

A Châteauneuf du Pape Wine Tasting Evening

PRESENTED BY



The Honourable Company of Freemen of the City of London of North America

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
ARTHUR'S CELLAR WINE CLUB

The Wines

White Châteauneuf-du-Pape

2009 Château Fines Roches Châteauneuf-du-Pape Blanc - 13.5% Alc./Vol.



This elegant Châteauneuf-du-Pape Blanc is 50% White Grenache, 20% Bourboulenc, 20% Clairette and 10% Roussanne from vines averaging over twenty-five years of age. A clear golden straw colour, it has a nose of pineapples, pears, white flowers, apricots and honey. It is beautifully balanced in the mouth – smooth, rich and harmonious. It would be delicious with grilled fish, white meat such as veal, and young Chevre.

2007 Château Jas de Bressy Châteauneuf-du-Pape Blanc – 13.5% Alc./Vol.



While only a small proportion of the total production of Châteauneuf-du-Pape is white, it is a glorious and special treat. And, the 2007 Château Jas de Bressy Blanc is a fine example. Made of equal parts white Grenache and Roussanne from vines averaging over sixty years old, it is aged in two and three year old oak barrels for nine months. It is a golden straw colour with a lovely, pronounced nose of pineapple, coconut and peaches with a hint of butterscotch and spices (nutmeg?) on the nose. In the mouth it is round, full, complex and beautifully balanced. A classic Ch.9 Blanc, it will go wonderfully with all seafood and roast chicken.

Red Châteauneuf-du-Pape

2007 Château Fines Roches Châteauneuf du Pape Rouge - 14.5% Alc./Vol.



The 2007 (a brilliant vintage) Château des Fines Roches is made of equal parts Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre from forty year old vines. The wine is aged for a year in two to three year old oak barrels. It is a deep ruby and displays aromas of sweet red fruit, exotic spices and a delicate note of vanilla. It is pleasant in the mouth, exhibiting soft, round tannins, medium body and length. This wine can be drunk now, after a few hours in the decanter or in eight to ten years when it will develop aromas of cocoa beans and more vanilla. It would be delightful with game or a coq au vin – and with Black Forest cake or any other chocolate dessert!

2007 Domaine Giuliani Chateauneuf-du-Pape - 14.5% Alc./Vol.

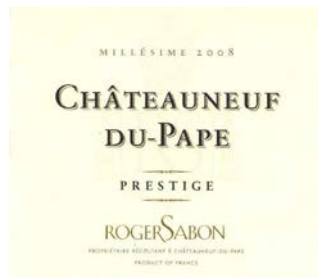


Let me confess that I am a Grenache addict; I just love the stuff. And the 2007 Domaine Giuliani is made from lots of it - 70% Grenache, 20% Syrah and 10% Mourvèdre - from vines averaging over fifty years of age situated on their best property. The Giulianis know how to grow great Grenache which is no doubt part of the reason why I adore this wine. It is a deep ruby red and aromas of ripe raspberries, cherries, cassis, smoke, garrigue and spice positively leap from the glass. In the mouth it is certainly not a timid wine. The red and black fruit persist joined by raisins, liquorice and just a hint of pepper. It is full, round, supple and long - everything a fine, young Châteauneuf du Pape should be. Here is what **Robert Parker** has to say

“The 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape, a sleeper of the vintage, proves that a high tide raises all boats. Exhibiting soft, sweet tannins, a velvety, medium to full-bodied texture, and loads of red and black fruits intertwined with Provençal herbs, pepper and spices, this luscious, complex, delicious 2007 should drink well for 7 - 8 years. Rating – 90/100.”

2008 Châteauneuf du Pape “Prestige” – 14.5% Alc./Vol.

This is the star of Sabon’s 2008 Châteauneuf stable as much of the fruit that would have gone into the vaunted Le Secret des Sabons can be found here. It is amazingly big and complex for the vintage. Grenache is the predominant grape in the blend and is joined by Syrah, Cinsault, Terret, Counoise, Vaccarese and Muscardin. It was matured in 40 hectolitre barrels and in oak casks for 16 to 18 months.



“Very stylish and perfumy, with sleek, fine-grained tannins carrying the crushed cherry, red licorice, bitter orange, clove and fruitcake flavors through the nicely defined finish. There’s also well-embedded acidity. Very fine-grained and Burgundian in style, making this deceptively long. Drink now through 2025. 730 cases made. \$75 93/100 - James Molesworth W.S.”

My notes ... this is a bit of a brooding monster; round, rich, strong and very, very elegant. It has a complex, delightful aroma of strawberries, black cherries, tangy spices, wildflowers, old leather and just a touch of black pepper. In the mouth it is quite voluptuous and pleasing with a bit of warmth to go with the Sabon’s lovely tannins. It is surprising long and concentrated. This is really, really good Châteauneuf du Pape and it will go well with wild game, roasts and, particularly, lamb shanks.

2005 Cuvée Fines Roches Châteauneuf du Pape Rouge - 14.5% Alc./Vol.



The Cuvée Fines Roches is the flagship of the VMB fleet. 2005 was a terrific vintage in southern France and it shows in this big, brooding Châteauneuf du Pape. Made from equal parts Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre from the best fruit of the forty year old vines, it saw twelve months of aging in two and three year old oak barrels and foudres. It is a dark ruby colour and exhibits powerful aromas of exotic spices, red berries and a delicate hint of vanilla on the nose. In the mouth it is full and round with great finesse and structure. The tannins are quite pronounced which indicates good aging potential although it tastes pretty darn good right now after a few hours in the decanter. It would be a delight with any hearty stew or wild game. Here is what Robert Parker says about it in the October 2007 Wine Advocate:

“The 2005 Chateauneuf du Pape (white label) may be the finest wine Fine (sic) Roches has made in many years. Displaying a combination of elegance, purity, and dense, concentrated, juicy blackberry and sweet black cherry fruit, earth, roasted Provençal herbs, and smoke, this wine

has low acidity, sweet tannin, full body, and a precocious appeal. It should drink beautifully for 10-12+ years. 90/100.”

Champagne Forget-Brimont 1er Cru Rosé Brut



This is the Champagne for those most festive occasions – like weddings! It is also an ideal apéritif. Its rosé colour comes from adding red wine from Brouzy to the Forget-Brimont reserve cuvée. The grape composition is 60% Pinot Noir, 20% Pinot Meunier and 20% Chardonnay (Premier and Grand Cru grapes only!). In the glass, the beautiful light orange, pink colour provides an ideal backdrop for its steady stream of tiny bubbles. Rate 90/100 WS.

Châteauneuf du Pape – A Little Background and Perspective



Pope Clément V, a Frenchman who planted Ch. Pape Clément in Graves decided to move the papal headquarters to Avignon in 1309 – things were a little troublesome in Rome and even the French king was being testy. Clément was quick to plant vines around the newly constructed Palais de Papes.

Avignon at the time was a comparatively large, bustling city – noisy, rude and dangerous – no wonder the palace was built like a fortress!



Clément's successor, Pope Jean-Paul XXII decided he and his entourage needed a quieter, more restful alternative, so they built a second, new castle (hence Châteauneuf) as a summer residence a few kilometres north of Avignon on a high promontory. Some historians say they constructed the second castle so that they could indulge in their own debauchery away from the prying eyes of the Avignon peasantry. In any case, John-Paul was quick to plant vines on the nearby rolling hills, much of it covered in large white stones called galets. The summer castle survived intact throughout the ages until the Nazis decided to use it as a munitions dump and blew it up as they retreated in 1944!

After the Popes relocated to Rome in 1378, thus completing what is called the Babylonian Captivity, little is known about the region and its wines until the late eighteenth century. Quality was spotty until 1923 when the visionary Baron Le Roy got most of the local producers to buy into a list of criteria for growing grapes and making wines – the precursor of the appellation system.

Quality soared. The Baron wrote, “as of 1932, the finest Châteauneuf du Pape estates were Les Cabrières, Fines-Roches, Fortia, Le Nerthe, Rayas, Vaudieu, Clos des Papes and Nalys. They all exist today! At the time, they were the most expensive wines in the world.

There are around 350 producers harvesting grapes from about 8,100 acres of vines. Châteauneuf comes in a myriad of styles. There are two divided camps, the ‘Traditionalists’ and ‘Modernists’ but recently there have shown promising signs of a pax Châteauneuf de Pape.



There are 14 permitted grape varieties: The red includes the dominant Grenache, Mourvèdre, Syrah, Cinsault, Vaccarèse, Counoise, Muscadin,

Terret Noir and Picpoul Noir. While Grenache dominates the reds at average of between 60% and 80% of the blend, there are some like Château Beaucastel (great tour) who use less than 50%. The whites from Grenache Blanc, Clairette, Bourboulenc, Roussanne, Picpoul and Picardin. They would love to add Viognier to the list.

For much of the twentieth century, wine from Châteauneuf du Pape, particularly the Grenache was shipped in bulk to many of Burgundy's top producers. Robert Parker reports, "I distinctly remember a tasting with a well-known Burgundy wholesaler/importer where he excitedly poured me a 1959 Musigny, saying, "Just wait until you taste this!" I loved the wine, but I told him it was not a Musigny, but one of the "best damn Châteauneuf du Papes I had ever tasted."

In his book '*Wines of the Rhône Valley*', Mr. Parker goes on to say, "Let me make this short and simple – I love a great Châteauneuf du Pape. For nearly 20 years in my wine journal, *The Wine Advocate*, I have proselytized the virtues of the best wines from this sun-drenched region of Provence. In the first edition of this book, I subtitled the Châteauneuf du Pape chapter "The Bordeaux of the Rhône," and said "Châteauneuf du Pape has the potential to consistently produce some of the finest and longest-lived red wines in the world." Its glorious perfume, which is reminiscent of an open-air produce market in a Provençal hill town, expansive, generous, well-endowed flavors, sumptuous texture, and heady alcohol content evoke an image of hedonism. Like hunger, fear, and lust, Châteauneuf du Pape, when it is great, has an almost addictive attraction to one's basic instincts. In spite of having an amazingly diverse taste for so many different kinds of wine, I drink more Châteauneuf du Pape than any other type of wine. Moreover, visitors to my private cellar can attest to the fact that my stock of Châteauneuf du Pape is proportional to my voracious taste for the appellation's finest wines. I have often posed the question – why is it that Châteauneuf du Pape is so often the centerpiece wine when I am having a dinner with dear friends, whereas Bordeaux seems to be reserved for other occasions?"



Arthur's Cellar Wine Club

www.arthursellers.com

jaswalker@arthursellers.com

Splendid wines from southern France (mostly).

Like the first Châteauneuf-du-Pape to receive a perfect 100 rating from Robert Parker!