



RHONE 2014 EN PRIMEUR

FRESH, BALANCED AND UTTERLY CHARMING

The release of a new vintage from the Rhône valley can so often find itself between a rock and a hard place. Great vintages are sensational but warrant so much patience, and at times have very high alcohol. In contrast the lighter vintages can be lampooned for being too wishy washy and not alcoholic enough. So how can the Rhône win?

2014 is a lighter vintage; but in no way due to poor quality. The wines are expressive of the growing season which delivered well balanced alcohols, crunchy red fruit flavours, and a softness of tannic structure; they have a touch of Burgundian freshness about them.

They are in fact utterly delicious in style, and will be eminently drinkable when young. I also see them giving great pleasure after a few years, in much the same way as the 2008s are now, and the 2004s most certainly did. There are strong similarities to these two very rewarding vintages, and happily 2014 has even more depth and layers of complexity.

THE GROWING SEASON

The growing season in the Rhône valley, both North and South, was very similar to that seen in Bordeaux and Burgundy in 2014. After a fairly conventional spring, flowering was warm and yields were looking normal after the previous years' reduced crops. The summer months of July and August were cooler than average, meaning a late harvest was inevitable. Then a spell of heat and sunshine at the end of August and early September helped to ripen the grapes, allowing them to reach optimum maturity in time for picking in healthy conditions.

But as an old vigneron once told me, you need one and a half days of sunshine in September to equate to one day in August. As a result the sugar accumulation was less than in years with sustained summer heat, and consequently the alcohol level is naturally slightly lower (approximately 1 degree). The late ripening is also what provides the delicious balance in these wines: softer tannins and appealing freshness.

THE WINES

These wines are charming. They are not to be recommended for the very long-term, although the very best will age extremely well in the mid-term. For me, Grenache and even Syrah can so often be at their best when young, with stunning vibrancy of berry fruits and spice.

The whites, too, are delightful. They have a level of freshness and raciness which makes them particularly appealing; they don't have that heavy fatness that can sometimes be levelled against the white wines of the Rhône.

This vintage is well worth investigating for any Rhône enthusiast as a collection of highly drinkable wines that will give great pleasure. It is also a wonderful introduction to those who might otherwise shy away from the heady style so often associated with the Rhône. They have tremendous balance and harmony.

DAVID ROBERTS MW

NORTHERN RHONE

DOMAINE PATRICK & CHRISTOPHE BONNEFOND, AMPUIS

Brothers Patrick and Christophe Bonnefond have been running their family estate for over 20 years and they make the perfect team. Patrick looks after the vines and Christophe the cuverie. The domaine style is always to make compactly rich wines, without going over the top; there is no excess of oak, with a preference for ageing in larger demi-muid casks and with only a small proportion (10%) of new oak. Their vineyard holdings consist of 7 hectares predominantly in the Côte Blonde, with the Côte Rozier the most classical in style, and a small parcel of superb Côte Brune under the Les Rochains label. The brothers' 2014s show a wonderful interpretation of the vintage with superb potential.

CÔTE RÔTIE COLLINE DE COUZOU

£250.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond

A fresh and clean style with hints of blackberry, summer fruits and dark chocolate on the nose. In the palate, the wine has excellent clarity. It is bright and precise, not powerful, but clean and pure with a rewarding freshness on the finish. This is Burgundian in style with finesse. Drink 2017–2026

CÔTE RÔTIE LES ROCHAINS

£165.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond

Youthful crimson colour, this has stronger darker black forest fruit aromas. A more brooding and intensely powerful style, this is rich and full in the palate. It has a firm intense tannic structure, without losing the brightness of flavours. This style encapsulates the vintage. A wine with strong ageing potential and fine balance. Drink 2018–2030

CÔTE RÔTIE CÔTE ROZIER

£165.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond

A favourite vineyard of Christophe's adjoining the great La Landonne. This is a wine with deep dark forest fruit aromas. A bright and open style with a fine balance between alcohol, acidity and soft rounded tannins. Hints of cocoa on the finish, but an uplifting style structured on the lower alcohol levels of this vintage. Drink 2017–2029

DOMAINE RENE ROSTAING, AMPUIS

René Rostaing has been the patriarch of Côte Rôtie for the past 40 years, making some of the finest wines of the appellation. His skills as a winemaker are legendary in the world of wine and his wines have an extraordinary degree of precision, poise and great ability to age. These fine 2014s are bound to cause huge interest and we anticipate demand as sadly they are his last vintage. René will oversee the bottling with the next generation – his son Pierre – and says he is then going to quietly pass the key and walk out of the door to enjoy a future of travelling with his wife and tending his much loved garden.

CONDRIEU LA BONNETTE (LIMITED)

£395.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond

Gentle lemon colour, this has subtle aromas of fresh oranges and clementines. In the palate it is beautifully mouth-coating, with delicate lychee and peach flavours. It is generous in style, whilst also pure and fresh. René advises drinking young when all the lovely primary Viognier flavours are at their best. Beautiful with lobster. Drink 2016–2020

CÔTE RÔTIE AMPODIUM (LIMITED)

£380.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond

£395.00 per 6 Magnums In Bond

Bright dark cherry colour, an appealing fleshy style, with beautifully moreish summer fruit flavours. A wine with fine silky tannins, very precise and pure, and highlights the elegance for which the hillside of Côte Rôtie is famed. Nice length and lovely balanced intensity; a hugely rewarding and charming style. Drink 2017–2029



DOMAINE CLUSEL ROCH, AMPUIS

In just 25 years husband and wife team Brigitte Roch and Gilbert Clusel have, through sheer hard work and talent, made this modest estate one of the “must buy” estates in the Northern Rhône. Their wines are truly exquisite, with a Burgundian touch. Their key vineyards are planted with an ancient clone of Ampuis Syrah called Serine, and these old vines provide so much personality to their wines.

They do not seek power and high alcohol, but purity and refinement in their wines. The secret to their success is their work in the vineyards, following organic practices and careful winemaking, avoiding the excesses of new wood, to allow the true expression of their Côte Rôtie fruit to come through. More recently they have been joined by their son Guillaume who is guaranteeing that the strong sense of tradition of this fine domaine will continue for many years.

CÔTE RÔTIE LA PETITE FEUILLE

£235.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond

Only 200 cases are made of this wine each year, from the young vines between 4 – 10 years old from the Clusel’s range of parcels of vineyards. Always a favourite of ours for its price/quality ratio. Gentle red cherry colour, this is full of red fruits. A soft and approachable style concentrating on primary fruits. It is a wine to be drunk young, where you can appreciate the charm of young Côte Rôtie. Drink 2017–2025

CÔTE RÔTIE CLASSIQUE

£295.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond

One of the most complete Côte Rôties that you will find, blended from three different locations on the hillside, with the oldest vines still thriving at 50 years old. Soft spicy aromas of fresh white pepper and black forest fruits. A wine with real depth, this is beautifully layered with fine texture and length. A classical Côte Rôtie, deliciously balanced for mid-term drinking. Drink 2018–2029

CÔTE RÔTIE LA VIALLIÈRE (VERY LIMITED)

£225.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond

This cuvée includes a dash of Viognier in the blend of brooding Syrah. It has a deep dark cherry colour, with crisp fresh summer fruit aromas. In the palate this is a wine with firm blackcurrant flavours, and it focuses on real drive. It finished with fine intense tannins and a long understated length. A wine with real finesse. Drink 2018–2029

CÔTE RÔTIE LES GRANDES PLACES (VERY LIMITED)

£275.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond

This small plot of 0.7 ha is planted with 100% Syrah. The wine is jet black in colour; it is a darker-fruited style of wine than the Viallière. It has very good intensity and is full and weighted, with a powerfully masculine structure. Real breadth, with an appealing spiced peppery finish. A beautiful wine. Drink 2018–2030

DOMAINE ANDRE PERRET, CHAVANAY



There can be little dispute that Condrieu is the home of Viognier, where this hugely expressive white wine is made from a tiny 200 ha appellation just outside Ampuis. In our opinion the delightfully affable André Perret makes the finest example, and his warm character and charming smile come through in the wines. These are happy wines in every way: nothing is forced, which is the secret to fine

Viognier. Great Condrieu should be drunk young. André's careful *élevage* process of part ageing in barrel and part in stainless steel allows the true purity of this delicious grape variety to burst from the glass. This 13 ha estate is a gem, and a great ambassador for the white wines of the Northern Rhône.

ST JOSEPH BLANC (VERY LIMITED)

£140.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond

A lovely blend of 50% Marsanne and 50% Roussanne from 25 year old vines on the edge of Condrieu. This is a creamy textured wine, with soft toffee fruit aromas. In the palate this is deeply concentrated, with lots of breadth and weight and lovely flavours of fresh pear, balanced by the creamy nature of the wine. This is a fine alternative to Chardonnay. Drink 2016–2021

CONDRIEU CLOS CHANSON (VERY LIMITED)

£330.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond

This enclosed vineyard of 50 year old vines on the granite and clay slopes of Condrieu produces a wonderfully poised wine. A wine which has up to 2 years' *élevage* on its lees in cask, it balances the great richness of Viognier with fine freshness provided by the granitic soil structure. Always a flagship wine for the appellation. Drink 2016–2020

CONDRIEU CÔTEAUX DE CHÉRY (LIMITED)

£330.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond

From 60 year old vines from the warm south-easterly facing slopes of Condrieu, this is a beauty. Wonderfully perfumed with hints of nectarines and apricots. In the palate this is all about purity of fruit with no sign of oak *élevage*; it has breadth and volume, full, ripe but beautifully clean. The subtly viscous peach flavours are aided by gentle acidity on the finish. A delicious example of great Viognier from one of the appellation's absolute masters. Drink 2016–2020

ST JOSEPH ROUGE (LIMITED)

£135.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond

From 25 year old vines on south-easterly facing slopes outside Chavanay, this is a wine not to be overlooked. Deep, dark chocolatey, black fruit aromas. This is a full and concentrated style, a wine which really fills the mouth with lovely wild cherry flavours. Beautifully intense with tightly integrated tannins, it has a soft freshness on the finish. Drink 2017–2025

DOMAINE BERNARD FAURIE, TOURNON

Having given his St Joseph vineyards to his daughter and son-in-law, this brilliant wine is sadly the only cuvée available from the delightful Bernard Faurie. Bernard is slowly preparing for his retirement but, having spent a life in the vineyards, this is proving much more difficult than he thought. He has therefore kept his tiny parcel of Hermitage vines (1.7 ha) and will continue making this stunning wine for as long as he can physically manage to tend his precious vines. There may not be many more vintages under his name, but whilst there are, we should make the most of them. He makes wines with layers of fruit and depth and if aged Hermitage is your thing, there is no better estate to seek out. Bernard's wines age into grand old Hermitage.

HERMITAGE

£225.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond

Bernard Faurie, as a senior statesman for the hill of Hermitage, has some of the oldest vines on the hillside, some as much as 100 years of age. Spread across three different locations of Greffieux, Meal and Bressards, he makes stunning Hermitage, balancing the characteristic power of the Syrah grape variety, with an extraordinary level of integrity and complexity, with nuanced layers of flavours in the mouth. Whilst always talking of retiring, he just cannot bring himself to part from his much-loved Hermitage vines. Drink 2018 – 2032

DOMAINE ALAIN VOGÉ, CORNAS

The appellation of Cornas is often overlooked when considering the great vineyards of the Northern Rhône, and wrongly so in our view, because they make some of the truest examples of Syrah in the world. The schistous soils of Cornas's steep slopes have the ability to produce wines with a drive of deep black fruit flavours, subtle white pepper aromas, and an underlining bite of acidity which provides power and uplifting freshness to this rich, spicy grape variety. Wine director Albéric Mazoyer balances a modern winemaking philosophy with a total respect for the history and characteristics of this appellation, abundantly displayed in his 2014s. This year these are an earlier maturing style of Syrah, with lovely personality.

ST PÉRAY FLEUR DE CRUSSOL

£230.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond

100% Marsanne matured in oak casks of one to three years old. Pale lemon in colour, this has broad ripe white fruit aromas. In the palate it has a very fresh and uplifting fruit feel, showing a good natural acidity without any excess. A beautifully refreshing style which is instantly drinkable. Drink 2016 – 2020

CORNAS LES CHAILLES

£230.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond

Les Chailles takes its name from the granitic terraces bordering a chalk based hillside in Cornas, where Vogé has a parcel of 30 year old vines. Dense, dark cherry colour, this is a rich and aromatic wine, with uplifting notes of loganberries and blueberries. Nicely concentrated, with the characteristic freshness one seeks from Cornas, and brightly mineral tannic intensity from the granitic soils. Classy and classical in style. Drink 2017 – 2028

CORNAS VIEILLES VIGNES

£350.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond

Made from a selection of vines which are all over 30 years old, this has a deep, broodingly intense colour. On the nose there is an explosion of aromas – black pepper and spice – with masses of black fruits. In the mouth it is full and concentrated, with a great drive of intensity without being excessively heavy. Lovely and full, with the refreshing touch of acidity on the finish which provides poise and life to the wine. A high class wine showing Alberic's ability to master the hillsides of Cornas. Drink 2019 – 2030

SOUTHERN RHONE

DOMAINE FONT DE MICHELLE, BÉDARRIDES

Guillaume Gonnet is part of the new generation of winemakers in Châteauneuf du Pape. Having travelled the world, he is forward-thinking and prepared to experiment with all aspects of viticulture and winemaking in order to drive the wines of Font de Michelle onwards. As he says, he will only have 40 attempts (vintages) in his lifetime, so it is imperative to try new things over the years. Guillaume has made considerable investment in his winery installing concrete egg-shaped fermentation tanks. He feels this material allows for a more natural fermentation and the unique shape of the tanks enables a more balanced extraction of fruit and greater complexity in his wines.

CHÂTEAUNEUF DU PAPE

£195.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond
£205.00 per 6 Magnums In Bond
£75.00 per Jeroboam In Bond

Predominantly a blend of Grenache, with a small proportion of Syrah and Mourvèdre, this has lovely full voluptuous summer fruit aromas. A very generous mouth-filling style, with subtle sweetness of juicy summer fruits and soft velvety tannins. A forward and easy early-drinking style. Delicious. Drink 2017–2026

DOMAINE CLOS DES PAPES, CHÂTEAUNEUF DU PAPE

One of the oldest winemaking families in Châteauneuf du Pape, the Avrils began their vinous adventures in the early 17th century. Today, the domaine is run by Vincent Avril who took over from his late father Paul in the early 1990s. Vincent is a renowned perfectionist who – vintage allowing – likes to use all 13 permitted grape varieties in his red wine. His 2014 focuses on 50% Grenache and 30% Mourvèdre, though this year he excluded the Syrah preferring his other varieties. Delicate vinification was the key to success and the fruits are vibrant in this extremely appealing 2014. Not a fan of prestige cuvées, Vincent makes just one red wine cuvée to create what in his mind is the most classic example of Châteauneuf du Pape.

CHÂTEAUNEUF DU PAPE BLANC (LIMITED)

£158.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond

A blend of 5 principal varieties: Roussanne, Grenache Blanc (slightly less this year), Clairette, Bourboulenc and Picpoul. This layered blend allows Vincent to create a very balanced wine. The viscous substance and volume of the Roussanne is refreshed by the crispness of Clairette. This is a wine with a fine volume and a lovely citrus, energetic finish. Enjoy when youthful and it will give huge pleasure. Drink 2016–2022

CHÂTEAUNEUF DU PAPE (LIMITED)

£225.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond
£460.00 per 6 Magnums In Bond
£170.00 per Jeroboam In Bond

2014 shows Vincent Avril's growing confidence in Mourvèdre. It plays an ever more important part in this fine wine's final blend, and is now 30% of the varietal make up. 50% is Grenache and the remainder comes from an assortment of the region's indigenous varieties. This wine shows the luscious succulence of Grenache, aided by the weighted substance of the Mourvèdre, which fills the mouth with spiced dark fruits and creates a wine that balances charm with depth. Drink 2018–2030

CHATEAU DE BEAUCASTEL, CHÂTEAUNEUF DU PAPE



This great estate bought by Jacques Perrin over 100 years ago was one of the Rhône Valley's very first estates to commit to organic, and more recently biodynamic, practices. So it is not surprising that naturalness and purity are the family's mantra. The current winemaker from this famous family is Marc Perrin. His style is to

make extremely polished wines, which steer away from the perception that the Southern Rhône is all about heat and alcohol. His wines, which inevitably have the richness of the warm South, have great harmony and balance. The 2014s are a lovely example of this.

CHÂTEAUNEUF DU PAPE BLANC

£219.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond

This fine example of Châteauneuf du Pape Blanc is made predominantly of Roussanne (80%) accompanied by a small amount of Grenache Blanc, Picardin, Bouboulenc and Clairette. Soft toffee fruit aromas, this is a broad and full style with delicate acidity. A beautiful balance between concentration and intensity, without being excessive. It has an appealing soft finish of hazelnuts and spice. A full and very rewarding wine. Drink 2017–2022

CHÂTEAUNEUF DU PAPE BLANC VIEILLES VIGNES ROUSSANNE (LIMITED)

£395.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond

Only 500 cases are made from these aged Roussanne vines on the estate of Ch de Beaucastel. Light lemon colour, it is initially a little reserved on the nose, but in the palate it is hugely textured, with hints of peaches, pears and chamomile. Incredibly intense and flavoursome with amazing length and a touch of spice on the finish. François Perrin always advises either to drink in the first 3 years after bottling or after 15 years of maturation. This is a wine with huge potential. Drink 2016–2030

COUDOULET DE BEAUCASTEL ROUGE

£114.00 per 12 Bottles In Bond

£120.00 per 6 Magnums In Bond

A blend of Cinsault, Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre from 30 ha of vines, just to the east of Ch de Beaucastel but on very similar soil structure. Generously giving, with appealing youthful fresh berry fruit aromas. In the palate, this is an open, forward style. It is a wine whose charm will very much be in early drinking. Soft rounded tannins and a lovely luscious sweet fruited finish. Drink 2016–2018

CHÂTEAUNEUF DU PAPE ROUGE (LIMITED)

£189.00 per 6 Bottles In Bond

£390.00 per 24 Halves In Bond

£390.00 per 6 Magnums In Bond

£145.00 per Jeroboam In Bond

Deep dense opaque colour, this has strong brooding aromas of dark toffee and treacle with hints of black forest fruits. A very concentrated style without losing any subtlety, this possesses the traditional Beaucastel power, beautiful intensity, and hints of pepper and spice with rounded ripe tannins. This has warmth and length, and will age well to be a high class mature wine. Lovely. Drink 2018–2030

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TERMS AND CONDITIONS

All wines are offered In Bond England. We will arrange shipment from the domaines in Autumn 2016. 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.