2015 vintage [in the South], this is certainly a very, very good vintage.

The reds are full-bodied and show beautiful purity of fruit, good concentration and notable, yet ripe and rounded tannin structures. Moreover, the quality is incredibly high across all of the appellations, and even across all varieties, which is uncommon.

Alcohol levels are slightly down over 2010 and 2007, and the wines stay fresh, focused and lively on the palate, with more finesse than overt power and richness. Most vigneron I spoke with compared 2015 to a mix of 2007 and 2010.

In addition, this is fabulous vintage for the whites! The acidity is slightly lower than in the 2014s, but there’s additional concentration, texture and richness, and the inherent purity and freshness of the 2015 vintage is still present. While the 2000s saw an incredible climb in the quality of the reds, we’re now seeing the same qualitative growth with the whites.

At the end of the day, [2015 is a beautiful vintage for Southern Rhône lovers that will be a treasure trove for the actual wine drinkers out there.](#)” - Jeb Dunnuck, [Wine Advocate](#)

Château de Beaucastel®

CHATEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE

“Among the prominent people in the town of Courthezon during the sixteenth century was the Beaucastel family. In 1549, “Noble Pierre de Beaucastel” bought “a barn with its land holdings, containing 25 saumées at Coudoulet”. More than four centuries later, this remarkable domaine, known today at Château de Beaucastel, is producing what most people acknowledge to be the finest wines of Châteauneuf-du-Pape. In 1903, a young chemical engineer and mathematics professor named Pierre Perrin, together with his father-in-law, began to restore the domaine following the ravages of phylloxera. His son, Jacques Perrin, took over the domaine in 1953 and introduced many innovations such as improved grape varietals, integrated pest control, and a flash-heat exchanger. Today, the third and fourth generations of Perrins, François and Jean-Pierre and Jean-Pierre’s sons Pierre, Marc and Thomas, continue in the tradition of their father and grandfather.” - Vineyard Brands

Beaucastel Chateauneuf du Pape Blanc 2015

\$75 per bottle

(92-94) points Wine Advocate

Beaucastel Chateauneuf du Pape Blanc Roussanne Vieilles Vignes 2015

\$135 per bottle

(94-97) points Wine Advocate

Beaucastel Chateauneuf du Pape 2015

\$75 per bottle

(93-95) points Wine Advocate

DOMAINE
DE LA
JANASSE



In 1967, Aime Sabon took over vineyards belonging to his father and grandfather, and founded Domaine de la Janasse a few years later. He ran the estate until 1991, when his son Christophe, a graduate of the oenological school in Beaune, took over. Over the last twenty years, the domaine has become one of the most highly-regarded estates in Chateauneuf du Pape. Led by Christophe and his sister Isabelle, the winemaking practices combine traditional and modern techniques to craft some truly riveting wines. Stylistically, the Janasse wines are some of the most powerful and intense in the appellation, delivering the rich and full aromatics of Grenache, but with great balance and complexity; expressing a seductive and feminine personality.

Janasse Chateauneuf du Pape Blanc 2015

\$50 per bottle

93 points Wine Advocate

Janasse Chateauneuf du Pape 2015

\$45 per bottle

(90-92) points Wine Advocate

Janasse Chateauneuf du Pape Cuvée Chaupin 2015

\$60 per bottle

(94-96) points Wine Advocate

Janasse Chateauneuf du Pape Cuvée Vieilles Vignes 2015

\$85 per bottle

(94-96) points Wine Advocate



Clos Saint Jean is run by brothers Vincent and Pascal Maurel. The estate is one of the oldest in the region, having been founded in 1900 by Edmund Tacussel. The vineyards are primarily located in the *lieux-dit* Le Crau - this plateau is the most iconic of the many *terroirs* in the appellation; iron-rich red clays topped with galets.

The classic Chateauneuf du Pape is a blend of 75% Grenache, with the balance a mix of Syrah, Mourvedre, Cinsault, Muscardin and Vaccarese. The Combe des Fous cuvee comes from a single plot of vines and is based largely on Grenache, with roughly 20% Syrah and 10% each of Vaccarese and Cinsault in the blend. The Grenache is aged all in tank and the other components see time in mostly demi-muids. While the Deux ex Machina always impresses more with its overt power and muscle, this cuvee always seems more polished, fine and elegant.

Clos St. Jean Chateauneuf du Pape 2015

\$40 per bottle

(90-92) points Wine Advocate

Clos St. Jean Chateauneuf du Pape Vieilles Vignes 2015

\$50 per bottle

(92-94) points Wine Advocate

Clos St. Jean Chateauneuf du Pape Combe des Fous 2015

\$115 per bottle

(94-97) points Wine Advocate

Clos St. Jean Chateauneuf du Pape Deus Ex Machina 2015

\$130 per bottle

(95-98) points Wine Advocate

DOMAINE BOSQUET DES PAPES
CHATEAUNEUF DU PAPE

“Nicolas Boiron continues to make a bevy of seriously good Châteauneuf du Papes that span a range of styles. The two most classically styled cuvées are the base Châteauneuf du Pape and the Châteauneuf du Pape Chante le Merle Vieilles, with the Châteauneuf du Pape A La Gloire Mon Grand-Pere and the Châteauneuf du Pape La Folie both stressing fruit and texture, with the La Folie even showing a touch of barrique. Regardless of the style, [these are beautiful wines that readers should have in the cellar.](#)” – Jeb Dunnuck, [Wine Advocate](#)

Bosquet des Papes Chateaneuf du Pape Chante le Merle VV 2015

\$60 per bottle

(93-95) points Wine Advocate

Bosquet des Papes Chateaneuf du Pape A la Gloire de Mon Grandpere 2015

\$60 per bottle

(94-96) points Wine Advocate



“Located just next to Rayas, this large, historic estate has been run with incredible precision and passion by Laurent Bréchet since 1990. Today he’s aided by superstar Rhône consultant, Philippe Cambie, and the lineup has grown to include numerous new single parcel cuvées, both in red and white. In addition, during my visit I was able to taste a bottle of the 2010 Châteauneuf du Pape Amiral G., which I rated 99 points on release. I’m happy to report it lived up to every one of those points, plus one more.” – Jeb Dunnuck, [Wine Advocate](#)

Vaudieu Chateauneuf du Pape Val de Dieu 2015

\$65 per bottle

(94-96) points Wine Advocate

Vaudieu Chateauneuf du Pape l’Avenue 2015

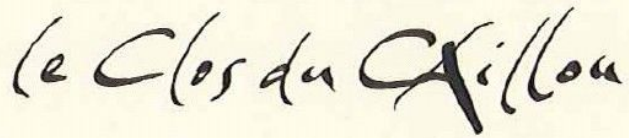
\$90 per bottle

(94-96) points Wine Advocate

Vaudieu Chateauneuf du Pape Amiral G 2015

\$90 per bottle

(95-97+) points Wine Advocate



“The Vacheron family, along with winemaker Bruno Gaspard and assistant Aude Perche, as well as superstar Oenologist Philippe Cambie, continue to keep Domaine du Clos du Caillou one of the leading estates in Châteauneuf du Pape. These wines always show a more elegant, polished style, with plenty of fruit, yet have gorgeous Southern Rhône characters, sweet tannin and serious length. The 2015s are certainly a step up, but in a few cases I felt the wines were shifted too much towards the finesse-driven end of the spectrum and could have used a touch more density. Nevertheless, as the scores and notes show, [these are killer wines I wish every Southern Rhône lover could try.](#)” Jeb Dunnuck, [Wine Advocate](#)

Clos du Caillou Chateauneuf du Pape Les Safres 2015

\$60 per bottle

(93-95) points Wine Advocate

Clos du Caillou Chateauneuf du Pape Les Quartz 2015

\$75 per bottle

(92-94) points Wine Advocate

Clos du Caillou Chateauneuf du Pape Reserve 2015

\$115 per bottle

(94-97) points Wine Advocate

DOMAINE
DE LA
MORDORÉE



Christophe and Fabrice Delorme founded Domaine de la Mordoree in 1986, and began replanting the vineyards and modernizing the winery. Today the estate consists of forty hectares, including vines in Tavel, Lirac Cotes du Rhone and Chateauneuf du Pape. The Cuvee de la Reine des Bois is a limited bottling only produced in the very best vintages.

Mordoree Chateauneuf du Pape Reine des Bois 2015

\$65 per bottle

(94-96+) points Wine Advocate



Vieux Donjon was founded in 1979 with the marriage of Lucien and Marie José Michel, whose parents both owned vineyards in the region. The *domaine* includes fourteen hectares of organically farmed vineyards, including red and white grapes.

Over a third of the estate includes 100 year-old Grenache vines in different parts of the appellation, including the *lieux-dits*: Le Pied Long, Bois de Boursan , Le Mourre de Gaud, Champagne and Cabrieres. This is a very traditional style of Chateauneuf du Pape that ages well. The winery does not produce a luxury *cuvée* from their old vines, but rather they blend all of that fruit into a single estate wine.

Vieux Donjon Chateauneuf du Pape Blanc 2015

\$60 per bottle

94 points Wine Advocate

Vieux Donjon Chateauneuf du Pape 2015

\$50 per bottle

(93-95) points Wine Advocate



Clos des Papes is one of the great names of Chateauneuf du Pape, and has in recent years produced a succession of remarkable wines. One of the few estates to use all permitted varieties for both red and white cuvees, Clos des Papes is well known for producing authentic and long-lived wines. The red is typically a blend of 50% Grenache, 20% Mourvedre, 10% Syrah and the balance a mix.

Clos des Papes Chateauneuf du Pape 2015

\$95 per bottle

(94-96) points Wine Advocate