

Domaine de Marcoux

Justly acclaimed Rhône estate

Visit to the property – March 2015

Domaine de Marcoux is situated in the north of the appellation of Châteauneuf-du-Pape not far from the town of Orange. The cellars are along one of the so-called *chemins* found in many parts of the growing area. Pathway is an apt term to describe these roads, which unexpectedly narrow to the width of one car alongside a deep drainage ditch into which the unwary can easily fall. The Marcoux vineyards are certified organic. In addition to their core estate of 17.5 hectares across scattered sites in Châteauneuf, they have 2 hectares of Côtes du Rhône and 8 ha in Lirac. The property is run by two sisters, Sophie and Catherine Armenier. There really are no secrets here, just respect for the vineyards and soils and rather non-interventionist winemaking – and that extra something behind all great wines. The results are brilliant: the regional is a superb overachiever, the Châteauneuf cuvees are reference points, and the Lirac is perhaps the hidden gem in the fold. Interestingly, the clientele for the domaine is largely overseas: 80% of the production is exported, with nearly one-third to the U.S. Yields of Grenache were cut in half by *coulure* in 2013.

Châteauneuf-du-Pape blanc 2014 (to be bottled mid-March) ****(*)

Pronounced yellow gold. Rich, broad and quite powerful nose marked by spicy yellow fruits with a faint suggestion of oak. In the mouth, this youthful white is more restrained, yet possesses evident underlying richness and fat. Ripe, well-integrated acidity surfaces in the aftertaste. This relies largely on Roussanne and Bourboulenc with an addition of co-fermented (in demi muids) Grenache blanc and Clairette.

Côtes du Rhône rouge 2013 ***(*)

Moderately dense very dark purple with red highlight. This regional's aroma is inviting, with understated red cherry fruit of good maturity. The palate is very clean and controlled at this stage and rather non-expressive. The alcohol content is 14.5% yet the wine leaves a surprisingly cool imprint. Clean, dry, well-balanced. A superior Côtes du Rhône which will be more revealing by the end of 2015. 80% Grenache plus Syrah and Mourvèdre.

Lirac “La Lorentine” 2013 *(*+)**

Moderately dense very dark purple. Very clean, vivid nose offering a forthcoming scent of black berries, black fruits and wild dark fruit which reflects the reliance on Syrah and Mourvèdre. This Lirac exhibits concentration and also restraint in the mouth. There is a mouth-coating quality with very subtle sweetness. Clean, dry and well-defined conclusion. 40% Syrah, 40% Mourvèdre, 20% Grenache – a blend dictated by the short yields of Grenache.

Lirac “La Lorentine” 2012 *(*)**

Moderately dense very dark red purple. Perfectly clean aroma, very fresh with scented dark fruits and black cherry. The taste is clean and withheld. There is a touch of firmness and a slight bitter note at the end. This needs a year or so to show. 50% Grenache, 25% each Syrah and Mourvèdre.

Châteauneuf-du-Pape rouge 2013 *(*)**

Moderately dense very dark purple. Beautifully clean aroma with deep, quite complex dark and red fruits with ripe notes. The palate is similarly nuanced and delivers pure fruit qualities. Dry but also tender and elegant with the promise of an attractive finish to come. 80% Grenache plus Mourvèdre, Syrah and Cinsault. This will be the only cuvee in 2013 due to the restricted crop. A classy and very successful 2013.

Châteauneuf-du-Pape rouge 2012 **(+)**

Nearly moderately dense very dark red purple. Very fine, ultraclean nose with early complexity exhibiting accented red fruits and berries with notable concentration. Far more closed on the palate with underlying sensuality and a finely matched, well-integrated structure. The finale imparts a touch of sweet ripeness. Grapes as for 2013.

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Vieilles Vignes 2012 **(*)**

Moderately dense very dark red purple. Very concentrated to the nose and showing a mélange of clean, pure dark and black fruits and berries with notable youthful intensity. The wine boasts a layered mouth-feel which is beautifully constructed, full-bodied, and already multidimensional. There is an undercurrent of sweet black cherry and raspberry, and the wine ends with a very clean,

Tasting Notes of Roger C. Bohmrich MW

balanced and embedded structure. This wine possesses the sensual and accessible profile of the vintage along with an overall sense of refinement and class. The old vines cuvee is sourced in 3 parcels, the largest one, Charbonnière, planted in 1900. A mix of co-fermented varieties, principally Grenache with small amounts of Mourvèdre, Syrah, Cinsault, and Muscardin. Destemmed, stainless steel tank.

Châteauneuf-du-Pape rouge 2011 *(*+)**

Nearly moderately dense very dark red-purple. The nose is just beginning to develop and offers nascent complexity along with dark fruit and tertiary notes. There is depth and warmth. In the mouth, the wine delivers a sweet, sensual attack and center. The taste is very seductive and substantial, similarly in an early phase of development. There are complex dark fruits and a note of licorice. The finish is less developed and still firm. 80% Grenache plus Mourvèdre, Syrah and Cinsault.

Châteauneuf-du-Pape rouge Vieilles Vignes 2011 **(*)**

Moderately dense very dark red with purple rim. The aroma is notably intense and penetrating with generous dark fruit and overall depth. On the palate, the old vines selection immediately delivers a voluptuous richness together with gorgeous black cherry, black plum and boysenberry fruit. The aftertaste is already long, sweet and rich though clearly just developing. This 2011 clearly possesses elevated alcohol yet tastes balanced and will be delicious drinking in the near rather than long term.

Châteauneuf-du-Pape rouge 1999 *+**

Moderately dense dark garnet with brick rim. Extroverted bouquet with pronounced leathery and roasted overtones. There is depth and generosity. The wine possesses a soft, polished center with a marked flavor of leather and roast. There is still a bit of firmness, but without any sharpness, at the end. This bottle was opened several hours earlier. Ready now, likely to reach its apogee by 2016. Sophie explained that the 1999 fell into the learning phase for the sisters, who took over in 1996.