

Château de ROQUEFORT

Roquefort-la-Bédoule

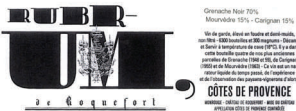
www.deroquefort.com



Raimond de Villeneuve



Erstwhile *Rubrum Obscurum* label, a regrettable loss, esp. compared to the new one:



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France

PROVENCE Côtes de Provence

OVERVIEW

The Côtes de Provence is an unreasonably large appellation on the eastern side of Provence. However, there is a small non-contiguous strip of it sandwiched between the Bandol and Côteaux Varois appellations, and it is here that Raimond de Villeneuve, a gregarious and idealistic renaissance man, exercises his thirst for experimentation. He's a bit of a rock star in the world of Provençal wine, which is appropriate, given that his vivacious wines radiate from a stage of vineyards situated in a natural amphitheater within a craggy massif of the Ste.-Baume Mountains. In 1995, after working several stages in other wineries, he returned to his family estate, which produced wine only for the bulk market. His instituted a regime that involved a complete change in farming practices and bottling under the Château de Roquefort label. Like any good iconoclast, de Villeneuve happily shatters long-held institutional beliefs, though he at least does it with good humor. Planting Cabernet Franc in Provence hasn't won him many bureaucratic friends locally, but then these are the same folks who decreed that his finest vineyard land—a knowledge born of acute observation—was his worst. A believer in *vin de garde*, most of his cuvées (including the rosé!) are built to improve with cellaring.

Varieties:

White: Clairette, Rolle
Red: Syrah, Grenache, Cinsault, Carignan, Mourvèdre, plus small amounts of Bordeaux varieties

Total Acreage:

59 acres

Average Production:

9,500 cases

VINEYARD/CELLAR PRACTICES

- Biodynamically farmed clay- & limestone-based vineyards
- Grapes are typically vinified separately (with the exception of *La Pourpre*)
- Wines are bottle without filtration

WINES

Château de Roquefort Rosé Corail

The unofficial flagship of the domaine, this rosé of Grenache, Cinsaut, Syrah, and Clairette is as seductive as any great Provençal rosé, without the typically tragic price tag.

Château de Roquefort Blanc Les Genêts

A sweeping, beautiful white of indigenous varieties Clairette and Rolle grown at high elevation. Broad yet subtle, expands with blooming mineral-driven complexity.

Château de Roquefort Rouge Gueule de Loup

A fascinating wine subject to de Villeneuve's mercurial whims (herein is his Cab Franc), it is a lovely, open, expressive wine that provides some instant *joie de Provence*.

Château de Roquefort Rouge Les Mûres

The estate's flagship, mostly from vines grown on intrusions of flint, is a complex, intimately aromatic wine brimming with essences of blackberry (mûres), violets, and spices. It has bright, youthful appeal, but as most Roquefort wines do, it takes on dramatic flair in its maturity.

Château de Roquefort Rubrum Obscurum ex Veteribus Vitibus

Though its name sounds poetic in Latin, "dark red out of old vines" is hardly fitting for this, one of the great wines of Provence. Made from 100+ year-old Grenache, Mourvèdre & Carignan, the *Rubrum* miraculously tastes good young, but really benefits from another decade in the cellar, providing added dimension and mystery...a *De Profundis* cry of terrestrial power.

Château de Roquefort La Pourpre

On the rare occasions that early-ripening Syrah and late-ripening Carignan mature simultaneously, mother nature grants us a new *La Pourpre*. The grapes are co-fermented, and emerge with a simultaneous sinewy intensity and silken richness that can be very appealing from the start, but each of the first two essays ('97, '00) have, with at least 8 years in the cellar, revealed an eye-popping and vividly-defined voluptuousness and succulence.

ACCOLADES

Incontestably, one of the great hopes of the Côtes de Provence...the wines perfectly combine ample and intense fruit with a rich and silky body. The wines of Roquefort possess a hedonistic character that will make you immediately rejoice.

Michel Bettane, *La Revue du Vin de France*