

2015 DÉCOUVERTES DANS LA VALLÉE DU RHÔNE PART ONE – WINES OF THE NORTHERN RHÔNE

March 2 & 3, 2015

Wines tasted at Mauves, Tain l'Hermitage & Ampuis

The biennial Découvertes showcase of Rhône wines in 2015 focused on vintages 2013 and 2012 with a smattering of 2014s and 2011s. The 2013 growing season was late in the North, and Syrah ripened by mid-October, up to three weeks later than the recent norm. The Northern reds offer an extra measure of freshness and a sense of transparency; they are medium plus in weight with notable definition. In the South, the season was similarly delayed and harvesting of red grapes took place several weeks behind the average for the past decade. Moreover, Grenache was badly affected by *coulure*, reducing the overall crop significantly. Syrah and Mourvèdre performed better and have imparted a fresh, firm feel and black fruit character to many Southern Rhône cuvees, which tend to display clarity and elegance rather than overt ripe fruit and fat. Hence they are ideal for drinkers put off by powerful, alcoholic vintages (such as 2009 or even 2010). There is a degree of irregularity in the 2013 reds in both halves of the Valley, but it is fair to say that quality overall is good to excellent. The whites proved to be the stars of the 2013 vintage: they are beautifully perfumed and possess elegant acidity. As for the 2012s, the Northern reds displayed sound maturities and attractive fruit and a supple feel. In the South, it seems the best producers coped with the multiple passes required to pick ripe grapes, and conducted necessary sorting. The reds in this part of the Valley are moderately concentrated and endowed with forward fruit and freshness. Which is better, 2013 or 2012, as far as the reds are concerned? While I would come down in favor of the 2012s, there are many appealing and very successful 2013s. The answer in fact depends on the appellation and individual domaine as my tasting notes reveal. In the North, Côte-Rôtie was quite successful. It was instructive to taste the occasional 2011 alongside the younger vintages. I came away two years ago with a very positive assessment of the 2011 reds in particular, which tended to meet with unfairly critical judgments at the time – perhaps suffering by comparison with the universally acclaimed 2010s. The 2011s offered a very satisfactory degree of fruit maturity as well as suppleness and charm, with lower alcohol content. Tasting a number

of 2011s again now after two years of bottle development, and in direct comparison with the 2012s and 2013s, I confirmed repeatedly that the 2011 reds in both halves of the Rhône Valley are excellent and are evolving relatively fast (relative to the pattern for each appellation), as I would have expected two years ago. The top wines – certainly in the South – already provide a great deal of drinking pleasure and will continue to do so over the next decade, before the best 2010s reach their apogee.

Note: I did not have the time to go to the venue where most of the Hermitage wines were presented, so they are notable omissions from my report.

**The most impressive wines tasted, by appellation & vintage
(rated at least ****+)**

NORTHERN RHÔNE – THE BEST WINES

Saint-Péray « Terres Rouilles » 2013, Domaine du Biguet

Saint-Péray 2013, Vins de Vienne

Saint-Péray « Les Figuiers» 2013, Bernard Gripa

Condrieu « Brèze» 2013, Louis Chèze

Condrieu 2013, André Perret

Condrieu « Clos Chanson » 2013, André Perret

Condrieu « Chéry » 2013, André Perret

Condrieu « Les Chaillées de L’Enfer » 2013, Georges Vernay

Condrieu « Coteaux de Vernon » 2013, Georges Vernay

Condrieu « Vertige» 2013, Yves Cuilleron

Condrieu « Les Chaillets» 2013, Yves Cuilleron

Condrieu « Bourasseau » 2012, Yves Cuilleron

Condrieu 2013, Yves Gangloff

Condrieu « La Doriane » 2013, Guigal

Condrieu « La Galopine» 2013, Delas

Condrieu « Clos Boucher» 2013, Delas

Saint-Joseph blanc « Le Lombard » 2013, Yves Cuilleron

Saint-Joseph blanc « Saint-Pierre » 2013, Yves Cuilleron

Saint-Joseph blanc 2013, André Perret

Saint-Joseph blanc 2013, Yves Gangloff

Saint-Joseph blanc « Ro-Rée » 2013, Louis Chèze

Crozes-Hermitage blanc « Cuvée Particulière » 2013, Domaine de Remizières

Crozes-Hermitage blanc « Cuvée Christophe » 2013, Domaine de Remizières

Saint-Joseph rouge « Le Berceau » 2013, Bernard Grippa

Saint-Joseph rouge « Les Grisières » 2012, André Perret

Cornas « Cuvée Jana » 2013, Johan Michel

Cornas « Les Eygats » 2012, Courbis

Cornas « La Sabarotte » 2012, Courbis

Cornas « Granit 60 » 2013, Vincent Paris

Cornas « La Geynalé » 2013, Vincent Paris

Côte-Rôtie « Viallière » 2011 & 2013, Clusel-Roch

Côte-Rôtie « Les Grandes Places » 2011, 2012 & 2013, Clusel-Roch

Côte-Rôtie « Maison Rouge » 2012, Georges Vernay

Côte-Rôtie « Colline de Couzou » 2013, Patrick & Christophe Bonnefond

Côte-Rôtie « Les Rochains » 2013, Patrick & Christophe Bonnefond

Côte-Rôtie « La Viaillière » 2012, Domaine de Bonserine

Côte-Rôtie « La Garde » 2011, Domaine de Bonserine

Côte-Rôtie « La Sereine Noir » 2013, Yves Gangloff

Côte-Rôtie « La Barberine » 2013, Yves Gangloff

Côte-Rôtie 2012 & 2013, Jamet

Côte-Rôtie 2012 & 2013, Patrick Jasmin

NORTHERN RHÔNE TASTING NOTES

Individual Saint-Péray wines

Saint-Péray « Grain de Silex» 2013, Guy Farge *(*)**

Brilliant yellow gold. Intensely perfumed, youthful nose of ripe yellow fruit. The palate is similarly well-endowed and expressive, verging on surmaturité but still controlled. This flamboyant white is richly textured, ending with well-embedded acidity and a chalky conclusion.

Saint-Péray « Terres Rouilles» 2013, Domaine du Biguet **(*)**

Light yellow gold. Engaging, ultraclean aroma of ripe lemon, white fruits and citrus pith. The wine displays noteworthy dimension and presence on the palate. There is marked intensity and highly expressive aromatics melding citrus and stone. Well-defined, youthful backbone.

Saint-Péray 2013, Vins de Vienne **(+)**

Light yellow gold. Restrained nose concealing richness and attractive, nuanced ripe lemon peel and tropical fruits. The wine's taste is focused, clean and dry, with notable persistence and elevated acidity and a chalky touch at the end.

Domaine Jean-Claude Marsanne

I came across this grower's wines in 2013 at Michel Chabran, a Michelin one star across the Rhône from Mauves in Pont-de-l'Isère. They own a mere 14 acres of St-Joseph on steep slopes, and their yields are below 35 hl/ha. They opt for destemming. The words "honest" and "typical" come to mind. The name "Marsanne" is not a typo.

Saint-Joseph rouge 2013 *(*)**

Moderately dense very dark red with purple rim. Clean, muted nose with moderately concentrated dark fruit and a faint complement of oak. The wine is rather closed on the palate yet delivers an appealing texture at the center and finishes fresh and dry. 12 months in demi-muids and Burgundian pièces, 5% new.

Saint-Joseph red 2012 *(*)**

Not quite moderately dense very dark red with clear purple edge. Non-expressive with hidden dark fruit and hints of spice. The taste is more revealing of its core of

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fruit and offers a touch of sweetness and a lingering soft impression. Dry, well-balanced.

Crozes-Hermitage rouge 2013 *(+)** or better

Nearly moderately dense very dark red with purple rim. Very clean, attractive youthful scent of dark fruits. The palate is more backward, clean and quite dry. Slowly reveals chalky tannins. Needs 6 months to show.

Domaine Eric et Joel Durand

The Durands focus on about 40 acres of parcels in Saint-Joseph and Cornas and have garnered a solid reputation since taking over the domaine in 1991. Their vines tend to be on the young side, so the dimension of the wines is bound to grow in time. They do not use much new wood.

Cornas « Empreintes » 2012 *(*)**

Nearly moderately dense dark purple. Clean, healthy scent of dark berries with noteworthy freshness. On the palate, the wine is particularly soft, even graceful for a young Cornas. There is a tenderness along with lasting wild berry aromatics in the clean, fresh finale. The suppleness and accessibility speak of the 2012 vintage.

Domaine Bernard Grippa

This estate is domiciled in Mauves and has vineyards in St.-Joseph and St.-Péray. The whites are barrel fermented and the reds barrel aged. There is solid quality here in both colors. Like many small Rhône growers, the Grippa wines are not easy to find in the U.S. The 2013s were among the best of their types.

Saint-Péray « Les Pins » 2013 *(*)**

Pale yellow gold. Ultraclean aroma with notable freshness and lift with stony yellow fruit and citrus notes. The palate is clean, direct and positive. The wine has tension and follow-through along with a chalky, undeveloped finish with hints of citrus.

Saint-Péray « Les Figuiers » 2013 **(+)**

Light yellow gold. Perfectly clean nose offering noteworthy intensity and focus with ripe yellow fruit and stony-citrus inflections. Les Figuiers possesses very good volume and expression in the mouth. The balanced finish displays attractive citrus and yellow fruit highlights and a chalky, dry conclusion.

Saint-Joseph blanc 2013 *(*)**

Pale yellow gold. The very attractive nose exhibits notes of ripe lemon and stone. In the mouth, this St Jo is clean, delicate and poised. There is a lasting youthful perfume and chalky texture.

Saint-Joseph rouge 2013 *(*+)**

Nearly moderately dense very dark purple red. The youthful aroma of this St. Jo is inviting, with expressive and fairly ample dark fruit and berries with a background of crushed blackberry. The wine is clean and direct on the palate and shows youthful restraint. Balanced and fresh with good underlying material. Dry, chalky ending.

Saint-Joseph red « Le Berceau» 2013 **(*)**

Moderately dense black purple. The nose is muted and has evident reserve. The black fruits and berries show above average maturity and generosity for the vintage. There are complementary tertiary notes. On the palate, the wine is held back and medium- to full-bodied, with an undercurrent of sweet dark fruit. The fleshiness is matched by a balanced, dry structure. The 2011 was one of the best I tasted in that vintage, and the same is true of this 2013.

Domaine Pierre et Jérôme Coursodon

With parcels exclusively in St.-Joseph and cellars in Mauves, this is a well-known estate with an excellent reputation. They own about 37 acres. The top wines see a good proportion of new oak, and they minimize sulfur and do not fine or filter. Their 2013 reds were somewhat withdrawn and hard to judge.

Saint-Joseph blanc « Silice» 2014 *(+)**

Pale gold. Ultraclean, lifted and focused aroma with a marked flintiness. On the palate, this white is similarly clean, focused and backed by defining acidity and a touch of phenolic grip. 100% Marsanne in stainless tanks.

Saint-Joseph blanc « Le Paradis St.-Pierre» 2014 *(*)**

Pale yellow gold. Very clean and subtle to the nose with delicate, very youthful white and yellow fruit accents and well-judged oak. The taste is clean and direct with attractive underlying fruit and texture, finishing with a chalky touch. 90% Marsanne, 10% Roussanne, barrel fermented with about one-fifth new wood.

Saint-Joseph rouge « Silice» 2013 *(+)**

Moderately dense very dark purple red. The nose is largely held back, suggesting clean, promising dark fruit and berries beneath. The taste is undeveloped and fresh although expressing little right now. Clean, dry frame of acidity and tannin.

Saint-Joseph rouge « L'Olivaie» 2013 *(*?)**

Nearly moderately dense very dark red with purple rim. The subdued nose suggests dark fruit and well-matched oak. The wine is very clean, fresh and medium-bodied in the mouth with underlying polish, ending dry with a touch of grip. From slopes above Tournon, 50+ year old vines.

Saint-Joseph rouge « Le Paradis St.-Pierre» 2013 *(*+)**

Moderately dense very dark red with purple rim. The nose is particularly clean and muted, hinting at attractively mature dark fruit. The wine possesses an appealing clean feel on the palate, and is medium plus in weight. There is a well-calibrated interplay of flesh, texture and freshness. Undeveloped finish.

Domaine Louis Chèze

This is a fastidious, quality-minded domaine based in Limony started in 1978 with a small holding in St.-Joseph. Today, the estate amounts to approximately 74 acres in St.-Joseph, Condrieu and IGP. The family is a partner in a separate venture at Seyssuel, the ancient Roman site on the left bank near Vienne. All parcels are picked by hand, and Syrah is sorted three times and destemmed. White grapes are sorted twice. Whites are fermented and aged in barrels, around one-fifth new for the whites, with bâtonnage. All reds see time in barrel. The 2013s are very successful in both colors.

Saint-Joseph blanc « Ro-Rée» 2013 **(+)**

Light yellow gold. Perfectly clean nose, very attractively perfumed ripe yellow peach and mango. The palate as well is ripe, fat at the center, finishing very clean and well-defined by integrated acidity. 60% Marsanne, 40% Roussanne.

Condrieu « Pagus Luminus» 2013 *(*+)**

Light yellow gold. Clean aroma with marked youthful maturity and yellow peach and pineapple. The palate is muted initially, opening slowly to reveal layered, nuanced fruit complexity. There is a fine backbone carrying the flavors. From a 3-

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hectare south-facing parcel in Limony. Fermented and aged in barrels of 2 to 3 uses for 8 to 10 months.

Condrieu « Brèze» 2013 *(*+)**

Light yellow gold. Focused high-toned aromatics with notable intensity characterized by flowery highlights and stony accents. This Condrieu expresses little on entry and displays a focused, well-integrated profile. The wine has flair and intensity in a building finish with complex high notes. This excellent Condrieu comes from a single southeast-facing parcel of 1.5 hectares in Limony. Fermented and matured in both new and seasoned barrels (of 2 to 3 uses) for 8 to 10 months.

Saint-Joseph rouge « Ro-Rée» 2013 *(*)**

Pale dark red with clear purple rim. Ideally clean, soft, pure aroma with a mix of dark fruits. This medium-bodied wine possesses a soft attack and center with understated fruit qualities, ending with ripe integrated acidity. 12 months in barrels of 1 to 3 uses.

Saint-Joseph rouge « Caroline» 2013 *(*)**

Nearly moderately dense dark red with purple rim. Impressively clean, soft, scented nose of red fruits and berries. The palate is equally attractive, with good texture and subdued youthful fruit, and the wine ends clean and dry. From a parcel at 1,000 ft. above Brèze with due south orientation. 20% new oak.

Saint-Joseph rouge « Angès» 2013 *(*)**

Moderately dense very dark red with purple rim. The nose is marked by clean oak and rather hidden dark fruit. The wine's taste has a fresh profile and remains largely closed, and there is a clean, dry frame and a note of ink at the end. From a 2-hectare parcel at 1,000 ft. in Limony. Vines 45 – 50 years old. 100% new oak for 18 months.

Côte-Rôtie « Belle Demoiselle» 2013 *(*)**

Pale very dark red purple. Healthy, clean nose with a lovely primary perfume of black berries and a subtle oak background. The palate is fresh and restrained, medium plus in weight, with hidden flavors. There is a clean, dry final impression. A blend of parcels fermented in small tanks with malo and aging in all-new oak.

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Domaine André Perret

With cellars in the village of Verlieu, just north of Chavanay, André Perret's estate of 32 acres focuses on Condrieu and Saint-Joseph, with notable holdings in Clos Chanson and Coteau de Chéry. Their 2013 whites showed brilliantly.

Saint-Joseph blanc 2013 **(+)**

Pale light gold. Very youthful, inviting and flattering aroma of white fruits and chalky highlights. The palate delivers enticingly rich white and stone fruits with noteworthy intensity and energy. The aftertaste is exceptionally expressive with a fine acidity and elegance. A real standout.

Condrieu 2013 **(+)**

Light gold. Ultraclean, restrained nose with controlled intensity and budding complexity and a background of white and tropical fruit. The taste exhibits marked purity and expression, increasing as the wine crosses the palate. There is even more dimension in the remarkably persistent finish which is defined by an elevated acid backbone. 15% new oak.

Condrieu «Clos Chanson» 2013 **(*)**

Pale clear gold. The stunning nose of this young Condrieu is impeccably clean and stands out for its superb purity and magnificent multidimensional white and tropical fruit perfume. The wine has tremendous intensity in the mouth and early complexity. The wine concludes with tension and definition. A single enclosure of 50-year old vines. Fermented and matured in barrels of 1 to 3 uses, with bâtonnage.

Condrieu «Coteau de Chéry» 2013 **(*) ! to be bottled December 2015**

Light gold. Ideally clean aroma exhibiting very fine inflections of white fruit, flowers and stone with impressive dimension. In the mouth, this outstanding Condrieu possesses richness, expression and stunning length yet is also well-calibrated. There is astonishing aromatic intensity and youthful complexity at the end. One of the finest Condrieu tasted on this trip, with highly skillful use of wood. 60-year old vines. 1/3 in stainless tank, 2/3 in 20% new oak.

Saint-Joseph rouge 2013 *(+)**

Pale dark red purple. The nose of this young red displays a notable fragrance of youthful, accessible red fruit. The wine's taste is clean and full of charm and has a dry, balanced frame. A medium-bodied drinker, easy to like.

Saint-Joseph rouge «Les Grisières» 2012 *(*)**

Very pale dark red purple. Lovely, scented aroma of dark red fruits and a meaty, smoky overlay. This has a light feel and a great deal of fragrance on the palate with smoked meat and a very fine structure. Composed, with notable finesse.

Individual Cornas wines

Cornas 2013 Johann Michel *(*)**

Nearly moderately dense dark purple. Aromatically, this Cornas suggests muted dark fruit and a faint volatile note, with moderate concentration. The palate is particularly aromatic, offering volume and personality. The wine boasts a lasting finish as well as softness offset by elevated acidity and moderate tannin. Destemmed and matured for up to 18 months in barrels of 2 to 4 uses.

Cornas «Cuvee Jana» 2013, Johann Michel **(+)**

Moderately dense dark purple. Mature, youthful dark fruits and berries with a subtle and complementary overlay of creamy oak. Just short of full-bodied, the palate has a particularly polished feel for a young Cornas, with restrained dark fruit. The wine shows length and freshness, with a lingering fragrance of fruit and pepper. Harmonious, even sensual. I have not tasted many wines from this domaine, and I found both examples to be among the top tier of 2013 Cornas.

Cornas «Empreintes» 2013, Eric et Joël Durand *(*)**

Moderately dense dark purple. Fresh and clean aroma with attractively scented dark berries. This well-balanced Cornas surprises with a soft, graceful mouth-feel. This has a tenderness and a lasting, fresh finale.

Cornas «Terre Brûlée» 2013, Guy Farge *(*)**

Moderately dense very dark purple. The aroma is relatively open and fresh, with youthful dark berries and a sharp note. The attack and center are polished, and the wine is undeveloped and non-expressive, ending with pointed acidity. Backward but has concealed concentration. Organic.

Domaine du Tunnel

This stellar domaine was formed in the mid-1990s and is looked after by Stéphane Robert, who shows remarkable talent across his entire portfolio of appellations, both white and red. The estate produces three styles of St.-Péray – including a rare

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pure Roussanne – as well as red St.-Joseph and Cornas. I have not tasted the Tunnel 2012s, but I found the 2013s, while very good at least, less exciting than their brilliant 2011s.

Saint-Péray « Marsanne» 2013 *(+)**

Pale yellow gold. Understated nose with a measure of yellow fruit. High-toned palate dominated by aromatics. Clean, dry chalky finish.

Saint-Péray « Roussanne» 2013 *(+)**

Pale yellow gold. The nose displays delicacy with accented white fruits and citrus. This has a leaner feel and a clean, dry frame. Lacks some dimension. I've been more impressed by previous vintages of this wine – a surprise given the general performance of whites in 2013. 20% in tronconique vats, 30% in barriques of 1 to 5 uses, and 50% in tank.

Saint-Joseph rouge 2013 *(*)**

Moderately dense very dark purple red. Clean, mostly held back to the nose with masked dark fruit and berries. The medium-full palate has an attractive presence with reserved dark fruit. There is a sense of balance and well-matched structure with a finale of pointed acidity and dry tannin. Grown in 3 parcels in Tournon, Mauves and Glun averaging 30 years of age.

Cornas 2013 *(*)**

Moderately dense very dark purple red. Reserved to the nose with controlled youthful dark fruit and berries and moderate substance. This Cornas has evident volume and concentration in the mouth and concludes with a dry backbone of elevated acidity and dry tannin. This needs some taming. The long, subtle dark berry aftertaste is a positive indication of its innate quality. A blend of 15 parcels covering 4 hectares.

Cornas « Vin Noir» 2013 *(*+)**

Moderately dense very dark purple red. All in reserve aromatically, with a suggestion of dark fruit and berries and moderate substance. In the mouth, Vin Noir is rather raw with hidden dark fruit which is scarcely expressive. The wine is wrapped up in a shell of dry, chalky tannins and high acidity. This Cornas, from 100-year old vines, is backward and does not immediately impress as it does in most vintages. It will merit the higher score in time if there is enough concentration emerges.

Domaine Vincent Paris

I have been an admirer of the wines of Vincent Paris, who set up his domaine in 1997, for a number of years. He currently looks after 17 acres, mostly in Cornas (about 12 acres) with small holdings in St.-Joseph and regional Côtes du Rhône. He practices destemming to a large extent, a week-long cold soak, and 3 to 4 weeks of maceration. He avoids new wood, maturing in barrels of 2 to 8 uses, and does not filter. Stylistically, I would place the Paris wines between the old school and modern: the wines are clean and possess both fruit and classic structures.

Crozes-Hermitage rouge 2013 **(*)

Not quite moderately dense very dark red with purple. The nose shows flinty inflections and black berries of low concentration. This Crozes, just medium-bodied, is raw and undeveloped, finishing with a dry edge and persistent berry aromas.

Saint-Joseph rouge « Les Côtes» 2013 **(*)

Nearly moderately dense very dark red with purple. Reserved nose, controlled dark fruit and berry scent, low concentration and substance. This St. Jo is certainly clean and fresh yet also raw, with hints of dark fruit in the undeveloped finish.

Cornas « Granit 30» 2013 *(*)**

Pale very dark red. Backward nose suggesting moderately concentrated dark and wild fruits and a subtle creaminess. On the palate, there is surprising suppleness and charm together with a soft center. Dark fruit and an inky note linger. The wine finishes with a clean, firm structure with pointed final acidity. The vines are 10 years old and maturation is in Burgundian barrels, none new.

Cornas « Granit 60» 2013 **(+)**

Pale very dark purple. Largely non-expressive yet possesses concentration and strength with wild fruits, dark fruit and flinty accents. In the mouth, Granit 60 has noteworthy raw material, a suggestion of sweetness, and very youthful dark fruits and berries. Firm but balanced. 60 year old vines.

Cornas «La Geynalé» 2013 **(+)**

Moderately dense dark purple. Mostly in reserve, this young Cornas displays a whiff of volatility and concentrated old vine dark fruit at the core. The palate confirms the wine's innate concentration, and the taste is layered and leaves a

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faint sweetness. A suggestion of dark fruit persists with dominant chalky tannins and embedded acidity. 100 year old vines yielding 22 hectoliters/hectare.

Domaine Courbis

This is a substantial estate of 81 acres, of which 59 are in St.-Joseph and the balance in Cornas together with a small IGP Ardèche vineyard. The domaine is managed by the two Courbis brothers and enjoys a solid reputation. They keep the yields low, practice destemming, use a proportion of new oak, and do not fine or filter. There is modern flair here in the best sense. The three top Cornas bottlings approach their 2011 counterparts in quality and are among the best of their types.

Saint-Joseph blanc 2014 *(*) bottled one week ago**

Pale yellow gold. Primary aromatics dominated by white and stone fruit. The palate is clean, direct and rather dumb from recent bottling. There are dry, stony accents and a lasting youthful fragrance. Fermented in all-new barrels. Almost entirely Marsanne from a vineyard toward the southern limit of the AOC at the 45th parallel.

Saint-Joseph blanc « Les Royes» 2013 *(*?)**

Light yellow gold. The nose displays overt oak along with muted white fruits and stony inflections. The wine shows precision on the palate and is well-defined with sharp acidity and woody overtones at the end. Oak aromas dominate for now. Six months in bottle will tell if the wine has more substance in reserve.

Saint-Joseph rouge 2012 *(+?)**

Moderately dense very dark red with purple rim. The nose is reduced, concealing dark fruit and making it difficult to judge the wine. There is a sense of freshness and moderate concentration. Pointed acidity lingers.

Saint-Joseph rouge « Les Royes» 2012 *(*)**

Moderately dense very dark red with purple rim. Attractive, clean, youthfully expressive nose of lifted dark fruit and an inky note. The taste is young and undeveloped yet possesses appealing texture and masked dark fruit. Medium plus in weight. Clean, dry frame. The vineyard is on a slope close to Cornas and faces due south in a protected, warm valley.

Cornas «Champelrose» 2012 *(*)**

Moderately dense plus very dark red with purple edge. The nose delivers above average concentration and depth together with restrained youthful dark fruit and earthy note. In the mouth, this credible Cornas shows more dimension than expected and textural appeal. The finish is yet to develop and is defined by clean dry acidity and moderate tannin hidden in the flesh. Champelrose is a brand name and comes from several parcels, both foot of slope and hillside, and vines from 20 to 90 years old. Matured in 25% new oak which has been fully absorbed.

Cornas «Les Eygats» 2012 **(+)**

Moderately dense plus very dark red with purple rim. Clean, youthfully restrained nose possessing notable concentration, hints of dark fruit, and carefully married oak. The palate is essentially non-expressive yet delivers a soft, polished feel from attack to aftertaste. Medium-bodied plus, this 2012 is particularly well-balanced and already harmonious. The ending is supple with an attractive texture and fine structure. From a parcel at 820 feet on terraces of decomposed granite which ripens very late. 18 months in 50% new barrels.

Cornas «La Sabarette» 2012 **(+)**

Moderately dense plus very dark red with thin purple rim. The nose of this Cornas possesses evident breadth and controlled generosity, combining undeveloped dark fruit and barrel-aging influences. In the mouth, the wine is mostly held back although it shows a lovely, polished, even sensual mouth-feel for a young Cornas. There is a budding finish with well-embedded acidity and moderate tannin surfacing only at the very end. Shows the added dimension contributed by 60+ year old vines. 18 months in all-new oak, which seems to suit the wine.

Domaine Auguste Clape

Clape is one of the grand old names of Cornas and has shaped the character of this appellation in the minds of devotees. They own a little over 13 acres in Cornas together with around 5 acres elsewhere. Their regime is ultra-traditional: no destemming, fermentation in open cement cuves, malo and aging in foudres. There is a divide between Clape and the more “modern” growers in wine style.

Cornas 2013 ?

Almost dense very dark red with thin purple rim. The nose is dominated by pronounced volatile acidity and ethyl acetate. This isn't entirely unusual for Clape, but in this vintage the level is a concern and makes the wine impossible to judge.

Yet the wine has obvious raw material and even a soft core of old vine dark fruit, with a dry, chalky ending. A wine to taste and evaluate at a later date.

Domaine Alain Voge

Voge is, like Clape, a reference point for Cornas in particular, but their estate extends to St.-Joseph, St.-Péray and a Northern Côtes du Rhône that is entirely Syrah. The range of whites includes the outstanding "Fleur de Crussol" and a sparkling St.-Péray. The old-vine bottling of Cornas is almost always a benchmark for the appellation.

Saint-Péray sparkling « Les Bulles d'Alain» non-vintage ***

Light yellow gold with an active mousse. Offers a simple nose with moderate expression and delicate white fruit. The taste is straightforward, clean, and fully dry. There are subtle notes of blanched nut and yellow fruits.

Saint-Péray « Harmonie» 2013 *(*)**

Pale brilliant yellow gold. The aroma of this pure Marsanne, fermented and aged on lees in stainless tank, is very appealing and scented with a lemony overtone and very good intensity. On the palate, this white is very clean, well-defined and poised, leaving a lemon and white fruit aftertaste. Vaguely reminiscent of an unoaked Burgundian Chardonnay.

Saint-Péray « Terres Boisées» 2013 *(*)**

Bright yellow gold. The aroma is characterized by vanilla, citrus, toast and stony notes. The taste is less revealing, with yellow fruits in the background, and a clean, chalky conclusion with a bit of phenolic grip. The handling à la Bourgogne has left its mark. Barrel fermented, with bâtonnage, in 30% new pièces for 12 months.

Saint-Joseph rouge « Les Vinsonnes» 2013 *(*) bottled one week ago**

Pale very dark red encircled by purple. Aromatically, this St. Jo is particularly clean and attractive with gently expressive red and dark fruits. The taste is largely reserved with a polished undertone. Dry, etched, rather assertive backbone. This needs some time to come together and soften after bottling. Comes from a very steep vineyard of young vines (around 10 years old) in Mauves. Aged in barrel for 16 months.

Cornas «Les Chailles» 2013 *(*)**

Nearly moderately dense very dark red with purple at rim. The nose is fresh, closed and undeveloped and possesses nearly hidden strength and intensity. The wine's taste is similarly backward and dominated by its clean, dry structure. Demands keeping to soften and reveal itself. Partial destemming, long vatting, 16 months in barrel.

Cornas «Vieilles Vignes» 2013 *(*+)**

Moderately dense very dark red purple. There is a core of old vine dark fruit hidden away and a touch of volatility in the nose. The palate is backward as well, yet there is a sense of underlying flesh offset by a firm, dry structure. The nascent finish testifies to the wine's potential and shows persistent aromatic notes of dark fruit. A blend of multiple parcels of vines over 30 years of age. Matured for around 18 months in 20% new barrels.

Delas

This producer dates from the early 1800s and has experienced a complete transformation since the 1990s. The firm, now part of the Champagne Roederer group, has an estate of 73 acres in Crozes, St.-Joseph and Hermitage. They also produce a range of négociant wines from throughout the Valley. There is dependable quality regardless of origin, and the firm's top estate bottlings compete with the best of their types. I tasted only a few wines in their range on this visit given time constraints.

Condrieu «La Galopine» 2013 **(+)**

Pale peach gold. Beautiful, impeccably clean nose with multifaceted high notes of flowers and pear. The palate as well is remarkably expressive, highly aromatic and flowery as well as exceptionally long, intricate and precisely defined. A selection of three parcels fermented in tank.

Condrieu «Clos Boucher» 2013 **(+)**

Pale yellow gold. There is more reserve here and with La Galopine along with inflected white fruits. In the mouth, this cerebral Condrieu is linear, transparent and highly persistent with notable finishing tension and clarity. The long, subtle aftertaste, still muted, confirms its quality. Sourced from a single south-facing parcel near Château-Grillet. Fermented and matured in Burgundian barrels for 8 months, 20% new.

Côte-Rôtie « Seigneur de Marignon» 2012 *(+)**

Pale dark red with purple rim. This is held back with fine, flinty inflections and hints of wild dark fruit. The wine has a lightness and grace and is fine and transparent. Ethereal expression of Côte-Rôtie. From several sites, malo and aging for 14 to 16 months in barrels of 1 to 3 uses.

Côte-Rôtie « La Landonne» 2012 *(*)**

Pale dark purple. Particularly fragrant aroma of sweet black fruit and berries with good dimension and early expression. The palate delivers sound maturity, with a mix of black fruit, in a medium weight profile. The wine has a fine structure. A normally solid and meaty example, 2012 La Landonne is elegant and rather delicate. Pure Syrah, the wine is raised in the same way as Seigneur de Marignon.

Domaine des Remizières (Caves Desmeure)

A domaine of around 74 acres in Crozes, St.-Joseph and Hermitage. Unfortunately, they are not easy to find. This is an address to seek out, and their red and white Crozes are particularly successful in 2013.

Crozes-Hermitage 2013 *(*)**

Moderately dense dark purple. This is perfectly clean and healthy and marked by pure black berries and noteworthy freshness. The palate surprises with its expressiveness at this stage and is very clean and medium plus in weight. Young but lasting and expansive aromatics. This is a very attractive basic Crozes raised in foudres.

Crozes-Hermitage blanc « Cuvée Particulière» 2013 **(+)**

Light peach gold. Perfumed nose boasting white fruits, dried yellow fruit and stony highlights. In the mouth, this white Crozes is inviting, scented and quite long and tender, with a very fine acid frame. 100% Marsanne.

Crozes-Hermitage blanc « Cuvée Christophe» 2013 **(+)**

Light yellow gold. Very attractive expression and varied white and yellow fruit aromatics and visible oak. On the palate, the wine is again perfumed from attack to finish, medium weight, and very long. The oak adds a flattering aspect. The aftertaste is particularly expressive. 85% Marsanne, 15% Roussanne fermented in Burgundian barrels, 30% new.

Crozes-Hermitage rouge « Cuvée Chrisophe» 2013 *(*+)**

Nearly moderately dense black purple. Especially clean, attractive and expressive nose with mature black fruits and berries. The palate is fresh and juicy, with a clean gripping conclusion which reveals lovely, scented fruit.

Crozes-Hermitage rouge « Cuvée Particulière» 2013 *(*+)**

Nearly moderately dense dark purple. So very clean once more, soft and pure, with mature black berries. The palate has an appealing softness and is wonderfully clean with very attractive fruit qualities. Dry and balanced with flinty accents at the end.

Saint-Joseph rouge 2013 *(*)**

Moderately dense very dark purple. The aroma shows restraint and youthful, nuanced dark berries and fruit of sound maturity and health. In the mouth, this St. Jo has a soft feel and is largely closed, but there is a sense of charm and potential. Very fine acid frame and touch of tannin at the end.

Hermitage rouge 2013 *(*)**

Nearly dense black purple. Remarkably expressive nose of black fruits and berries with moderate depth and substance. There is an appealing layered fruit expression and lingering aromatic highlights. Clean, medium-bodied plus, well-balanced. Quite supple and approachable for 2013 or any young vintage of Hermitage.

Gilles Robin

Crozes-Hermitage rouge « Papillon» 2013 *(*)**

Nearly moderately dense dark red purple. Very pure, clean and attractive nose with a youthful scent of black currant and blackberry. The palate as well is notably clean as well as fresh, vivid and direct, concealing a core of black fruit, and the wine has a long, dry, fresh finale. From 20-year old vines on the Plain of Chassis.

Crozes-Hermitage rouge « Albéric Bouvet» 2012 *(+)**

Nearly moderately dense very dark purple red. The aroma is of young, varied dark and red fruit, clean and held back. The palate is juicy, medium weight, with hidden dark fruit and berries, ending very dry. May reveal more in time.

Crozes-Hermitage rouge «1920» 2012 *(*)**

Moderately dense very dark purple. To the nose, this Crozes is expressive, showing blackberry fruit along with flinty and peppery accents. The taste is very fresh, juicy and energetic, finishing with a clean, very dry backbone and gripping tannin. Vines planted 1956. 18 months in demi-muids of 2 to 3 uses.

Saint-Joseph rouge « André Péalat» 2012 *(*)**

Moderately dense black purple. Very young, backward nose with a touch of reduction and masked black fruit and berries. The taste is largely hidden though there is moderated concentration and texture at the center and a lasting, dry, undeveloped finish. 12 months in demi-muids.

Hermitage rouge 2011 *(+)**

Moderately dense very dark purple. This 2011 is still in an early phase of life, offering fragrant dark berries and a trace of ink to the nose. In the mouth, the wine has an engaging, attractive presence, medium body and concentration, and inky dark berry fruit. Balanced and appealing, but does not seem like a 2011. Purchased grapes.

Yann Chave

Crozes-Hermitage rouge 2013 **(*)

Moderately dense dark purple. Reduction dominates the nose, and there are concealed red and dark fruits. The palate is more appealing, with spicy, piquant dark berries and a tightly wound, very dry ending.

Crozes-Hermitage rouge «La Ronvie» 2013 *(?)**

Moderately dense very dark purple. Very young yet particularly attractive expression of primary dark fruit and berries of moderate concentration and intensity. The palate is juicy and fresh, medium-bodied plus, and ends with a degree of severity and astringency. Aggressive now, may soften in time.

Hermitage rouge 2013 *(*)**

Opaque black purple. This young Hermitage displays an undeveloped aroma of primary black currant and blackberry with an overlay of oak. On the palate, the wine offers moderate substance and sweet, attractive black fruits and berries, ending dry and somewhat astringent, with pointed acidity at the end.

Domaine de Lucie

This small quality-minded estate has a hands-off philosophy and favors organic and biodynamic farming. Lucie Fourel, who looks after the property and winemaking, does not use sulfur and avoids fining and filtration. Les Pitchounettes comes from young vines on the Plain of Chassis and is aged in used demi-muids for a brief period.

Crozes-Hermitage blanc « Les Pitchounettes» 2014 (+?)**

Pronounced dark gold. This white Crozes has not completed its malo-lactic and is obviously in an unfinished state. Seems to have moderate concentration and fruit though it is raw and hard to judge. It is a very dependable wine in past vintages. 100% Roussanne.

Crozes-Hermitage rouge « Les Pitchounettes» 2014 *(+)**

Pale dark purple. Very clean, expressive young aroma of blackberry with notable intensity. In the mouth, the wine is precociously attractive and charming, ending clean and dry with a lingering black fruit aroma.

Crozes-Hermitage rouge « Les Sabiaux» 2013 *(+)**

Pale plus dark purple with a clear red rim. Aromatically, this young Crozes is quite open and expressive, offering attractive dark and black fruit and a meaty note. The palate similarly delivers lifted fruit and early charm yet is lighter weight. May come out more in a few months.

Crozes-Hermitage rouge « Les Sabiaux» 2012 *(*)**

Pale plus dark purple. Fragrant, clean aroma offering appealing dark berries with a meaty note. The palate is focused and fresh with noteworthy aromatic expression, concluding clean and dry with a touch of astringency.

Crozes-Hermitage rouge « Racines» 2013 *(*)**

Pale plus dark purple. The nose offers fragrant dark berries and is moderately concentrated. In the mouth, Racines possesses notable, appealing fruitiness and a graceful quality. Just medium weight, this young red is suppler than most 2013 Crozes, yet is still framed by a measure of dry tannin.

Crozes-Hermitage rouge « Racines» 2012 *(*)**

Moderately dense dark purple. The appealing aroma exhibits scented blackberry and a flinty highlight. The wine is more closed to the taste, with a clean, dry but not severe conclusion. Persistent aromatics enhance the appeal.

Domaine Patrick Jasmin

This is an old-fashioned estate in all the best senses – a benchmark for the appellation. They have nearly 12 acres in Côte-Rôtie and a small piece in Vin de Pays. Jasmin practices destemming and foot treading. He does include around one-fourth new barrels – of varying sizes – but uses the barrels for up to ten years. Both the 2012 and 2013 are exemplary in my opinion.

Côte-Rôtie 2012 **(+)**

Pale plus dark red with purple. The promising nose is largely closed and undeveloped, but there is wonderful purity of fruit with a controlled lift. The wine is medium-bodied plus and possesses striking early aromatic complexity on the palate, which delivers exceptional finishing intensity. The equilibrium is precise the wine has a very fine structure. A beautiful example with more Viognier than usual: 85% Syrah, 15% Viognier. A composite of 11 parcels.

Côte-Rôtie 2013 **(*) to be bottled Summer 2015**

Moderately dense black purple. The nose is controlled and suggests dark primary fruit, warmth, and subtle oak and spice. This wine has exceptional volume and impressive harmony despite its juvenile state. Terrific class, elegance and potential. One of the very best expressions of the vintage.

Domaine Clusel-Roch

This excellent estate has nearly 20 acres in all divided among several locations in Côte-Rôtie (around 8.6 acres) along with a little Condrieu and Coteaux du Lyonnais (an appellation west of Lyon focusing on Gamay and Chardonnay). The vineyards are certified organic and employ massale selections for Syrah. The family utilizes partial destemming and a contemporary basket press. Their use of oak is masterful: it is invisible. The wines, white and red, are reliable and classy, and Grandes Places is consistently outstanding. Both the 2012s and 2013s are very successful.

Condrieu « Verchery» 2014 *(*+)**

Bright light yellow gold. The clean aroma is still primary and is marked by a mixture of white and yellow fruits. The very youthful palate shows beautiful, pronounced aromatics which are amplified across the palate. Exceptionally clean, balanced and perfumed.

Côte-Rôtie « Classique» 2012 *(*)**

Pale dark purple red. The nose is reserved with a suggestion of mature red fruit and flowery highlights. The wine is especially high toned with very fine inflections and an exceptionally long and promising albeit youthful finish with a finely calibrated structure. This is all about finesse and clarity. 96% Syrah, 4% Viognier.

Côte-Rôtie « Viallière» 2012 *(*+)**

Pale dark purple red. The youthfully restrained nose exhibits red fruits concealed by oak and spice. The palate is finely constructed rather than dense and has a long line, tension and exceptional finesse. 100% Syrah, 25 year-old vines. 24 months in 25% new barrels.

Côte-Rôtie « Les Grandes Places» 2012 **(+)**

Pale very dark purple red. The nose says little and is all in reserve, with faint red fruits. The palate as well is undeveloped and has notable tension with a suggestion of inflected red fruits and red meat. The finish reveals more of the wine's innate complexity. From a single parcel of 100+ year old Syrah (the fabled Serines). Aged 24 months in 30% new oak.

Côte-Rôtie « Classique» 2013 *(*)**

Pale dark purple. Primary, concentrated dark and forest fruit. The taste is characterized by ample though undeveloped dark fruit and a polished center. The finish builds gradually and persists, showing balancing acidity and tannic grip. This is a fine example of a standard Côte-Rôtie in the 2013 vintage.

Côte-Rôtie « Viallière» 2013 **(*)**

Pale dark purple red. Primary yet beautifully pure deep, dark fruit with noteworthy depth. The palate possesses excellent volume, substance and fruit purity. Expansive and highly persistent. A beautiful, promising example.

Côte-Rôtie « Les Grandes Places» 2013 **(*)**

Pale very dark purple. Very beautiful, very pure youthful dark fruit with excellent intensity and notable concentration. This has a polished entry and fills the mouth. Nearly full-bodied as well as harmonious and graceful, this outstanding Côte-Rôtie delivers an impressively long, enveloping and subtly nuanced finish. A highly promising young wine and model of elegance. 70-year old vines. Aged in 25% new oak this year.

Côte-Rôtie « Les Grandes Places» 2011 **(*)**

Pale dark red purple (a very youthful appearance). Very clean and surprisingly reserved to the nose, with subtle mature dark fruit. The palate boasts striking purity and integration along with a polished center. Full-bodied, long and balanced, this outstanding wine exhibits a multifaceted, long-lasting aromatic aftertaste. Consistent with my notes for this wine in 2013.

Domaine Jamet

Jamet is an icon in Côte-Rôtie and a strong argument in favor of using multiple vineyard origins in a single cuvee. They have 25 parcels in 17 lieux-dits, and due to the varying conditions, harvesting takes place over three weeks. Theirs is a pure Syrah example. The winery is gravity fed, and they partially destem according to the year. Aging is in one-fourth new wood for up to two years. These are brilliant, perfumed classics.

Côte-Rôtie 2014 *(*+) or likely even better**

Very pale vibrant purple. Primary and backward with promising dark fruit and clarity. Very young and controlled on the palate with a beautiful, budding fragrant lift. This has terrific presence and class for such a young wine. The degree of harmony and integration at this stage is remarkable. The wine ends with delicately embedded acidity and fine-grained tannin.

Côte-Rôtie 2013 **(+)**

Pale dark purple. Splendidly pure and beautiful primary dark fruits and berries with a faint note of pepper. In the mouth, this 2013 is highly expansive and possesses heightened aromatic expression though it is so very young. There are alluring sweet dark fruits and berries as well as spice along with exceptional aromatic expressiveness. Fine, well-integrated structure.

Côte-Rôtie 2012 **(*)**

Moderately dense black red purple. Pale dark red purple. Restrained, youthful aromatic expression of meat, forest fruit and pepper. Remarkably polished and supple mouth-feel with tremendous aromatic lift and expression for a young wine. The wine possesses mouth-filling volume and is precisely calibrated, ending with defining tension.

Cave Yves Cuilleron

This is an outstanding producer with a large range of appellations and sixteen separate bottlings of AOC wines. Cuilleron has a substantial estate of 146 acres and makes excellent white and red wines which have a near-cult following and command high prices. Their specialties are Saint-Joseph, 37 acres and 6 cuvees; Condrieu, 25 acres and 4 cuvees; and Côte-Rôtie, 17 acres and 3 cuvees. For whites, Cuilleron likes barrel fermentation; for reds, partial destemming along with punching down and pumping over. Aging is in one- to four-year old barrels.

Saint-Péray « Les Potiers» 2013 **(*)

Light peach gold. Clean, non-expressive nose with stony highlights. The palate is focused and narrowly defined with a delicate white fruit fragrance and crisp ending. A blend of several parcels. Marsanne and Roussanne.

Saint-Péray « Les Cerfs» 2013 *(*)**

Brilliant light gold. Ultraclean to the nose with delicate nuances of white fruit flesh and stone. In the mouth, this white is finely assembled and focused with notable intensity and a long, racy conclusion. There are attractive aromatic highlights in the finish. Vaguely reminiscent of a Chassagne-Montrachet in a lighter year. 100% Marsanne.

Saint-Joseph white « Lyséras» 2012 *(*)**

Light clear gold. Focused, delicate inflected aroma with an inviting mix of white and yellow fruit notes. The palate is tightly wound with noteworthy tension, opening slowly on the finish to express nuanced aromatic notes. Possesses intensity and elegance. 50% each Marsanne and Roussanne planted at high density.

Saint-Joseph white « Le Lombard» 2013 **(+)**

Pale bright gold. Lovely and promising aroma, very clean and fine, with early complexity of white fruits and flowery notes. Held back on attack and building

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subtly to offer a delicate, inflected aromatic personality and a fine spine of acidity. 100% Marsanne.

Saint-Joseph white « Saint-Pierre» 2013 **(+)**

Light yellow gold. The nose of this white St. Jo shows youthful restraint as well as impressive purity along with hints of yellow and white fruits. In the mouth, the wine has a lilting, inflected personality and is transparent and highly aromatic. There is a defining, clean acid backbone. 100% Roussanne.

Condrieu « La Petite Côte» 2013 **(+)**

Pale yellow gold. Pure and perfectly clean, the aroma of this standout Condrieu shows beautiful dimension, with a combination of ripe Comice pear and stone fruit. In the mouth, the wine is mostly reserved, highly focused and well-defined with multidimensional, very lasting highlights of flowers, white and stone fruits. A selection, not a lieu-dit, given 9 months in 15% new wood.

Condrieu « Les Chaillets» 2013 **(*)**

Light yellow gold. This youthful Condrieu boasts a beautiful, multifaceted mélange of ripe white peach and pear accented by flowery notes. The palate displays comparable dimension and expression with a remarkably long presence and finishing intensity. There is an elegant, fine structure with defining acidity. A selection of the oldest vines, 9 months in 30% new oak.

Condrieu « Vertige» 2013 **(*)**

Light yellow gold. Impeccably clean nose offering an inviting aroma of ripe yellow fruit complemented by quality new oak. There is evident richness. In the mouth, the wine exhibits far more control and reserve as well as a transparent quality. The very fine conclusion is persistent, elegant and dry. This is given 18 months in barrel, roughly double that of the whites above, in 50% new oak.

Crozes-Hermitage rouge «Laya» 2013 *(+)** – new wine in 2012

Moderately dense red purple. Very clean, inflected nose of dark berries and fruits. The wine is direct and positive on the palate, medium weight and lasting in its inflections and sense of tension, ending with well-defined acidity. High density vineyard. 18 months in barrel.

Crozes-Hermitage rouge «Les Deux Terrasses» 2013 – new wine in 2012

Moderately dense very dark red with clear purple edge. High-toned, inflected aroma with marked stoniness and a background of black cherry and blackberry. In the mouth, this young Crozes is particularly fresh, clean and dry with lingering aromatic inflections and a distinct stony flintiness. From the plain of Chassis, 18 months in barrel.

Saint-Joseph rouge «Les Pierres Sèches» 2013 *(+)**

Pale very dark red purple. Clean and scented rather than concentrated with dark cherry fruit aromas. Fresh, medium-bodied and well-defined with noteworthy tension and finesse and an etched conclusion. A selection of high-density hillside parcels in Chavanay. 18 months in barrel.

Saint-Joseph rouge «L’Amarybelle» 2013 *(*)**

Pale plus very dark red with purple rim. Youthful, clean and reserved, suggesting a mix of red cherry and plum. The taste is highly focused, fresh and alive. This medium-weight St. Jo has clarity and lingering aromatic notes, and a touch of pepper, together with a firm, dry frame. A selection of high-density vines from 20 to 40 years old.

Saint-Joseph rouge «Les Serines» 2013 *(*)**

Moderately dense very dark purple red. Very attractive scented youthful aroma of black cherry with excellent purity. The wine is clean and somewhat angular for now on the palate with noteworthy grip and an etched finale. A selection of vines 25 to 60 years old, 18 months in barrel.

Côte-Rôtie «Bassenon» 2013 *(*)**

Pale dark red purple. Very fine young nose, very clean with promising early complexity and a sense of transparency. The palate follows the aroma and is transparent and medium weight, displaying heightened aromatic lift. Fresh, dry ending. From vines on the Coteau de Semons, 90% Syrah and 10% Viognier. Aged 18 months in barrel.

Côte-Rôtie «Madinière» 2013 **(+)**

Pale dark red purple. The nose is particularly focused and fresh with marked wild fruits and flintiness. On the palate, this red is as well characterized by its freshness and tightly defined feel, offering clarity and tension with lasting aromatic notes

Tasting Notes of Roger C. Bohmrich MW

and a firm, dry backbone. A selection of high-density Syrah from the north of Ampuis. 18 months in barrel.

Cornas «Le Village» 2013 *(+)**

Pale dark red purple. Clean, held back with a suggestion of dark fruit and moderate concentration. The palate is very fresh and tight. Dry, flinty conclusion and subtle youthful fruit notes. From three parcels of high-density vines.

Cornas «Les Vires» 2013 **(+?)**

Moderately dense very dark red purple. Very clean nose with notable purity, very lovely and restrained dark cherry fruit. Highly focused, tightly framed palate with pronounced tension and structure, leaving a final very dry impression. Needs time to come out of its shell. Two-thirds of the vines were planted in 1911. 18 months in barrel.

The following wines represent the best parcels and barriques of each appellation. They are marketed with a unique label designed by artist Robert Bourasseau with a different image of a woman on each. They were outstanding.



Saint-Joseph rouge «Bourasseau» 2012 *(*) or better in time**

Moderately dense very dark red purple. The undeveloped nose shows youthful restraint along with an undercurrent of wild fruit, red fruit and flinty accents. In the mouth, the wine is backward and tightly held together, building in aromatic intensity and ending with arresting cut. This is a singular expression of Saint-Joseph. Aged 24 months in barrel.

Côte-Rôtie «Bourasseau» 2012 *(*+)**

Pale dark red purple. Very clean, muted and undeveloped nose of tremendous clarity with understated dark and wild red fruits. The wine delivers marked intensity in the mouth without density and with exceptional tension and cut. The finish features high notes of flinty dark fruit. This backward wine is off-putting right now and must be cellared, perhaps to 2023 to 2026. Aged 24 months in barrel.

Condrieu «Bourasseau» 2012 **(*)**

Pronounced yellow gold. Extroverted aroma of ripe yellow peach and mango with above-average richness and a complement of flattering oak. The wine's taste is layered yet less giving at first than its aroma, then builds toward an exceptionally long aromatic conclusion with a defining framework of acidity. Richly flavored, full-bodied and also elegantly constructed. 12 months in barrel.

Domaine Georges Vernay

This name is a reference point for Condrieu, particularly their Chaillées de L'Enfer and Coteau de Vernon selections. The family estate, overseen by Christine Vernay, also has holdings in St.-Joseph and Côte-Rôtie. In all, the domaine covers nearly 40 acres under vine.

Condrieu «Terrasses de l'Empire» 2013 *(*)**

Light gold. Superbly clean, still primary white fruits and flowers. In the mouth, this vibrant medium-bodied Condrieu opens slowly to show striking purity and an enticing floral aftertaste with elegant acidity. Fermented and matured in foudres.

Condrieu «Les Chaillées de l'Enfer» 2013 **(*)**

Pale gold. Ultraclean, wonderfully pure scent of ripe pear and other white fruits. This wine exhibits terrific precision and focus in the mouth. There is an attention-grabbing fragrance which persists for some time. The beautiful flowery highlights are accompanied by a ripe, elegant backbone and sense of tension. Gorgeous example with skillfully managed oak. Fermented and matured one year in 225-liter barriques, one-fourth new, with regular bâtonnage.

Condrieu «Coteau de Vernon» 2013 **(*)**

Light yellow gold. Impeccably clean like the other whites, the nose of this Condrieu reveals exquisite inflections of white fruits and stoniness. The ethereal taste delivers a transparent feel and beautiful, lasting aromatics. Very young yet

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possesses exceptional fruit complexity. The wine finishes with a fine and elegant frame. Vines between 50 and 80 years of age. Fermented and aged in barriques (25% new) for up to 18 months.

Saint-Joseph red 2013 **(*)

Very pale dark red with clear purple rim. This St. Jo offers a fragrant young aroma of low concentration marked by red cherry. The palate is light, fresh and rather simple. From one parcel, 30 years old, in Chavanay. Fully destemmed, about a year in barrel.

Côte-Rôtie «Blonde du Seigneur» 2013 *(+)**

Pale dark purple red. Muted, young scent of red fruits with a note of red meat. The palate is clean, fresh, just medium weight, with tension and a finale of subtle fruit and meat accents. 95% Syrah, 5% Viognier, 30-year old vines. 18 months in 25% new barrels.

Côte-Rôtie «Maison Rouge» 2012 **(+)**

Pale purple red. The aroma is fresh and undeveloped, with restrained dark red fruit with a background of well-matched oak. The wine's taste profile exhibits harmony and follow-through, with a polished texture, and finishes with a promising display of controlled dark fruit, spice and a meaty note. This Côte-Rôtie has lovely presence and equilibrium and is medium-bodied plus. There are persistent aromatic highlights. Pure Syrah, 50 years old from a climat in the south of the appellation. 24 months in 30% new barriques.

Domaine Yves Gangloff

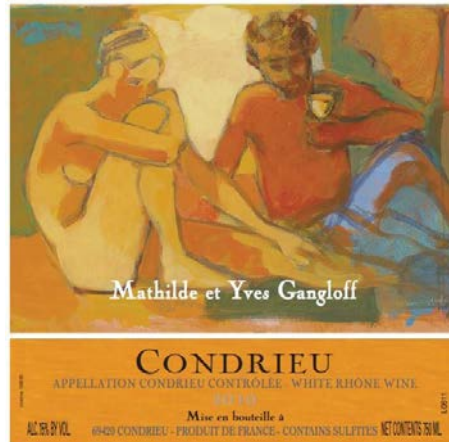
This is still a fairly young estate, first set up in 1982. Their main holdings now comprise 7 acres in Côte-Rôtie and 5 acres in Condrieu. The wines are full of personality and dimension with modern flair. The colorful labels remind me somewhat of Paul Gauguin paintings. The 2013s in both white and red are extremely successful.

Saint-Joseph blanc 2013 **(+)**

Light yellow gold. Inviting, pure and expressive perfume with ripe white fruits. The palate as well is dominated by aromatics and is long and full of charm. Highly expressive and lasting finish. Stylish and beguiling. Roussanne and Marsanne.

Condrieu 2013 **(*)**

Light yellow gold. Very beautiful and very pure aroma with gorgeous high-toned accents of tropical, white and yellow fruit. The wine impresses immediately on the palate with its volume while promising even more to come. There are inflections of white fruits and flowers which are amplified in the extraordinarily long, exquisite finish. Rich yet balanced and controlled. One of the most striking of many outstanding Condrieu in the 2013 vintage. From relatively young vines (20 years old), fermented in 300-liter casks.



Côte-Rôtie «Barbarine» 2013 **(+)**

Pale dark red purple. Beautiful aroma of mature dark berries, fragrant and nuanced. The palate possesses a similarly aromatic presence which intensifies on the finish to reveal sweet, inflected berry highlights. The final impression is of a finely calibrated structure providing finesse and tension. Roughly 92% Syrah, 8% Viognier, 15 years old. Maturation of 20 months in 30% new oak.

Côte-Rôtie «La Sereine Noir» 2013 **(+)**

Pale dark purple red. The nose of this young red shows tremendous purity and a heightened fragrance of wild red fruit. The wine possesses noteworthy volume and beautiful high notes of red and wild fruits and pepper. The structure provides defining grip and pointed acidity. Pure Syrah, 50 year-old vines, from Les Roziers and other climats. Partially destemmed.

Guigal

This house scarcely needs an introduction given their high profile and good distribution. Tasting a few of their wines in the context of their peers reminds me of their distinctive style. With an extended period in barrel, their top wines tend to

come onto the market later than most and possess an added creaminess more than obvious oak.

Condrieu 2013 *(*+)**

Pale yellow gold. Very fine, particularly fragrant to the nose with delicate inflections of white and yellow fruits along with a faint green note. The palate is quite rich on attack, full in weight, and clearly has more in reserve. The mouth-coating finale has terrific intensity and stony inflections.

Condrieu «La Doriane» 2013 **(*)**

Pale yellow gold. Undeveloped with ample depth and reserve, yet has excellent intensity and youthful inflections of tropical fruits. Richly flavored, but not heavy, with a particularly long, imposing finish with pronounced fruit flavors. This outstanding Condrieu boasts remarkable staying power. Very impressive.

Saint-Joseph rouge 2012 *(+)**

Pale very dark red purple. Clean, youthful aroma displaying marked focus and piquant red fruits. The palate possesses intensity and cut and is medium weight with an etched conclusion. A bit on the lean side.

Saint-Joseph «Vignes de l'Hospice» 2012 *(*) or better**

Moderately dense very dark red with purple. The fresh, clean nose delivers prominent dark fruit and well-married oak. Quite young and reserved as well as transparent with muted complexity and tertiary accents. Clean, dry finale. This justly famous wine originates with 90-year old vines and sports a new, colorful label depicting the vineyard slopes. An extension of the original site was planted in 2010 to the north of the older vines.

Côte-Rôtie «Brune et Blonde de Guigal» 2011 *(* ?)**

Short of moderately dense dark red with purple rim. Fragrant, expressive aroma with mature dark fruit and well-integrated oak and wood spice. The palate is curiously non-expressive and appears to lack follow-through, but may simply be in a dumb phase – although this would be uncharacteristic of the 2011s.

Côte-Rôtie Château d'Ampuis 2011 *(*)**

Nearly moderately dense dark red with purple rim. Warm, restrained fragrance of mature dark fruit with conspicuous tertiary notes. In the mouth, this 2011 shows a fresh and nuanced profile along with lifted black fruit. Very lasting, highly

Tasting Notes of Roger C. Bohmrich MW

aromatic and well-framed. Not the most concentrated example but offers plenty of interest.

Domaine Patrick et Christophe Bonnefond

This domaine owns about 17 acres of Côte-Rôtie and also produces Condrieu.

Condrieu «Côte Chatillon» 2014 (***)**

Pale yellow gold. Strongly primary aroma yet alluring and flattering, with a ripe multidimensional fruit expression dominated by pear flesh and pineapple. The elegant palate juxtaposes tenderness and substance with a long, expressive aftertaste. Intensely pure with an extraordinary perfumed personality at this very early stage.

Côte-Rôtie «Colline de Couzou» 2013 *(*)**

Nearly moderately dense black purple. This young wine has a splendid, wonderfully clean nose of healthy, perfectly mature black fruits and berries. The palate is far more reserved with a polished center as well as freshness and elegance. This medium-weight wine is framed by pointed acidity and integrated tannin. 18 months in barrel, 15% new.

Côte-Rôtie «Côte Rozier» 2013 *(*)**

Pale plus dark purple red. Superbly pure aroma, very clean, of vivid youthful black fruit and berries. The wine's taste is muted and undeveloped yet possesses elegant aromatic lift and is long and finely etched. Scented rather than full-bodied and fleshy. A selection of 45-year old vines matured in 30% new oak.

Côte-Rôtie «Les Rochains» 2013 *(*)**

Just short of moderately dense very dark purple. Undeveloped, very youthful nose suggesting dark fruit and an overlay of oak. The palate is backward and especially transparent rather than dense with restrained aromatic highlights and a chiseled, dry conclusion. A selection of 65-year old pure Syrah aged in 40% new oak.

Domaine de Bonserine

Bonserine has vineyard holdings of 22 acres in numerous sites in Côte-Rôtie and 2.5 acres of Condrieu. They sort, destem and favor rather long maturation in barrel of 22 to 36 months depending on vintage.

Côte-Rôtie «La Sarrasine» 2012 *(*)**

Pale dark purple. Very young, reserved, clean nose with an undertone of dark berries and a creamy note. The taste says little at first, then reveals largely hidden dark fruit. Well-balanced, medium plus in weight, with notable tension at the end.

Côte-Rôtie «La Viallière» 2012 **(+)**

Pale dark purple. Restrained, undeveloped nose with a background of dark cherry and black berries. The palate as well is dominated by sweet, macerated black fruit. This is very attractive, textured and lasting, delivering a seductive impression overall despite its youthful reserve.

Côte-Rôtie «La Garde» 2011 **(*)**

Pale dark purple. Strikingly beautiful aromatic impression characterized by a complex dark fruit perfume and faint inkiness, with more in reserve. The attack is non-expressive, then the wine expands, showing flair and intensity. The finale displays high-toned, nuanced dark fruit and spice. This young red is harmonious and shows exceptional early length.

Stéphane Ogier

This is an Ampuis-based domaine of 27 acres with diverse parcels in Côte-Rôtie, among them Lancement, But de Mont, Champon and Côte-Blonde (the individual climat, not the generic reference to a soil type). The range extends to Condrieu and several varietally labeled Syrah selections. This domaine has a very good reputation although the wines I tasted did not attain my top marks.

Condrieu 2013 *(*)**

Light gold. This Condrieu is still dominated by a clean primary perfume and faint vegetal note found in some Viognier. The palate is clean and undeveloped, expressing little on attack and then more intensity on the finish, with attractive aromatic nuance and flair at the end.

Côte-Rôtie «Le Village» 2012 *(+)**

Pale dark purple red. Largely closed to the nose with well-concealed dark fruits and berries. The wine has lightness and clarity rather than density and concentration. Clean, dry, well-balanced with a fine structure. Vines from 5 to 40 years of age.

Côte-Rôtie «Réserve» 2012 *(*)**

Pale dark purple. Youthful, engaging aroma of dark fruit although quite restrained, with a faint peppery note. The palate shows more concentration and dimension. This 2012 has excellent purity and is well-knit, fairly long, with a finely calibrated structure. Promising if undeveloped finish. 18 months in 30% new oak.

Côte-Rôtie «Réserve» 2011 *(*+)**

Pale dark purple. The developing aroma is moderately concentrated, lovely and fragrant with nuanced black fruits and smoked meat. The taste profile is fine and polished, medium weight, and possesses clarity and elegance. The wine has a lingering accented finish with very fine embedded acidity and fine-grained tannin showing at the very end.

Domaine de Rosiers

This domaine claims about 18.5 acres of vineyard in the Côte-Rôtie appellation and produces two cuvees. They practice destemming and vatting of twenty days with a submerged cap. Aging is in one-fourth new barrels.

Côte-Rôtie «Maxime Gourdain» 2012 *(*)**

Moderately dense red with purple rim. Aromatically, this 2012 has depth, intensity and strength and exhibits wild dark fruits and flinty highlights. The palate as well delivers depth in a layered expression. The finale is clean, dry and well-defined.

Côte-Rôtie «Coeur de Rose» 2011 **(+)**

Moderately dense very dark purple. The aroma offers notable warmth and breadth and is dominated by attractive, mature black berries. The wine's taste is by contrast hidden, with a layered, sinewy profile and pronounced flinty accents, finishing firm and dry. Less developed than many other 2011s at this stage.