

RHÔNE VALLEY
Southern RhôneCLOS DU
MT.-OLIVET

Châteauneuf-du-Pape

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Sabons: the Next Generation



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OVERVIEW

When a *doyen* speaks of the history of his domaine, you could be forgiven for dreading the inevitable (and interminable) ramblings on a nascent estate, its evolution, and the grandeur of its wines...unless that rambler is Joseph Sabon. A grand spinner of tales, it is significant that his stories are but a prelude to the epic told by his wines. His father, Séraphin, set the domaine in motion, he himself gave it its inner rhythms, and now his children and grandchildren provide the sense of direction, continuing to observe the estate's traditional approach while also providing needed modernity. Some practices have changed (the most notable being that bottling is now done all at once—it used to be in stages, which meant that different bottlings showed varying levels of oxidation) and the portfolio has expanded rather deliciously, to include wines with some immediate appeal.

VINEYARD/CELLAR PRACTICES

- Vines farmed *lutte raisonnée* & insecticides are eschewed in favor of *confusion sexuelle*.
- Reds are gently extracted, matured in concrete then assembled and transferred to vats, tuns, or barrels; whites are raised in stainless steel tanks (though the Roussanne is barrel-fermented) and assembled just prior to bottling.

WINES

Côtes-du-Rhône Font de Blanche

Despite being 60% Grenache, this cuvee gets its prevailing northern Rhône character from some marvelous Syrah. Though not a long-term wine, it's best after a year or two in the bottle.

Côtes-du-Rhône Montueil-la Levade

Another blended Côtes-du-Rhône dominated by Grenache, but heavily colored by the sensuous tannins and glyceric qualities of Carignan. Elegant and sunny with a long, sappy finish.

Côtes-du-Rhône Serre de Catin

Easily the best wine name ever ('Hill of the Whore'—of course Joseph Sabon's story about the origin of its name is ribald...at best!), the wine is, appropriately, an easy-to-get-into, lip-smacking smash. 100% Grenache from a sun-drenched hillside, intended for early drinking.

Côtes-du-Rhône Varène

A new cuvée of 100% Syrah—black raspberries, violets and a slightly waxy texture are fabulously charismatic components of this magical wine. Not unlike a Syrah smoothie, it still maintains a lance of minerality reminiscent of quartz & chalk. Mmm...good! **The Sleeper!**

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Blanc

A fascinating white with a beautiful redolence and flavor of white fruits haunted delicately by an incredibly attractive iodine aroma. A streaming, radiant, crystalline wine with an arresting, exotic aroma that is hard to leave behind long enough to drink.

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Le Petit Mont

With the craze for early-drinking wines still chugging away, this is a poetically-styled example of practicality. It is a beautiful wine that has the greatest charms of Châteauneuf-du-Pape—an amazingly velvety red fruitiness, utterly satisfying length—for which you don't have to wait.

Châteauneuf-du-Pape

If ever there was a classic expression of Châteauneuf-du-Pape, this is it. Not straight-up *vin de garde*, it is nonetheless intended for extended cellaring. A wine of incredible consistency from vintage to vintage thanks to the *Papet*, (see below for more detail) it possesses moody red and black fruits, and a mouth-watering finish with an underpinning of persistent minerality.

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Cuvée du Papet

Made only in the finest vintages (when it is otherwise declassified into the regular cuvee...which often makes *that* wine unusually good), its composition is dependent upon the vintage (in '05 it was 97% Grenache, but in '03 only 70%). It is the class of the vintage, usually from the oldest vines with the mingling of elegance and power that matures beautifully.

Varieties:

White: Bourboulenc, Clairette, Roussanne, Grenache Blanc, Picardan, Picpoul Blanc, Viognier

Red: Grenache, Syrah, Mourvèdre, Cinsaut, Carignan, Counoise, Muscardin, Picpoul Noir, Terret Noir, Vaccarèse

Total Acreage:

111 acres

Average Production:

13,000 cases