



## RHONE 2015 EN PRIMEUR

RICH, SUPPLE AND FRESH



2015 is a genuinely exciting vintage in both the Northern and Southern Rhône and, as always, will represent tremendous value. It comes after a short series of nice but slightly middling vintages. Unlike the atypical 2014s, whose lighter style and pretty fruit will deliver excellent early drinking, 2015 sees the Rhône return to its classic roots: rich flavours, supple tannins, and a distinctly fresh minerality which has always distinguished the better vintages.

With a series of very good but small harvests in Burgundy, and the recently reengaged enthusiasm for Bordeaux en primeur, not to mention the seductive charms of recent vintages in Tuscany and Piedmont to distract buyers with eclectic tastes, the Rhône has been somewhat overshadowed in recent years. We have therefore carefully considered our selection this year, and propose a concise selection of the growers, wines, and styles that have really caught our attention in 2015.

Comparison to other vintages at this early stage is always dangerous, but a number of producers did draw comparison to 2010 and 2005, although they anticipate slightly more forward drinking in their 2015s, and in the Southern Rhône 2007 was mentioned by more than one grower. What is clear is the vintage has produced some very exciting wines, many of which have the potential for long ageing. Whether you prefer the detailed distinction of Syrah from the Northern Rhône, the generous charms of Viognier in Condrieu, the pithy timbre of a Marsanne / Roussanne blend, or the juicy, supple richness of a Southern Rhône blend, the Rhône 2015s are not short of style or appeal.

## THE GROWING SEASON

Hot, dry and precocious is how an uncanny number of growers described the growing season in 2015. The early months of January and February were the warmest seen in the southern Rhône since 2007. High winter rainfall meant the underground water reserves were well charged for the hot year ahead.

Growers remarked on how ahead of schedule the whole season was, with flowering taking place in the warm sunshine of early summer. Following an uncomplicated fruit-set, the ripening berries began to mature under a sizzling summer sun. In the south a dousing of 100mm rainfall at the beginning of June topped up the water table so that vines were prepared for the long, hot summer months. Temperatures between 15th June and 20th August hit 35°C every day in Châteauneuf du Pape.

Towards the end of August both the south (on the 13th) and the north (on the 17th) enjoyed a long awaited summer rain shower followed by a drop in extreme temperatures. In both instances this meant the vines avoided any extreme water stress, which can often result in the vine shutting down and producing green and unripe flavours despite fierce summer heat. Since 2015 was spared this misfortune, the berries continued their phenolic ripening in ideal conditions. After small harvests in 2012 and 2013, 2015 saw a full crop picked at optimal ripeness.

One concern of a hot, dry year is that the all-important acidity of the grapes will plummet, leading to jammy flavours, flabby whites, and the prospect of only a short lifespan in the cellar. Many growers spoke of their fears in the run up to harvest regarding acidity, but in fact the replenished water reserves and the thick skin of the sunbathed berries meant the levels of tartaric acid remained adequate. As a result, the vintage is marked by a distinctively fresh, salty minerality that balances with the rich fruit flavours and liquorice spice in the reds. The better whites, too, have a surprising freshness despite their rich apricot, blossom, and nutty flavour profiles.

## THE WINES

As mentioned above, a marked quality of the 2015s is their freshness. It would be incorrect to describe this as a high-acid vintage, but it was a point of conversation with every grower we visited that the wines have a particular salty freshness.

The tannins of the Syrah in the north are very fine, giving the wines an appealingly juicy, supple character. The alcohol levels of the north are certainly higher than in some recent vintages, but a modest increase of 0.5% abv means the wines are pitching between 13–14% rather than 12.5–13.5%; and their rich fruit characters and mineral freshness mean the alcohol integrates well, affording an impressive balance to the wines. The northern whites are undeniably richer than their 2014 sisters, but their creamy, rich apricot is tempered by a floral elegance in the better growers. The Marsanne in St Péray has also performed well.

In the south Mourvèdre has had a tremendous year, and those blends which have a high proportion of this late ripening variety have retained their elegance, whilst the earlier ripening and sweet strawberry scented Grenache adds flesh and body. It is the case that some growers may have over-egged it in 2015, and high alcohols of 16%+ can be found across the southern appellations. However, the growers offered here have all made good picking and blending decision, and alcohols have remained the right side of 15%.

These wines are rich and seductive; but they are not blockbusters. They retain a savoury undertow, with well-integrated alcohol and supple tannins. Overall it is a homogenous vintage of high quality across the whole region. As always, careful selection is needed, but we hope there is something for everyone here. A case or two to tuck away for later drinking will certainly reward in years to come, so you can buy with confidence.

CATHERINE PETRIE

RHONE BUYER

# NORTHERN RHONE

## DOMAINE PATRICK & CHRISTOPHE BONNEFOND, AMPUIS

For over 25 years brothers Patrick and Christophe Bonnefond have been running their family estate in the commune of Mornas, perched up on the hills just behind the Côte Rôtie escarpment. They make a good team, with Patrick tending the vines and Christophe in the winery. The domaine's style is a modern and polished approach to Northern Rhône Syrah. The wines have a compact richness, and in 2015 particularly Christophe feels they can benefit from a little new oak, so he has matched the vintage's concentration with some toasty smoky notes from up to 50% new oak in the top cuvées. The Colline de Couzou is a blend of fruit from the Côte Blonde and the Côte Brune, however the Rochains and Rozier both come from the heart of the Côte Brune whose schist and mica-schist soils typically give more structure to the wines than the finer, more delicate character of the granite soils found in the Côte Blonde. Their vineyard sites are of exceptional quality; the Les Rochains parcel lies just next to Guigal's La Landonne. Their style is slick and seductive.

### CÔTE RÔTIE COLLINE DE COUZOU (LIMITED)

£310.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond

From a blend of plots scattered across the Côte Blonde and Côte Brune. The granite parcels of the Côte Blonde contribute dark cherry fruit flavours and a fine freshness, whilst the Côte Brune parcels give a more sweetly ripe, violet scented aroma and firmly structured tannic body. The majority come from vines with an average age of 25–30 years, and the result is a very pure style of Syrah, unmasked by the light touch of new oak (10% in new 400l oak fûts). Drink 2018–2027

### CÔTE RÔTIE LES ROCHAINS (LIMITED)

£210.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond

A distinctive inky dark purple, this wine from the Côte Brune has a profound nose of raspberries, black cherries, cinnamon spice and smoke. There is a black fruit core on the palate, around which silky tannins are hung. This tightly wound young wine will have a long life ahead. Drink 2019–2029

### CÔTE RÔTIE CÔTE ROZIER (LIMITED)

£210.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond

This comes from a small half hectare parcel of 50 year old vines lying next to Guigal's La Landonne. It is brooding and intense style, with an emphatic power and tremendous freshness on the long finish thanks to its high altitude position. A complex nose of black peppered fruit is refined by the inclusion of a small amount of whole bunch fruit (10–15%). The compact tannins will need time to unfurl, but this is a real beauty. Drink 2020–2032

## DOMAINE RENE ROSTAING, AMPUIS

René Rostaing retired after the 2014 vintage, leaving the estate in the capable hands of his son Pierre. René had spent 40 years building a reputation as the patriarch of the Northern Rhône, and Pierre's handling of the 2015s shows a seamless handover has taken place. Old vines from some of the region's greatest sites, 100% whole bunch vinification, long macerations and temperate use of French oak mean the Rostaing wines reveal the soul of their terroirs. After studying in Montpellier Pierre did a stage at Domaine Comtes Lafon, and the Burgundian touch is clear in his wines. There may be power and structure to these Syrahs, but there is also a silky smoothness reminiscent of the Côte D'Or. Pierre has continued his father's inimitable style in the Condrieu, fermenting and ageing in stainless steel, meaning La Bonnette is the perfect antidote to the heavily oaked, fatty style favoured by some other Condrieu producers.

### CONDRIEU LA BONNETTE (LIMITED)

£475.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond

This Viognier fermented and raised in 100% stainless steel has a luminous fruit character and a succulent core. Flavours of blanched almonds, apricots, and jasmine tumble from the glass. Best drunk in its youth. Drink 2017–2019

### CÔTE RÔTIE AMPODIUM (LIMITED)

£460.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond

£470.00 per 6 Magnums In Bond

A blend of 13 parcels from around Côte Rôtie. This purple hued wine has a distinctive, pungent aroma of blackcurrant leaf in its rich, intoxicating aroma. The palate is structured and notably meaty, although there is elegance to its silky structure that delineates its high class. Benchmark Côte Rôtie. Drink 2018–2028

### CÔTE RÔTIE LA LANDONNE (LIMITED)

£495.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond

A legendary site on the Côte Rotiè, this wine has a dense purple colour and deep, black fruit flavours of cassis and mulberry. Bigger tannins and firmer structure ensure ageing potential, and the velvet flow of fruit flavours give this fine wine a real distinction. It is gourmand, powerful, and structured, with a tension between sweetness of fruit and mineral freshness. Drink 2020–2032

### CÔTE RÔTIE CÔTE BLONDE (LIMITED)

£530.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond

With a similar level of concentration to the Landonne, Côte Blonde's tannins are finer and more powdery in character with some evident grip in their youth. A black-fruited spice on the palate gives it wonderful typicity, true to its variety and terroir. Very long finish. Drink 2020–2032

## DOMAINE CLUSEL ROCH, AMPUIS



Brigitte Roch and Gilbert Clusel's son Guillaume is beginning to make his mark on his parents' estate. The style here is understated yet complex, with a distinctly Burgundian finesse combined with Syrah's natural muscle. The domaine includes some very old parcels of Syrah vines, and has been certified organic since 2002. The delicate handling in the vineyard and cellar results in wines with lower alcohol than many of

their neighbours, and produces hugely pure, distinctive wines avoiding any over-extraction. Rhône expert John Livingstone-Learmonth describes Les Grandes Places as 'a formidable wine of challenging complexity and well worth the outlay.' This estate holds its traditional methods close to heart, and their dexterous array of Côte Rôties is a fascinating portrait of Syrah.

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### CÔTE RÔTIE LA PETITE FEUILLE

£295.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond

Only a small volume is made each year from this parcel of vines aged 10–12 years. What young vines might lack in vinous power and structure they make up for in aromatic charm. Cherry coloured, red-fruited, with crunchy tannins and a light volume. This will be an early drinking style. Drink 2017–2022

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### CÔTE RÔTIE CLASSIQUE

£360.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond

A very complete Côte Rôtie, blended from three parcels across the appellation's mica-schist soils in the Côte Brune. It has a perfumed graphite and red cherry nose, taut tannins and a toothsome body with a saline finish. 50% whole bunch adds finesse, and 15% new oak barrels give a well-judged smokiness to this fine example. Ideal for the mid-term. Drink 2018–2028

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### CÔTE RÔTIE LA VIALLIÈRE (VERY LIMITED)

£265.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond

This parcel within the Côte Brune is particularly respected amongst Côte Rôtie's vigneron. The high proportion of stones in the schist soil aid drainage, and produce wines of great finesse and notable substance. A floral dried rose petal aroma introduces the wine. There is a tender sweetness of red fruits on the entry and a long, precise, fresh finish. The greater structure here is matched with 25% new oak. Drink 2019–2030

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### CÔTE RÔTIE LES GRANDES PLACES (VERY LIMITED)

£340.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond

This tends to be a much bigger, more structured and masculine wine than the Viallière. But in 2015 it still retains a great purity and tension, disinclining me to present it in the binary masculine / feminine trope. There is a swirling violet tone, a saline minerality, potent density, profuse but very fine firm tannins, and a distinguished, lengthy finish. Drink 2020–2035

# DOMAINE ANDRE PERRET, CHAVANAY



André Perret needs little introduction: he is the master of light-footed, complex Viogniers from the granite soils of Condrieu. The appellation is known for its rich, mouth-coating whites best drunk in their youth. André's sophisticated, expressive examples also have the potential to age intelligently in bottle. These wines will give enormous pleasure drunk in the first two years,

or even up to five. The whites are raised in a combination of oak barrel and stainless steel so that the wines have depth but are never marked by an overlay of new oak. All elements are closely integrated from the start. The 13 hectare domaine includes 5 hectares in Condrieu and 5 hectares in St Joseph, and the close-knit, peppery, herb-tinged St Joseph rouge is excellent value and not to be missed.

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## ST JOSEPH BLANC (VERY LIMITED)

£185.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond

An equal split of Marsanne and Roussanne fermented and raised half in oak (a fraction new), half in stainless steel. This has a creamy nuttiness, and a clear, bright palate with good drive. There is a richness underneath and the spicy flesh of pear and quince, with a nicely fresh finish. Drink 2017–2021

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## CONDRIEU CLOS CHANSON (VERY LIMITED)

£195.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond

This south-east facing enclosed vineyard is home to 55 year old Viognier vines grown in granitic soil. There is delightful freshness and an exotic perfume of white flowers on the nose, with a creamy apricot succulence on the palate. Drink 2017–2021

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## CONDRIEU CÔTEAUX DE CHÉRY (LIMITED)

£195.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond

From another lieu dit with vines approaching 70 years, this wine is vinified in exactly the same way as the Clos Chanson, yet its expression is quite different. The nose is so delicate and scented with white chocolate and jasmine; the palate has a lightly viscous density to it, with fresh apricot, peach and quince all coming through in layers. There is a superb finish of crisp minerality. A wine of harmony. Drink 2017–2021

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## ST JOSEPH ROUGE (LIMITED)

£160.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond

These Syrah vines grow in the very north of the appellation, not far from Condrieu and André's cellar, and produce a deep ruby wine with expressive blackberry coulis and wild thyme aromas. It is very Syrah, with a touch of graphite over the fruity nose, fine chalky tannins, bright freshness, and a well-balanced body. Unfussy northern Rhône Syrah that will slip down all too easily. Drink 2018–2025

## DOMAINE BERNARD FAURIE, TOURNON

Bernard is slowly moving into retirement having handed over the majority of his St Joseph-based estate to his daughter and son-in-law. Yet we learn tasting in his cellar this autumn he has once again vinified the small parcels of Hermitage that he retains. And we should count ourselves lucky: his are ethereal wines. He still holds three parcels across the three major parts of the Hermitage hill: Méal (schist), Greffieux (poor soil at the lower part of the hill), and Bessards (granite). Blended together these create a wine of seductive depth and complexity. The fruit from old vines (some over 100 years) is whole bunch fermented and undergoes a fairly short maceration period (just 15 days in total), followed by ageing in barrel (only 10–15% new); made just the way the three generations before him have done.

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### HERMITAGE (LIMITED)

£275.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond

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Medium gleaming ruby in the glass, the 2015 has layers of fruit, flowers and spice woven throughout its intoxicating perfume: violets, raspberries, cinnamon, macerated cherries, smoke. The alluring aroma is followed by the mellifluous flow of silky tannins. Yet this wine also has a spine – there is Syrah's sinewy shadow lurking underneath, giving structure for the long term. This wine is enough to convince anyone of Syrah's nobility. Enthralling. Drink 2020–2035

## DOMAINE DU COLOMBIER, MERCUROL

This 16 hectare estate is run by brothers Florent and David Viale and produces a darker, bolder interpretation of Hermitage. These wines are brawny and powerful, and have a distinctive flavour palette of black fruits, black olive tapenade, and graphite smokiness. Although grape growers for almost a century, the family only began to bottle their own wines in the early 1990s. Their wines may take a little time to come around, but will reward in the long run.

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### HERMITAGE BLANC (VERY LIMITED)

£245.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond

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This tiny parcel (just one fifth of a hectare) of old Marsanne vines produces a concentrated white wine with a fulsome length. Aged in oak, nutty notes and smoky spice overlay white flowers and nectarine fruit. Drink 2019–2028

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### CROZES HERMITAGE CUVÉE GABY (LIMITED)

£195.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond

£205.00 per 6 Magnums In Bond

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From the clay-limestone soils of Crozes Hermitage, this special cuvée is aged in 20% new oak barrels. This was a little backward when tasted from barrel, but there is clear evidence of some nice black fruit character, black olive salinity and juicy tannins. Drink 2019–2025

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### HERMITAGE (LIMITED)

£240.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond

£250.00 per 3 Magnums In Bond

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A deeply coloured Hermitage with aromas of sweet, ripe black fruit and dark chocolate. The power of the rasping tannins will need some time to integrate. The whole wine abounds with flavour and structure, with exciting potential. Drink 2022–2032

# DOMAINE ALAIN VOGÉ, CORNAS



Alain Vogé is now in his mid-sixties, and the accomplished Albéric Mazoyer runs this reputable estate in Cornas. Having cut his teeth at Chapoutier, Albéric has a very good understanding of how to coax the signature style out of different appellations. He also really understands the chemistry of each variety, and he seeks out the pithy phenolic character of Marsanne grown on St Péray's limestone and granite soils, resulting in

accomplished whites with length and savoury bite. The reds are equally well handled, and are benchmark Cornas – bright Syrah with depth, freshness and just a hint of rusticity in their wild berry and dried herb flavours. The domaine is certified organic for its whites, and will be fully certified across its red parcels from the 2016 vintage onwards.

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## ST PÉRAY FLEUR DE CRUSSOL

£270.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond

Old Marsanne vines from the heart of the appellation, grown on a granitic soil with limestone in the lieu dit of La Côte. Sweet nuttiness and a creamy smoothness to the palate are the result of barrel fermentation and ageing (a third new). The palate has layered aromas of apricot pit, almond, lemon pith and nectarines. The phenolic flicker towards the end is precisely what Albéric seeks in his Marsanne, and gives this wine a long flavourful finish. Drink 2017–2021

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## CORNAS LES CHAILLES

£285.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond

From a parcel of 30 year old vines from the granitic terraces bordering a limestone hill, and aged in neutral oak casks for 18 months. It has a black fruit aroma with a warm almond patisserie toastiness. The silky smooth fruit of the palate is complemented by fine, linear tannins. Drink 2019–2029

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## CORNAS VIEILLES VIGNES

£430.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond

The old vines produce notable concentration in this black olive scented, juicy Cornas. Black cherries and dried wild herbs come through on the tight palate, which has a suede-like tannin structure. Long, fresh, mineral finish. Drink 2020–2030

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## CORNAS LES VIEILLES FONTAINES

£370.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond

This single vineyard site is only bottled separately in the best years, when the wine has great harmony and concentration. The poor granite soils and 80 year old vines really express the essence of the Syrah grape, with liquorice spice, black fruit density, and tannic grip. Drink 2021–2035

# SOUTHERN RHONE

## DOMAINE CLOS DES CAZAUX, VACQUEYRAS

The enthusiasm of Jean-Michel Vache who runs this southern Rhône estate with great panache is infectious. Late picking, long maceration periods, and extended élevages give the wines a primal density. The appellations of Vacqueyras and Gigondas really shine in the better years like 2015, and this estate is an excellent source of good value wines.

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### VACQUEYRAS CUVÉE ST ROCH

£110.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond  
£120.00 per 6 Magnums In Bond

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This Grenache based blend (70%) with 25% Syrah and 5% Mourvèdre is vinified with no hint of new oak. Here are juicy primary aromas of strawberry and cranberry. The tight tannins will benefit from their further eight months of ageing before bottling, but this wine should come around to be a very juicy expression of Vacqueyras. Drink 2020–2028

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### GIGONDAS CUVÉE TOUR SARRASINE

£140.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond  
£150.00 per 6 Magnums In Bond

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Another Grenache based blend (70%) but with slightly more Mourvèdre (15%) and less Syrah (15%) than the Vacqueyras St Roch. This wine packs a real punch on the palate, with chunky tannins and a broad structure. Drink 2022–2030

## DOMAINE FONT DE MICHELLE, BÉDARRIDES

Guillaume Gonnet is another of an impressive group of young vignerons stepping up to take the reins from their parents, guiding their domaines with modern innovation and respect for tradition. Innovation includes the installation of concrete egg vats in the cellar. Tradition lies in the gentle handling of the fruit, which receives minimal extraction. The results are unforced wines with appealing juicy fruit. The domaine makes a number of cuvées in Châteauneuf, but we feel their classic cuvée, which blends a selection of parcels and grape varieties, is the most evocative expression. The estate is organically certified, and follows a number of biodynamic practices. Their style is to flow with the character of each individual vintage, and using no new oak allows the fruit to fully express its charm.

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### CHÂTEAUNEUF DU PAPE

£235.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond  
£245.00 per 6 Magnums In Bond  
£90.00 per Jeroboam In Bond

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This gutsy blend is based on 70% Grenache which is vinified along with a number of other varieties since all – apart from the trellised Syrah – are planted as field blends in gobelet bush vines. This has sweet plummy fruit, supple tannins, and a very juicy core. Black liquorice spice lifts the finish, and the rich alcohol is extremely well integrated. The meaty structure of the palate gives the wine some broad shoulders, and a dried herb detail adds freshness. This could drink well from an early age, yet has the strength to last as well. Drink 2019–2030



# CHÂTEAU DE BEAUCASTEL, CHÂTEAUNEUF DU PAPE

Beaucastel is the flagship estate of the Perrin family and these masters of the Southern Rhône make benchmark Châteauneuf. The best vintages here can age into legendary wines, and an increasing tendency to elegance in the winemaking style of recent years has not gone unnoticed. The Beaucastel vines are all in one large 110 hectare block at the northern end of the Châteauneuf du Pape appellation. The plot contains all the archetypal soil types of the region: sand, clay and limestone, with pudding stone pebbles on the surface. Their Coudoulet

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## COUDOULET DE BEAUCASTEL BLANC (LIMITED)

£170.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond

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This delightful blend comes from just beyond the Châteauneuf du Pape boundary and thus can include the varieties of Viognier and Marsanne in its rich peachy blend (which also includes Bourboulenc and Clairette). Glowing pale gold in the glass this has a pretty nose of white flowers, flat white peaches and a pinch of roasted chestnuts. The palate has a nicely weighted nectarine succulence and excellent freshness. Drink 2017–2021

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## CHÂTEAUNEUF DU PAPE BLANC (SOLD OUT)

£225.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond

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Roussanne forms the major basis of this blend (80%), the rest being made up of Grenache Blanc, Picardin, Bourboulenc and Clairette, with 30% vinified in oak. The estate believes a characteristic of Roussanne is that it welcomes you with open arms in its first five years – young, nutty, fruity, creamy – and then shuts down, only to re-emerge from its chrysalis after 15 years in the cellar with a complex, tertiary bouquet. This young 2015 has a very pretty white peach and vanilla spice aroma and a subtly nutty background on the palate. It has a delicate but long finish. Drink 2018–2032

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## CHÂTEAUNEUF DU PAPE BLANC VIEILLES VIGNES ROUSSANNE (LIMITED)

£220.00 per 3 Bottles In Bond

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Unusually for a Châteauneuf this is not a blend, and comes solely from a 3 hectare parcel of very old Roussanne vines (85 years) within the Beaucastel estate. These vines produce tiny yields and take slightly longer to ripen their fruit, which means they can develop extraordinary phenolic complexity. Vinified in 50% oak, this wine has a distinctive aroma of crystallised ginger and poached nectarines. There is a wonderful minerality and freshness on the palate. Expect it to close down after 5 years, but this surely has the bottle for the long run. Drink 2018–2035

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vines lie just beyond the northern boundary and convey much of the typicity of a Châteauneuf in a more accessible format. The estate famously grows all thirteen varieties permitted within the Châteauneuf appellation. Beyond the Beaucastel estate, the Perrin family have built up a comprehensive portfolio of wines across the Southern Rhône appellations including Gigondas, Vacqueyras and Vinsobres. The full collection is quite substantial, and we have selected a shortlist of our favourites to offer in 2015. The whites of Beaucastel are always a treat.

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## VINSOBRES LES HAUTS DE JULIEN FAMILLE PERRIN

£100.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond

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Vinsobres is the most northerly of the southern appellations, so it is no surprise that this cuvée has a high proportion of Syrah (50%), supported by Grenache. The 80 year old vines in the 500m elevated 4 hectare parcel are kept cool by a stiff breeze and cool nights. At 40km north of Châteauneuf, the Syrah shows much of the character of that grown in the north (it is particularly Cornas-like), with violets and graphite on the nose and a distinct freshness on the palate. It has a deep inky colour and sweetly spiced dark fruit, with the Grenache adding a fleshy richness. Ageing in foudres has given a little toastiness of cinnamon spice on the nose, which should integrate well with the palate, which ends with plush tannins. It is geographically and stylistically between north and south, and the perfect compromise if you are undecided. Drink 2019–2030

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## COUDOULET DE BEAUCASTEL ROUGE

£140.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond

£140.00 per 6 Magnums In Bond

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From a parcel that lies just beyond the boundary of the Châteauneuf appellation, but is actually an extension of Beaucastel's single block. After a brief swirl in the glass it begins to open up its notably nuanced layers for a declassified wine. There is a delicate sweetness to the red berry fruit, and a dusting of vanilla and nutmeg spice. The palate is nimble with sleek tannins and a lingering freshness. Drink 2018–2024

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## CHÂTEAUNEUF DU PAPE ROUGE (LIMITED)

£225.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond

£450.00 per 24 Halves In Bond

£450.00 per 6 Magnums In Bond

£170.00 per Jeroboam In Bond

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This cuvée draws on the late ripening Mourvèdre for 30% of its complex blend, which has performed particularly well in 2015. It gives structure, cool fruit, aromas of herbes de Provence, and some fine peppery tannins, plus its moderate alcohol brings the heat of the blend down. The rich, sweetly fruited Grenache adds fleshy depth. Combined with the other varieties (Syrah, Cinsault, Counoise, Terret Noir, Muscardin, Vaccarèse) this wine has a meaty depth and persistence. It should stay the course. Drink 2020–2034

## DOMAINE DU VIEUX TELEGRAPHE, BÉDARRIDES

This is a top class Châteauneuf estate with a well-deserved reputation for long-lived wines. Belonging to the Brunier family, the 65 hectare single plot lies on the plateau of La Crau, one of the highest points between the small towns of Châteauneuf du Pape, Bédarrides and Courthézon. The soil here is carpeted in the famous galets roulés, or pudding stones, which insulate the vines against both heat and cold, and aid drainage. The elevation means these vines are exposed to the extremes of the Mistral wind and the fierce sunshine. Not what you might call easy to farm; but the Brunier family have clung to this unruly terrain for over a century, and produce some of the truest wines of the appellation. The family also own a small property in nearby Gigondas, Domaine Les Pallières. The Terrasse de Diable is one of the finest sites in this appellation.

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### GIGONDAS TERRASSE DU DIABLE DOMAINE LES PALLIÈRES

£210.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond

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This blend is dominated by Grenache and its heady sweet red fruit aroma. A small dash of Mourvèdre brings a garrigue sprightliness to this pungent berry-scented Gigondas. The high elevation of the terrace (400 metres) means the wine has a pure freshness.

Drink 2019–2028

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### CHÂTEAUNEUF DU PAPE

£195.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond

£205.00 per 12 Halves In Bond

£205.00 per 3 Magnums In Bond

£155.00 per Jeroboam In Bond

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These 65 year old vines on the stony plateau of La Crau consistently produce a smooth, garrigue scented Châteauneuf. This has a paler colour than many others, but lacks no stature on the palate. There are sweet red berry fruits, rich juiciness, and no heaviness at all. Velvet tannins run through the long finish. Drink 2020–2032

## DOMAINE CLOS DES PAPES, CHÂTEAUNEUF DU PAPE

Rightly revered as one of the greatest growers of the appellation, Vincent Avril is lifting his long-established family estate to new heights. Having studied in Burgundy, and having trained in cellars all over the world (including a stage at Mouton Rothschild) Vincent has just seen in his 30th vintage at the domaine in 2016. He makes supreme wines, blending varieties from the moment they are picked, so that Grenache may be co-fermented with Syrah or Mourvèdre, or all three together. His various cuves are therefore mini blends, which show the development of the young wine as it ages before the final assemblage takes place. In 2015 he was delighted that a parcel of late ripening Mourvèdre reached maturity at the same time as a parcel of Syrah, a rare occurrence. Low yields ensure concentration, and the same team of pickers over the past 20 years safeguard careful selection of each bunch. The white is unoaked, and Vincent explains there are three important stages for the wine: 1) primary fruit and floral freshness in the first 1 to 2 years; 2) petrol minerality not dissimilar to Riesling between 3 and 5 years; 3) and finally notes of honey and grilled nuts, with a salty savoury character from 5 years plus. Vincent is not interested in creating super cuvées; for him just one red and one white are the best expression of this appellation.

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### CHÂTEAUNEUF DU PAPE BLANC (SOLD OUT)

£216.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond

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This blend includes all six varieties authorised for the appellation's white: Grenache Blanc (fruity flesh), Roussanne (power), Clairette and Picardin (finesse), Bourboulenc and Picpoul (acidity). In its extreme youth it has a dazzling array of primary pear and pineapple, accented by vanilla and nutmeg spice. There is a genuine sweet ripeness to the palate, which nevertheless retains elegance. It has all the ingredients to develop seamlessly through the three stages of great Clos des Papes Blanc. Drink 2017–2025

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### CHÂTEAUNEUF DU PAPE (SOLD OUT)

£276.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond

£285.00 per 3 Magnums In Bond

£210.00 per Jeroboam In Bond

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A high proportion of 35% Mourvèdre brings finesse and elegance to this blend, and ensures the alcohol is checked below 15%. Mourvèdre does particularly well on the clay soils of Châteauneuf, whilst Grenache finds its most mineral expression on the pockets of sandy soil that pepper the appellation. The core of the blend's 60% Grenache comes from an excellent 7 hectare sandy parcel right next to Château Rayas. It has the peppery warmth of southern France, the herby flecks of Provençal garrigue, the sweet ripe fruit of a silky core, and a long, mineral finish. The overall blend has a freshness and tension one would not immediately associate with Châteauneuf, particularly in a warm year. But Vincent has succeeded in producing a wine that transcends its appellation; this is a truly great wine. Drink 2019–2035

## MAS DU DAUMAS GASSAC, HÉRAULT



Strictly speaking, this is not part of the Rhône. But its vanguard position as the Languedoc's greatest estate, its rich southern accent, and its substantial ageing potential give it more than enough credentials for inclusion in this offer. Surrounded by thick garrigue scrub and glacial, mineral-rich earth, the valley in which the property is nestled has a unique micro-climate for the region. Despite its southern France location in the Hérault, this deep valley draws in cool air from the mountains, particularly in the summer evenings, which creates extraordinary diurnal temperature swings ranging from 0–30°C. As a result the domaine is able to grow up to 40 different varieties successfully, all the while attaining excellent ripeness and retaining the varieties'

fresh acidity. The white is blended from an eclectic range of varieties (Chardonnay, Chenin Blanc, Viognier, Petit Manseng, amongst other rarer birds) whilst the red turns to the classic Bordeaux varieties of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot and Malbec. Initial guidance from Bordeaux's preeminent oenologist, Émile Peynaud, set the Guibert family on a path in the 1970s. Since then they have earned a well-justified reputation as "The Grand Cru of the Languedoc". As with the nearby Rhône, Mas de Daumas Gassac enjoyed a fantastic growing season in 2015, and the wine has a composed, concentrated style. The white release is from this year's harvest, and will be shipped along with the red 2015 in May 2017.

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### MAS DE DAUMAS GASSAC BLANC VIN DE PAYS DE L'HÉRAULT 2016

£120.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond  
£130.00 per 3 Magnums IB

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A blend of Petit Manseng, Viognier, Chenin Blanc, Chardonnay and other rare varieties. Low yields and cool nights give this wine a pointed concentration, with fresh acidity combined with that peachy, ripe generosity of fruit from Viognier and Petit Manseng. There is a good weighty texture to the palate, with blanched almonds and white peaches coming through. Drink 2017–2021

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### MAS DE DAUMAS GASSAC ROUGE VIN DE PAYS DE L'HÉRAULT 2015

£120.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond  
£130.00 per 3 Magnums IB  
£105.00 per Jeroboam IB

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A vibrant youthful ruby in the glass, the aroma has intoxicating smoky cedarwood spice, and the blackcurrant coulis aroma so typical of Cabernet Sauvignon (which dominates three quarters of this blend). On the palate there is a complex blend of violets, liquorice, blackcurrant and juniper, punctuated by grippy little tannins on the persistent finish. Full bodied yet elegant, it has excellent prospects for the future. Drink 2019–2030

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### TERMS AND CONDITIONS

All wines are offered In Bond England. We will arrange shipment from the domaines in Autumn 2017. On arrival, your wines can either be delivered directly to you or stored Under Bond at our independent storage company, Private Reserves, at a cost of £10.50 ex-VAT per case per annum.

When you decide to take delivery, Duty and VAT at the prevailing rate will become payable. These charges are at present £24.60 per 12-bottle case and 20% respectively.

All En Primeur deliveries will be charged at cost.