

CUVÉE DU VATICAN

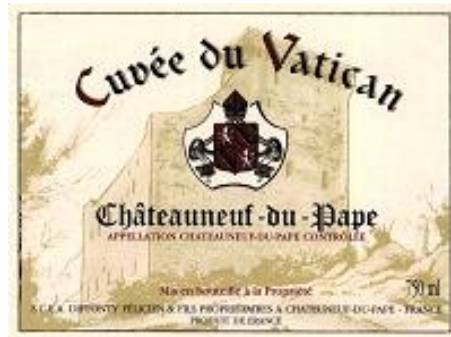
Châteauneuf-du-Pape

Felicin Diffonty's family has been producing a very traditionally-styled Châteauneuf-du-Pape for generations, and began bottling it in 1954. "My father told me: here's how I did it and your grandfather before me, so just do it this way," says Diffonty. "The first year I did it this way. The second year I did it this way. The third year, I did one thing differently. The next year I did other things differently."

In the words of Robert Parker (*The Wine Advocate*, December 2001) "This estate has been invigorated under the youthful, committed direction of Jean-Marc Diffonty, one of many young Rhône Valley proprietors who are part of the youthful revolution taking place [there]. Cuvée du Vatican made impressive 1998s, but their 1999s are even better, and the 2000s are the finest efforts I have ever tasted from this estate."

The name "Vatican" came about "after a long night in 1954 spent drinking Châteauneuf-du-Pape" says Diffonty. Unsurprisingly, he later elected to name his new and new-fangled cuvée after the Vatican's Sistine Chapel.

To their acreage around the winery (in the so-called "Terres Blanches" section of the appellation) and in "La Crau", the family has recently added a precious parcel immediately adjacent to Château Rayas.



Cuvée du Vatican Châteauneuf-du-Pape

Variety: *Grenache, Syrah (ca. 15%), Mourvedre (ca. 12%), a small amount of Cinsault, and mixed whites.*

Total acreage: *51 acres*

Average production: *6,000 cs.*

Vinificatory details: *No or partial destemming. Fermentation, including malo, in tank. One year in fuder. "Cuvée Sixtine", composed of half Grenache, 30% Syrah and 20% Mourvedre, is partly aged in smaller, newer barrels.*

Châteauneuf-du-Pape

Châteauneuf-du-Pape "Cuvée Sixtine"
