



Cru RHONE *en Primeur*

38 delicious wines

16 inspiring producers

from across the best regions

in the Rhone



Rhone *Revelations*



“For those who have never bought Rhone en Primeur, this is the year to start.”

– Madeline Mehalko, Senior Wine Buyer

As a region, it hasn't been especially fashionable in recent years. Despite the illustrious past of some of the top appellations, the wines largely remain in the shadow of Bordeaux and Burgundy with a few notable exceptions. Seen as traditional (read: rustic) and perhaps without the same investment potential as the two 'B's, the wines are generally more reasonably priced and not so difficult to get one's hands on. Unlike other regions, the Rhone has had quite a long run of successful vintages – even the less critically acclaimed vintages like 2008 and 2011 produced some excellent wines – and 2013 is no different. Not an easy vintage per se, but for those who were willing and able to take on the conditions they were given, all the potential for greatness was there.

With Burgundy's run of tiny vintages and Bordeaux's less than stellar quality in 2013, will we be willing to consider these wines as alternatives? They offer excellent value in comparison, can be cellared for a comparable amount of time, often have the critics wholeheartedly recommending them – the region is not lacking in 100-pointers... Not to mention the fact that the new generation of vigneron is enthusiastic, inquisitive and reactive, making for wines which are getting more refined all the time ... the catch? Quantities are up to 50% down on a normal year.

If you are a true wine lover, secure a few cases of superb Syrah from the northern half of the region; these wines are the real stars in this vintage, with power, finesse, complexity, freshness and longevity. What more could you ask for in a classic?

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VINTAGE REPORT



Northern Rhone

In Northern Rhone, volumes are down but quality is very high. The vintage had a slow start; bad flowering led to reduced yields, there was a lack of light in May which affected chlorophyll production, June saw problems with mildew. But then, with the arrival of summer, some dry warm days and cool nights began to save the vintage.

As harvest time approached, word spread that the rains were coming. The first was on the 5th; growers like Gilles Barge scrambled to harvest before the first rain; there were good conditions at the end of September, and those who chose to pick on these earlier days have ended up with more elegant, fresh styles. Those who waited had a relatively late harvest and made wines of greater concentration – they did not, however, save themselves from rushing to beat the rains, which re-appeared on 16 October. As a general rule, the wines are deep and rich and highly structured thanks to small berries and low yields (some growers reported a harvest half as large as a usual vintage).

As a result, some growers who usually employ whole bunch vinification opted to do a partial de-stem to keep balance in the wines. Guigal claims that the quality is ‘astonishing’, and I can attest that some of the Cote Roties especially were some of the finest I had ever tasted in barrel. This is THE year for Syrah.

VINTAGE REPORT

Southern Rhone

2013 in the Southern Rhone is a little less straightforward. There is more variability in the wines, and unlike the charmingly fruity 2011 and the lovely fresh 2012, the young, fruit driven styles did not always fare so well. This is a beefy, butch vintage that needs time to reveal its softer side.

A lack of Grenache is the main identifying factor of the vintage – Grenache is especially susceptible to coulure, or poor fruit set, and cold weather during flowering meant this affliction was rife. To make matters worse, the old Grenache vines were still recovering from the heavy frost in early 2012 – those that had survived simply did not produce fruit in 2013. To make up for the dramatic reduction in the sweetly red-fruited variety, more Syrah and Mourvedre were used, putting their stamp on the wines with their firm structures and spicy complexities. I found many Chateauneufs to be racier and more exciting than usual with their high proportions of Mourvedre.

After a cool and wet April and May, June was much improved and the summer was largely fine with the exception of some thunderstorms in July. August was dry, and the lack of water slowed down growth and ripeness – between this and the late budburst in the spring, it was an exceptionally late vintage for many. Berries were small as they were in the North, leading to highly structured and dense wines – great for those wines destined for the cellar, not always the ideal for the early drinking wines.

Quantities are also reduced by up to 50% on a normal year so many estates have made fewer cuvees than usual, taking the juice that they did have and making one or two great ones rather than spreading it out over several. So careful selection is necessary, but there are some long-lived and exciting wines to be had.





*“a mecca for well-priced,
high-quality wines
that are actually
fun to drink at all stages
of their evolution”*

– Jeb Dunnock, The Wine Advocate
on Southern Rhone

TOP FIVES

If you really can't decide what to buy, buy these:

Top 5 Big Value

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Super smart wines to cellar

Top 5 Posh Rhone

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GILLES BARGE

A stunning effort this year. Gilles historically made very good, but rustic wines. His son Jullien is getting more involved and the wines are becoming more and more refined while still remaining traditional and true to style. The du Plessy cuvee is showing beautiful perfume even in infancy; it is pure, focussed and seductive. 50% of the grapes were destemmed this year, which might partially explain why it was so delicious to taste from barrel. Harvest was done here before the early October rains.



Gilles Barge Cote Rotie Cuvee du Plessy 2013 £145 IB per 6 x 75cl

A beautiful and pristine perfume of violets and wild berries and spice; the nose is truly bewitching. Silky and very fresh, it shows its appeal even in infancy in the barrel. Deceptively structured, this will certainly not fade away for a decade or more, but will provide more pleasure early on than others in the appellation this year. Drink 2016-2023.

Gilles Barge Cote Rotie Cote Brune 2013 £156 IB per 6 x 75cl

This cuvee wears an overcoat of oak at the moment – very dark fruited with elements of smoke and tar and toasty spice. There is not a lot of new wood used at this estate – perhaps 4-5 new barrels per year – and most of these are used for the masculine Brune cuvee, whose density and structure can handle it. There is a lot of schist in these vineyards, and beneath the heft there is a real underlying minerality and lifted, perfumed red fruits. Will be a stunner. Drink 2019-2028.

Gilles Barge Cote Rotie Cote Blonde 2013 £168 IB per 6 x 75cl

Normally a component in the Plessy or the Combard cuvees, Gilles and Jullien decided this year to bottle some separately. It is certainly less immediately accessible than the Plessy – dense and rich, with peppery spice and pain d'épices, and a bitter chicory edge. Despite its seemingly sturdy nature, there is an underlying finesse which will doubtless become more evident as the time passes. Drink 2019-2028.

REMI NIERO

Remi is the third generation of Nieros at the helm of the estate, having joined his father Robert in 2004 and taken over the estate in 2010. He has travelled the world to truly understand how soils and vines can work together and now works hard both in vineyard and winery to ensure that the wines reflect the special terroirs of Cote Rotie and Condrieu. He now farms his land organically and has some impressively old vines in his holdings.



Niero Condrieu Cuvee de Chery 2013

£156 IB per 6 x 75cl

A tiny south-facing plot of 70 year old vines, the Condrieu Chery sees a complex programme of fermentation including tanks, concrete eggs and oak, 10-15% of which is new. The resulting wine is lean and tight, but silky, with green apple and mineral aromas – it needs a little time but has impressive concentration. Drink 2014-2018.

Niero Cote Rotie Eminence 2013

£135 IB per 6 x 75cl

A blend of 2 lieu-dits – Vialliere on micaschist and Bassenon on granite – with 5% Viognier blended in. Vinification here is done in concrete, ageing in wood 20% of which is new. Overtly peppery nose with crunchy blackberry fruit, and sophisticated notes of leather and cigar box. The palate is seductive and silky, with cardamom and rose aromas and seductive berry fruit. Has a real feminine touch, a really attractive style which will be approachable earlier than some, though with a snap of Northern Rhone acidity. Drink 2018-2023.

PIERRE JEAN VILLA



Pierre made wine in Burgundy from 1992-2003, then after a stint at Vins de Vienne decided to set up his own estate in 2009. He bought 2ha of vines, made wine in his friends cellar, then 2 years later was established enough to build his own. Now he has 11ha, 7 of which are in production, and makes 8 wines largely following organic principles. It is always exciting to be able to offer something new in a largely traditional region, and he has built up an impressive reputation in such a short amount of time.

Pierre Jean Villa Cote Rotie Carmina 2013

£168 IB per 6 x 75cl

Made from 55 year old vines in Cote Brune, near Fongeant; no Viognier is used and the Syrah undergoes a partial de-stemming. Quite a powerful nose, bold dark fruits with toasty spice and a slight tinge of smoked meat. Gutsy and persistent, full and round and multi-layered; a particularly masculine example of Cote Rotie, befitting of the Cote Brune, though with plenty of silky finesse. Drink 2018 - 2028.

FRANCOIS VILLARD

Villard is considered by many to be the 'Condrieu Master', though he makes a range of around 20 different wines. A former chef, Robert Parker has called him one of the stars of the Northern Rhone in the past. He has plots of Condrieu in Chavanay and Verin, with 25+ year old vines grown on late-harvest sites; oak is used judiciously, only to give body and depth without obvious oak aromas.



Francois Villard St Peray 'Version' 2013

£144 IB per 12 x 75cl

St Peray is an often overlooked appellation that makes delicious and versatile wines. This blend of 70% Marsanne and 30% Roussanne is fresh and herbal and floral, the scents of a summer meadow, with zingy grapefruit accents and the faintest hint of tropical passionfruit. Pink grapefruit on the palate with a pithy finish makes for an appetising aperitif-style wine. Drink 2014-2017.

Francois Villard Condrieu 'les Terrasses du Palat' 2013

£144 IB per 6 x 75cl

Quite a textbook style of Condrieu as would be expected from the Condrieu master – peachy and ripe with lemon and orange peel notes; ripe and rich with some tannic structure, a saline, mineral finish reminds of its roots. Classy, clean and balanced, and just serious enough. Drink 2015-2019.

FERRATON

Ferraton is an interesting estate in Tain l'Hermitage which warrants sitting up and paying attention. Small and family run, though now owned by Michel Chapoutier, it is the best of both worlds – small production of handcrafted wines, but with the know-how and the biodynamic slant of nearby Maison Chapoutier. The malolactic fermentations were so slow to finish in 2013 that the whites had not even finished when I tasted here in July. At first look it seems that while they are rich and structured rather than delicate and perfumed like the 2012s – they should age beautifully.



Ferraton Ermitage Blanc Reverdy 2013

£200 IB per 6 x 75cl

A rich, buttery elixir with ripe, yellow-fleshed apricots, sunny marmalade, and smooth butterscotch; despite its weight and concentration, it is clean and pure with a great balancing freshness. Once the blunt edge of fruit has sharpened with time, its beguiling minerality should appear. Drink 2016-2028.

Ferraton Crozes Hermitage Picheres 2013

£115 IB per 12 x 75cl

Coming from the flat vineyards south of Crozes Hermitage, this juicy, vibrant wine is a real bargain. Licorice, black pepper and berry fruit aromas are so appealing, and the juicy acidity really draws out the cherry-tinged finish. Such lovely purity, such drinkability... proves that the vintage can produce some earlier drinkers after all. Drink 2015-2020.

FERRATON

Ferraton St Joseph lieu dit St Joseph 2013 £110 IB per 6 x 75cl

Set on top of the vertiginously steep hill of St Joseph, this wine was a real highlight of the tasting. None of the rusticity often found in the appellation can be found here – the fruit is refined and the tannins fine. Rich dark berries and chocolate with a spicy brulee character; so pure and fresh, and like all great wines, should have merit both young and old. Drink 2017-2028.



Ferraton Ermitage le Meal 2013 £250 IB per 6 x 75cl

Seriously dense and with a fair bit of reduction in youth, this is distinctively blackcurranty; herbal undertones and toasty hints of oak barrels. Sturdy and tightly knit, but the precise backbone of acidity and the impressive length hint at a future greatness. Drink 2020-2040.

Shipment of Ermitage wines in February 2016;
the others in Autumn 2015

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COLOMBIER

Florent Viale has done wonders for the reputation of the Crozes Hermitage appellation; he has always practiced *lutte raisonnee*, and wanted to go organic but relied on his neighbours to do so as well. Unfortunately they did not go along with it, but he still follows the principles himself as closely as possible. His style is to make a fruit-forward wine from young vines grown on stony, pebbly soil, vinifying in concrete to highlight the pure fruit and freshness.



Domaine du Colombier Crozes Hermitage 2013

£99 IB per 12 x 75cl

Inviting nose of dried herbs, wet stone, and sun-ripened blackberries. Pure, unadulterated Northern Rhone syrah, this could be nothing else. Clean and fresh, filled out and smooth, long with a gentle tannic grip that appears on the finish. Exactly as it should be, and really more-ish.

Drink 2015-2018.

BALTHAZAR



A great vintage at Balthazar. The young vine cuvee shows some of the rusticity that you would expect from the appellation but the Chaillot is very fine indeed. Franck compares it to 2010 with its structure and black fruits, but there is a plush, perfumed bouquet, and wines which are (dare I say it) elegant – no mean feat for Cornas. Harvest was nearly a month later than in 2012 - beginning of October instead of September - and it shows in the ripeness of tannins.

Balthazar Cornas Chaillot 2013

£135 IB per 6 x 75cl

Heady, profound perfume of boysenberry and cassis, violets and rich cocoa; smoky depth and impressive polish. It is highly structured with tightly woven tannins, but they are ripe and refined. This is an increasingly viable alternative to the superlative but rare wines of Allemand, though with a slightly more traditional slant and a much more palatable price. Drink 2017-2030.

VINS DE VIENNE

This estate has remained largely under the radar somehow, despite the illustrious names behind the project and the sheer class of the wines. Started in the '90s by Yves Cuilleron, Pierre Gaillard and Francois Villard who wanted to revive some abandoned vineyards in Seyssuel, they now make a range of appellations across the Rhone Valley. Those from the North are especially successful and reliably clear-cut examples of their types. Unusually, even their wines from bought-in grapes retain the same quality and style.



Vins de Vienne Condrieu Chambee 2013

£148 IB per 6 x 75cl

An attractive, fresh style of Condrieu with lychee, salted butter and rosewater aromas; a cool, mineral feel on the palate with pear and bitter melon notes. Unusually linear for a Viognier with refreshing, lingering acidity. Vinified and aged for out the mouthfeel. Drink 2015-2018.

Vins de Vienne Hermitage Blanc Le Bachole 2013

£215 IB per 6 x 75cl

A blend of 80% Roussanne and 20% Marsanne. Polished and tightly knit with citrus and floral aromas; the overall impression is discreet and elegant. Clean and crystal clear, there is richness and roundness there, but it is hidden by the freshness and minerality shining through. A really interesting contrast in style to the Ferraton white Hermitage, an almost Burgundian effort. Drink 2015-2020.

Vins de Vienne Crozes Hermitage Palignons 2013

£162 IB per 12 x 75cl

Typical blackberry and black pepper aromas with parma violets and liquorice pastilles; especially good concentration and richness of spicy fruit for an earlier drinking style. Balanced and drinkable, this will be a crowd pleaser. Drink 2016-2020.

VINS DE VIENNE

The Wines of Seyssuel

Situated in the very northernmost tip of the Rhone Valley, the vineyards of Seyssuel have existed since the Roman Empire. When phylloxera ravaged the region, the vineyards were abandoned, not to be given any attention again until 1996. Cuilleron, Gaillard and Villard saw the potential here; it is the narrowest section of the Rhone, and its high temperatures, high altitudes and strong winds make it more Mediterranean in style than its neighbours. Though the trio are campaigning to bring back the historic Seyssuel appellation, at the moment the wines can be called simply 'IGP des Collines Rhodaniennes'. These fascinating wines made with all indigenous yeasts are really worth a look.



Tabarnum Viognier 2013

£148 IB per 6 x 75cl

These vines are on the 'left bank' of the Rhone, an unusual microclimate where cacti grow. There is some serious heady depth to the nose – pear and apricot with rich butterscotch and rosewater notes – and the wine is a much richer style than the Condrieu Chambee. Absolutely oozes with character. Drink 2016-2020.

Heluicum Syrah 2013

£172 IB per 12 x 75cl

A fresh Crozes-Hermitage style with raspberry jam and spicy dried fruits. Intensely spicy on the nose with real Northern Rhone acidity. Drink 2017-2025.

Sotatum Syrah 2013

£148 IB per 6 x 75cl

Left bank vines, as the Viognier. Liquorice pastilles, blackberry and spice; typical northern Rhone aromas that don't completely hint at the serious wine in the glass – packed with substance, remarkable minerality and energy, peppered complexity, persistence... this is a top class wine which could easily beat many a Cote Rotie or Hermitage in a blind taste test. There is some oak evident which should smooth out with a bit of time in bottle. Drink 2018-2030.

DOMAINE BOISSON

Bruno Boisson is the 7th champion for the wines in the area whether they be his own or those of his neighbours. Cairanne is a great place to look for value, prices have not yet caught up with quality and there has been talk of promoting it to 'cru' status, but for the moment it remains a humble Cotes du Rhone Villages. Robert Parker has previously declared the estate to be 'one of the finest estates in Southern France', which for the price is an achievement indeed.



Domaine Boisson Cairanne Blanc 2013

£88 IB per 12 x 75cl

A blend of 5 varieties, 40% being Clairette, 20% Grenache Blanc and the rest made up of Roussanne, Bourboulenc and Viognier. Ripe yellow fruits with an acacia honey and honeysuckle perfume; pear on the palate with a bready richness adding interest, the acidity is precise and freshens everything up. Very drinkable. Drink 2014-2017.

Domaine Boisson Cairanne Rouge 2013

£88 IB per 12 x 75cl

The main production of the estate. The 2013 is a blend of 50% Grenache, 20% Syrah, 20% Mourvedre and 10% Carignan. Pure and vibrant nose, bright red fruits and black cherry with tea leaves and spring flowers. Surprisingly elegant with a real lightness of touch, and the hallmark freshness of the vintage without the square tannins. This would need no food to accompany it, perfectly enjoyable on its own. Drink 2014-2018.

DOMAINE LA CABOTTE

A biodynamic estate owned by Burgundian Gabriel d'Ardhuy producing largely Cotes du Rhone Villages Massif d'Uchaux; wines with real purity of fruit and personality. 2013 here was a very late vintage with cool nights; this plus reduced Grenache yields means low-ish alcohol and good acidity. This is a great option for 'dipping a toe' in to the world of Rhone en Primeur; the wines are easy to understand and won't break the bank.



Domaine la Cabotte Cotes du Rhone Blanc 'Sauvageonnes' 2013

£100 IB per 12 x 75cl

A 100% old vine Clairette cuvee of great pedigree and class; production is tiny and Cru have secured the only 300 bottles available in the UK. Great concentration, depth and texture; cinnamon spice and apple blossom with an appetising saline minerality. The long, slow fermentation brings many layers of complex flavours. Drink 2014-2016.

Domaine la Cabotte Cotes du Rhone Villages Massif d'Uchaux Garance 2013

£80 IB per 12 x 75cl

None of the top cuvee was made this year, so there is a great proportion of old vine wine in the blend, as well as a higher proportion of very good Mourvedre. Pretty, ripe fruit with Christmas cake spices and rye bread. The structure is quite serious and tightens up on the finish; good density of sweet dark fruit. Drink 2015-2020.

CLOS DES PAPES

Vincent Avril is a perfectionist, and as a result always ends up with yields dramatically lower than others in the area, but this year production is truly tiny. There is more Mourvedre and Syrah in the blend thanks to a lack of Grenache, meaning wines which are more structured but with the typical sweet ripe tannins of this address. Vincent likens the structure to his 2011, and the finesse of his 2008. Unlike most years, where several different initial blends are made before blending everything together pre-bottling, there was very little wine and all blending was done at once.



Clos des Papes Chateauneuf du Pape Blanc 2013

£175 IB per 6 x 75cl

Aromatic and floral, this is the usual blend of 6 grape varieties including Roussane, Grenache Blanc, Picpoul, Bourboulenc and Clairette. Really lovely freshness this year with peachy ripeness and a marked creamy spice; a greater proportion of Bourboulenc and Picpoul have given lift. As per usual, when this wine is drunk depends on preference – in the first few years for freshness and fruit, then the wine goes in to a more closed, mineral state, then begins its honeyed, mature phase. Drink 2014-2025.

Clos des Papes Chateauneuf du Pape Rouge 2013

£260 IB per 6 x 75cl, £525 IB per 6 x 150cl

The Syrah in the blend comes out at first nose – black fruits and violets and liquorice pastilles. Then, on the palate, the spicy Mourvedre (making up 30% of the blend this year) with notes of leather and a saline undertone. Tannins, though ripe and fine, are present – it is a less immediate wine than some of the past vintages have been, but the wines here always age well and this year is no different. Drink 2018-2035..

CHATEAU DE BEAUCASTEL

The Perrins are starting to pre-assemble the 2013 Beaucastel and everything is looking good. Harvest was carried out between 10 October and 11 November when the last of the Mourvedre was harvested – harvesting this late is not often seen here! The first juice from the Grenache was bled to make it especially concentrated, and all the elements are indeed concentrated and full of sweet fruit with serious tannins and acidity.



Beaucastel Blanc 2013

£240 IB per 6 x 75cl

This will be a blend of 80% Roussanne and 20% Picpoul, Picardin, Bourboulenc and Clairette. There is a whiff of smoky complexity above confit lemon to the blend; the wine will spend further time in barrel with more lees stirring to fatten out. Various elements of the wine showed everything from tropical richness to steely minerality – this blend of fat and lean, tank and barrel should bring everything together nicely. Drink 2018-2028.

Coudoulet de Beaucastel Blanc 2013

£175 IB per 12 x 75cl

This was especially attractive this year, even in early stages there were attractive grapefruit and floral aromas with a hint of autolytic complexity. Filled out but fresh, the Bourboulenc component was especially impressive with its depth and polish and long, mineral finish. Drink 2015-2018.

CHATEAU DE BEAUCASTEL

Beaucastel Rouge 2013

£215 IB per 6 x 75cl

Magnums £450 IB per 6 x 150cl

2013 was a good year for Syrah and Grenache here, the pure Grenache component of the main cuvee had some impressive acidity (though there was much less of it than usual). The blend will be something like 35% Mourvedre, 30% Syrah, 20% Grenache, 5% Counoise, 5% Cinsault, and 5% of 'foudre 8', a blend of lesser known Rhone varietals like Muscardin, Terret Noir and Vaccaresse and white varietals Roussanne and Picpoul. It all makes for a complex and complete wine, the family will do the final blend together in early March. There is great acidity and density of sweet fruit, the tannins are a touch angular in youth but this is typical of the vintage. Drink 2020-2035.



Coudoulet de Beaucastel Rouge 2013

£130 IB per 12 x 75cl

Though I did not have the opportunity to taste, this cuvee should be quite serious this year with its increased proportion of Mourvedre and Syrah. Always great value and approachable in the early to mid term.

GRAND VENEUR

Grand Veneur is an interesting estate making Chateauneuf, Lirac, Vacqueyras and Cotes du Rhone wines with a real emphasis on healthy vineyards and healthy grapes. Interestingly, Christophe Jaume claims that yields in 2013 are actually not that much less than usual - while in most years a lot of green harvesting is carried out, this year there was no need. There is plenty of ripeness and extract in the 2013s, but also great purity. Christophe believes that a 'Grand Vin' must be great both early and late - 2013 may just fit the bill.



Grand Veneur Lirac 2013

£48 IB per 6 x 75cl

The often forgotten Lirac appellation is given much love here, the galets roubles on a plateau are remarkably similar to the best Chateauneuf terroirs, and they feel that it has just as much potential as Chateauneuf if not more in some cases. The word that kept cropping up in my notes from all the barrels was purity - black cherries, berries, rosemary, liquorice, spices... the Grenache especially was juicy and well-defined, inky and rich but so fresh. More than deserves to be offered side by side with the Chateauneuf despite its bargain price tag. Drink 2018-2028.

Grand Veneur Chateauneuf du Pape 2013

£92 IB per 6 x 75cl

The vines for the Chateauneuf here grow right next to those of Beaucastel, so they start out with a great terroir. The components tasted in barrel were concentrated and highly structured, though the tannins were so ripe and fine that tasting the wines in their infancy was not hard work. Oak is used judiciously and even those in barrique were not masked with oaky aromas. Tasting some older vintages to see how they develop indicates this will be a very pretty wine when it comes of age. Drink 2018-2030.

MAS DE BOISLAUZON

Run by a brother and sister act, this estate makes Chateauneuf from some very old vines and have won considerable praise of late in the form of some 100 point scores for a couple of their previous vintages. There will be only one Chateauneuf cuvee in 2013 thanks to the small volumes. The blends had not yet been decided, but I tasted two options, one with more Grenache and one with more Mourvedre (Syrah is not used here in the Chateauneuf wines). The Mourvedre dominant blend was deep and rich with polished tannins – Mourvedre will bring a lot to this vintage.



Mas de Boislauzon Chateauneuf du Pape 2013

Price TBA

The final blend will not be determined until early 2015 (nor will the price), but it is certainly worth registering your interest for what is sure to be a great effort from this superlative little estate.

DOMAINE LA GARRIGUE

The wines here are 'proper Rhone' – they don't use oak, they don't destem, they don't fine or filter, and the resulting wines have a touch of rusticity as traditional Rhone wines do, but give a very clear picture of the grapes and the terroir. The harvest was small here as were the berries – this led to half the usual volume being produced and to some rather tannic young wine. These are big wines which need time but are a must-have for Rhone lovers.

Domaine la Garrigue Vacqueyras Hostellerie 2013

£55 IB per 6 x 75cl

No old vine Vacqueyras cuvee was made, so the wine went in to the Hostellerie cuvee, making it more serious than usual. It did indeed have impressive complexity and finesse. 75% Grenache and 25% Syrah, it is polished and full of energy; intense garrigue and spice and a lingering note of salted liquorice – an interesting snapshot of the Vacqueyras appellation. Drink 2018-2028.



FONT SANE

I tasted here after the brooding 2013 Gigondas wines at Saint Cosme (which will be released next year, watch this space!) - what a contrast. Vibrant, succulent, joyously sweet-fruited wines with plenty of up-front charm and structure for the cellar. The 2012s are still in barrel and the 2013s have not yet made it out of the tanks and in to wood; they won't be bottled until late summer next year, so to include the wines in the en Primeur offer we have bought some of the 2012 vintage – very pleased to offer them here, as they were really rather delicious.



Font Sane Gigondas 2012

£115 IB per 12 x 75cl

Focussed, bright plum and cherry fruit aromas – very fruit driven on the nose. Vibrant and succulent with smooth tannins, bright acidity and a subtle floral backdrop, this really will be delicious at any stage of its life. A blend of 72% Grenache, 25% Syrah and a drop of Mourvedre and Cinsault. Drink 2016-2022.

NOTRE DAME DES PALLIERES

The wines from this estate show great concentration in a relatively modern style; run by Jean Pierre and Claude Roux, it has been family run for generations. With old vines and handcrafted wines, this is an excellent source of good value wines with real sense of place.



Notre Dame des Pallieres Gigondas Mourres 2013

£55 IB per 6 x 75cl

'Mourres' is the local word for 'small hill', and this cuvee comes from old Grenache, Syrah and Mourvedre vines in the Trignan Valley. Rich, smoky garrigue, rosemary, lavender, blackberry and raspberry... great streak of freshness and polished tannin. This shows that Gigondas can be really serious wine, and the fruit and the terroir really shine through. Drink 2018-2028.

Notre Dame des Pallieres Rasteau 2013

£78 IB per 12 x 75cl

Having recently been made a 'cru' rather than simply a named Cotes du Rhone village, Rasteau is a really interesting new addition to en Primeur offers. It's one of the only villages where no white wine is made at all, its brown and grey clay soils are much more suited to red. This one comes from old vines and is made without any oak; 70% Grenache, 20% Mourvedre and 10% Cinsault, it is juicy and succulent, with seductively sweet fruit, white flowers and liquorice, and a long fresh raspberry finish. This wine is new to the UK. Drink 2015-2020.

HOW TO ORDER

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The Team

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Terms and Conditions

All orders are subject to confirmation. En Primeur wines are priced in bond and exclude VAT and duty. Duty, VAT and delivery will be charged at the prevailing rates at the time of delivery. Cases cannot be mixed. All wines offered are subject to availability. E & O.E. There will be a delivery charge for all En Primeur orders, regardless of the size or cost of the order. For full Terms and Conditions please visit our website <http://www.cruworldwine.com/terms-conditions/>
