

Rhone 2007

2007 Southern Rhône

“Throughout the southern Rhône, 2007 is the greatest vintage I have tasted in my thirty years working in that region.” Robert Parker

“Think of 2007 as a hypothetical blend of an opulent, powerful, sumptuous year such as 1990, and a cooler drought vintage such as 2001. These are very aromatic wines of great concentration, freshness, laser-like focus, and amazing purity as well as depth. **It is the vintage of my lifetime for this region, and I don’t say that lightly.** These 2007s will also be very long-lived given their extraordinary balance.” **Robert Parker**

Domaine Versino

The compact little cellar, housing a number of large oak 'foudres', is the cradle of their magnificent version of this famous appellation. Owing almost 40 acres (95% red) with many different parcels spread over a diverse range of 'terroirs', Jean-Paul and his father are proud custodians of a source of some of the finest Châteauneuf-du-Pape currently available. Established in the 1950's by Jean's Italian father, the estate is run in a fully hands-on fashion. “2007 is riper/richer than 2006, maybe a bit like 1999 or a richer version of 2000” Jean-Paul

2007 Châteauneuf-du-Pape Rouge

@ £175 c/s IB (12 bts per case)

@ £185 c/s IB (6 mags per case)

The traditional 2007 Chateaneuf du Pape displays delicious resinous, lavender, garrigue, and kirsch notes, loads of red fruits, deep, medium to full-bodied flavors, silky tannins, and outstanding purity and length. It is a blend of 65% Grenache, 15% Syrah, 15% Mourvedre, and 5% the other red grapes of the appellation. This is a beauty; it should drink well for 12-15 years. Drink 2009-2023 **90-93 Points, Robert Parker**

2007 Châteauneuf-du-Pape Blanc

@ £155 c/s IB (12 bts per case)

Lovely expressive definition, hinting at herbs, green fruits and yellow plums. Lively with a most attractive vital edge. 20% barrel (not new), the rest matured in vat to give a more pristine style, rather than seek out a more expansive profile. 35% Grenache Blanc, 25% Clairette, 15% Roussanne, 15% Bourboulenc plus other local varieties. Ready to enjoy now.

2007 Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Cuvée Felix

@ £295 c/s IB (12 bts per case)

@ £315 c/s IB (6 mags per case)

The 2007 Felix has won much acclaim at recent tastings for this vintage and is once again a most striking cuvée – Not a ‘Parker’ style – but outstanding purity!

The 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape Cuvee des Felix has a dense plum/purple color and a full-bodied, earthy nose with plenty of sweet black cherries, hints of root vegetables, licorice, and some meaty notes. It is full-bodied, chewy, remarkably elegant and stylish despite its substantial flavor profile. Exhibiting some moderate tannins, this wine will need 3-4 years of cellaring, and should drink well for at least two decades. Drink 2011-2031

92-94 Points, Robert Parker

Domaine Roger Sabon

Proprietor Jean-Jacques Sabon and the other younger family members are taking these wines to even greater quality heights than previously attained. The new vintages possess updated, more polished labels, but more importantly, the wines continue to go from what were very strong efforts in the past, to even deeper concentration, complexity, and depth. All cuvées are now routinely outstanding, with the top two offerings, the Cuvée Prestige and the limited production Le Secret des Sabon, compelling Châteauneufs. As with many estates, the 2007's exhibit the vintage's succulent, juicy, incredibly pure fruit and tremendous freshness and vivacity, all packed into substantial, full-bodied wines with surprisingly high alcohols given their vibrancy. One might expect such greatness in 2007 in Chateauneuf du Pape, but Sabon have also hit the heights in the excellent 2006 vintage.

2007 Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Cuvée Réservee

@ £195 c/s IB (12 bts per case)

The dark ruby/purple-tinged 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape Cuvee Reserve is one of the finest yet made by the Sabons. Deep ruby/purple with notes of root vegetables, figs, tobacco leaf, roasted meats, kirsch liqueur, and black currants, this is a broad, deep, substantial, long, heady Chateauneuf that should evolve for 15 or more years.

90-93 Points, Robert Parker

2007 Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Cuvée Prestige

@ £265 c/s IB (12 bts per case)

The 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape Cuvee Prestige's opaque purple color is accompanied by a lovely bouquet of crème de cassis, kirsch, licorice, smoke, new saddle leather, roasted meats, and lavender. Full, deep, and exceptionally pure, it is a superb effort that should drink well for 20-25+ years.

92-95 Points, Robert Parker

2007 Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Le Secret de Sabon

@ £575 c/s IB (6 bts per case)

Reminiscent of a hypothetical blend, stylistically speaking, of a 1990 and 1998, the opaque plum/purple 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape Le Secret des Sabon is off the charts. There are only 2,000 bottles of this limited cuvee, from a parcel of 100+ year old vines in the famed La Crau sector. Enormously powerful notes of grilled herbs, roasted meats, crème de cassis, blackberries, charcoal, and truffles emerge from this massive, super-concentrated 2007. A tour de force in winemaking, this is old vine intensity at its greatest and purest. Give it 5-6 years of bottle age, and drink it over the following three decades.

Drink 2013-2043

96-100 Points, Robert Parker

Domaine Paul Autard

*This gorgeous portfolio from proprietor Paul Autard includes a classically-styled traditional cuvée, a Cuvée la Cote Ronde, a decidedly modern-styled Chateauneuf du Pape, and the newest offering, the blockbuster Cuvée Juline which, despite the use of barriques for aging, is very much in the traditional school. **The 2007's are all brilliant.***

2007 Châteauneuf-du-Pape Cuvée La Cote Ronde

@ £275 c/s IB (12 bts per case)

The 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape La Cote Ronde appears to handle the oak component better than some of its older siblings. Inky/ruby/purple to the rim with a beautiful perfume of cassis, kirsch, charcoal, and graphite, this wine is powerful, rich, and full-bodied with a subtle hint of toasty oak in the aromatics, and no hard edges. The vintage's hallmark purity, and gorgeous texture as well as length are present in this excellent 2007. It should hit its stride in 3-4 years, and last for 20-25.

92-94 Points, Robert Parker

2007 Châteauneuf-du-Pape Cuvée Juline

@ £235 c/s IB (6 bts per case)

A blend of barrel-aged Grenache and Syrah, the 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape Cuvée Juline is fabulous. **My first note was "wow!"** and that was after tasting some truly great 2007's. Inky/ruby/purple-tinged with a rich, sumptuous bouquet of blackberries, kirsch, incense, licorice, and subtle smoke, this is a powerful, multilayered Chateauneuf boasting admirable purity, stunning intensity, and a finish that lasts over a minute. A remarkable cuvee, it should be **one of the monumental wines of the vintage** after sufficient time in the bottle. Anticipated maturity: 2012-2025+.

95-97 Points, Robert Parker

Château de Vaudieu

"The finest performances of Vaudieu in my thirty years of tasting in Châteauneuf-du-Pape....

***This is a killer Châteauneuf-du-Pape."* Robert Parker**

*"This estate, nestled just south of **Rayas**, has a fabulous terroir, but they only recently began exploiting it to its full potential. The traditional Chateauneuf-du-Pape cuvée is aged 85% in tank and 15% in barrel. The blend is generally 80% Grenache and the rest Syrah and Mourvedre. The luxury cuvée, Val de Dieu (Valley of God), is composed of 62% Grenache, 23% Syrah, and 15% Mourvedre, with 55% aged in tank and the Syrah and Mourvedre components aged in 600 liter demi-muids. These two wines represent the finest performances of Vaudieu in my thirty years of tasting in Chateauneuf du Pape."* **Robert Parker**

2007 Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Château de Vaudieu

@ £105 c/s IB (6 bts per case)

@ £110 c/s IB (3 mags per case)

The 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape, all from the sandy soils of this sector, exhibits a dense ruby/purple colour along with an explosive bouquet of black cherries, licorice, smoke, truffles, and meaty undertones. A ripe, full-bodied effort with silky tannin and good freshness (despite what appears to be low acidity), this is a big, mouthfilling Chateauneuf that falls halfway between the modernists and the traditionalists. It should drink well for 12-15 years.

91-94 Points, Robert Parker

2007 Châteauneuf-du-Pape Cuvée Val de Dieu, Château de Vaudieu
@ £180 c/s IB (6 bts per case)
@ £185 c/s IB (3 mags per case)

The stunning, full-bodied 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape Val de Dieu offers up a beautiful nose of acacia flowers, blueberries, blackberries, grilled meats, licorice, and cedar. Impressively pure, multilayered, and long (the finish lasts 50+ seconds); **this is a killer Chateauneuf du Pape** that should age effortlessly for two decades.

93-95 Points, Robert Parker

Domaine Charvin

*"Best vintage since 1990, finesse, richness & freshness...gourmand!
(declares Laurent)...it was ideal for me!"*

Laurent has fashioned a Côtes-du-Rhône cuvée of superbly good value as ever. At least the equal of a number of more 'celebrated' Châteauneuf-du-Pape offerings from elsewhere.

2007 Côtes-du-Rhône Rouge

@ £80 c/c IB (12bts per case)
@ £85 c/s IB (6 bts per case)

As usual, Charvin's 2007 Cotes du Rhone, a 500-case blend of 85% Grenache, 10% Syrah, and 5% Carignan, is one of the more attractive wines of this broad appellation. It exhibits an elegant black cherry, spring flower, loamy soil, garrigue, and spice-scented wine that should drink well for 3-4 years. Drink 2009-2012

88-89 Points, Robert Parker

Perrin et Fils

*"I have been visiting this estate for nearly thirty years, and over that time I have seen all the elements of what makes wines great – an incredible respect for the vineyards, a conscientious, uncompromising work ethic, and extraordinary passion for gentle handling of fruit from their sites" **Robert Parker***

Using the template of quality that has propelled Beaucastel to the top of the hierarchy, the Perrins are now crafting a selection of wines that truly do deserve a wider audience.

We have chosen 2 wines to highlight their skill and dedication to offering typicité and value at the same time.

2007 Vacqueyras, Les Christins

@ £100 c/s IB (12 btls per case)

A real blockbuster is the 2007 Vacqueyras Cristins, a blend of 80% Grenache and 20% Syrah. Its deep ruby/purple hue is followed by a full-bodied bouquet of black cherries, black currants, licorice, grilled herbs, and roasted meats. Very Chateauneuf du Pape-like in its full-bodied power and intensity, it should drink well for 10+ years. Drink 2008-18

90-92 Points, Robert Parker

2007 Gigondas, La Gille

@ £130 c/s IB (12 btls per case)

The 2007 Gigondas Le Gille (80% Grenache and 20% Syrah from the appellation's sandy soils) reveals fabulously intense notes of blueberries, black raspberries, crushed rocks, and white flowers. The vintage's wonderful purity is well-displayed as well as an alluring texture and length. High class Gigondas. Drink 2001-2016

91 Points, Robert Parker

Domaine La Soumade

Tiny yields, cold pre-fermentation maceration, egg white fining and no filtration to mention just a few of André Romero's preferred techniques - and thus a combination of both new and traditional methods. A star of the appellation -

Robert Parker

Frédéric Romero (André's son) guided us through our tasting waxing lyrical about its quality - excellent vintage, less powerful than 2005 but more supple and forward'

2007 Rasteau, Cuvée Préstige

@ £68 c/s IB (6 btls per case)

Matured in 5/6 year old barrels this big, bold and powerful offering a depth of flavour that transcends the more 'normal' quality of this often overlooked appellation. Old vine Grenache and Mourvedre giving low yields being key to its success. Autumnal, briary aromas infused with minerality entice the taster's senses. Drink 2011-2015.

2007 Côtes-du-Rhône, Cuvée Spéciale, 'Les Violettes'

@ £95 c/s IB (6 btls per case)

André's homage to the top wines of the northern Rhone, Cote-Rotie in particular. It really does hint at violets and nuances of coal-tar. Svelte, refined with wonderfully mellow tannins. A joy! 90% Syrah 10% Viognier. Aromatic, intense and stylish. 2011-2016

2007 Northern Rhône Offer

Another truly remarkable vintage in the Rhône Valley, with many growers rating it as high as anything they have seen before. The sequence of success that the region has witnessed over the last 10 years is quite staggering.

Northern Rhône Reds - Like the south, the north too has fashioned a truly memorable set of wines. Lovely colour, lovely fruit profiles with harmony, intensity of flavour and real typicité, but here, obviously, and as always, it is the Syrah that is king. Minerality and finely balanced structure were noticeable very widely. Shapely, svelte tannins support heady aromatics to ensure that the wines have huge appeal. They will be enjoyable young or after several years ageing.

Northern Rhône Whites – The Viognier has excelled. Lovely expressive purity with finesse and undeniable charm are the hallmarks of the best Condrieu. Marsanne and Roussanne too have produced many excellent cuvées.

Domaine Vincent Paris

Vincent Paris fashions exquisitely good Cornas but only in tiny quantities from his 8 hectares of Syrah vines, planted on steeply terraced granitic soils. To taste his wines, especially in top vintages such as 2005 & 2006, is to understand that this often overlooked & underestimated AC really can offer high class fare. Both cuvées are svelte, textured and poised, the 'Granit 60' version offering more depth and richness. The 'Granit 30' maybe wins on finesse. Being the nephew of the great Cornas exponent Robert Michel, Vincent literally has quality Cornas in his veins!

Vincent describes his 2007's as having "very good indeed, even better than the excellent 2006's...the cool August slowed down the ripening to give us elegant, superbly harmonious fruit."

2007 Cornas 'Granit 30'

@ £175 c/s IB (12 bts per case)

Matured in used (2-10 years old) barrels, to be bottled in December 2008. So ripe, so pure. Magical texture and deftness. Very refined and elegant for this erstwhile considered 'rustic' appellation! Lovely, violets, pepper & coal-tar. Satin-like finish. Drink 2010-2015

2007 Cornas 'Granit 60'

@ £240 c/s IB (12 bts per case)

The older vines here lend even more focus and intensity of flavour as well as a more defined minerality. Yet, as above, the wine has clearly been handled with such a 'light hand'. Great purity and poise. A real energy can be sensed from within. Vibrant and full of impressive potential. Drink 2011-2016

2007 Cornas 'La Geynale'

@ £295 c/s IB (12 bts per case)

The first vintage of this high profile cuvée from Vincent. This fabled Cornas old-vine vineyard (inherited from his now retired uncle Robert Michel) has a history of yielding many truly great wines over the years. Vincent's debut is clearly in the same vein. Surely the 'essence' of Cornas - such purity and precision. Blackberry, minerality and nuances of violet. Hidden grip and restraint. Superb. 2011-2020.

Domaine Michel et Stéphane Ogier

Michel's son, Stéphane, is firmly at the helm of this export-orientated estate in Ampuis. Having worked overseas, particularly with some top producers in South Africa, he has a very open mind when it comes to quality/style and winemaking 'savoir-faire'. His wines, though, do retain their innate sense of place and certainly do not pander to the 'show stopping' impact that so many New World winemakers seem to crave. Ultimate drinkability rather than sheer imposition is surely the key. A domaine that is now firmly, and indeed fairly, set amongst the very finest of the region. Superlatives are the norm here! In fact the visit to taste with Stéphane was, as so often in the past, a real 'high spot' of the week.

Stéphane describes 2007 as a "truly lovely vintage...with more focus even than the superb 2006."

2007 La Rosine, Vin de Pays des Collines Rhodaniennes

@ £115 c/s IB (12 bts per case)

A very fine vintage from this cuvée sourced from vines just south of Côte Rôtie. Tight, poised and deftly mineral. 2009-2013

2007 L'Ame Soeur, Vin de Pays des Collines Rhodaniennes

@ £95 c/s IB (6 bts per case)

Sourced from vineyards in Seyssuel (facing Côte Rôtie from across the Rhône), L'Ame Soeur is a very refined, expressive cuvée hinting at violets and a definite streak of 'iodine' – almost sea-salt in its character! A most striking offering from Stéphane. Pepper, black olives and wild herbs also compete for attention. Excellent structure in support. 2009-2014.

2007 Côte Rôtie

@ £345 c/s IB (12 bts per case)

Excellent harmony, texture and finesse. Nothing exaggerated. Intense, refined and yet with brooding potential. 2012-2020.

2005 Côte Rôtie, Belle Hélène

@ £580 c/s IB (6 bts per case)

Always released two years later than traditional 'en primeur' offerings, the supreme Belle Hélène cuvée is a well-structured, intense version of Stéphane's 'regular' Côte Rôtie. Having matured for 2 years in barrel, La Belle Hélène (sourced solely from the Côte Rozier terroir just above La Landonne), and first produced in 1997, owes much of its quality to the age of the vines (55 years). A must for the cellar. 2011-2025

Really gorgeous aromatics of incense, black tea and freshly brewed espresso are backed by a ripe, dense but silky palate of macerated currant and plum fruit interwoven with a mouthwatering iron note. Hard to resist now, but really built for cellaring. Best from 2010 through 2025. 100 cases made.

97 Points, Wine Spectator

2006 Côte Rôtie, Belle Hélène

@ £525 c/s IB (12 bts per case)

Bright ruby. High-pitched, intensely floral aromas of spicy raspberry, cherry and blueberry, along with smoky minerals and mocha. Deep, round and chewy, with admirably concentrated dark berry liqueur flavors, velvety tannins and a long, sappy finish. Ogier told me that he kept 50% of the stems for this.

92-95 points, Steve Tanzer

2005 Côte Rôtie, Lancement

@ £580 c/s IB 6 bts per case)

Packed and superdense, but thoroughly beguiling, with gorgeous aromas of freshly roasted espresso, shaved vanilla, mesquite and black tea followed by rich layers of blackberry, fig and boysenberry fruit. The long, fine-grained finish lets incense and mouthwatering minerality play out. Best from 2010 through 2025. 100 cases made.

96 Points, Wine Spectator

2006 Côte Rôtie, Lancement

@ £525 c/s IB (6 bts per case)

Tasted from a new barrel: Pungent raspberry, cherry, violet and rose on the nose, plus a gentle licorice note. Broad, silky and strikingly sweet, offering supple texture and deep red berry liqueur flavors. Very sexy. From three-year-old oak: Vivid, sharply etched red fruit aromas, with a subtle dark chocolate quality. Deep and chewy, with potent kirsch and bitter chocolate flavors. Finishes with superb grip and persistence. This may well match the 2005, especially for sheer elegance.

92-95 points, Steve Tanzer

Domaine Pierre Gaillard

A supremely well-tended 45 acre estate owned and run by Pierre Gaillard and very much a 'beacon' of quality and authenticity. Pierre used to hold the post of 'Chef de culture' at the very traditional, but very high quality, Rhône producer Vidal Fleury (now part of Guigal).

2007 Côtes-du-Rhône Blanc, Les Gendrines

@ £120 c/s IB (12 bts per case)

Heady peach/apricot aromas, but reined in by a fresh vibrancy without any hint of over-embellishment. Silken harmony. Gentle, elegant oak nuances. Much finesse. Condrieu in all but official classification, as the vines find themselves just across the road from the appellation boundary.

2007 St Joseph Rouge, Clos de Cuminaille

@ £155 c/s IB (12 bts per case)

Always sumptuously textured this fine cuvée very, very rarely disappoints. The 2007 is of high quality indeed, even more impressive than the wonderful 2006. Loaded in peppery, liquorice expressiveness. Plenty of amplitude but married to a linear, streamlined structure. A very stylish St Joseph! 2011-2016

2007 Côte Rôtie

@ £280 c/s IB (12 bts per case)

Complete, harmonious and great length of flavour. A wine that beguiles, enchants and intrigues. Caresses the palate on entry but keeps itself in check with appropriate tannins that are incredibly well sculpted. Nothing extreme at all. Seamless. Immediately expressive with hints of violet, pepper and olive. Lovely wine. 2012-2018

Domaine Francois Villard

Francois Villard is without doubt one of the finest vigneron in Condrieu. Only 25% barrel-fermented, these two spectacular cuvées offer gently exotic peach & nectarine fruit with excellent richness on the palate and sufficient racy acidity on the finish. The 'Les Terrasses du Palat' offers perhaps more elegance and minerality than the 'Le Grand Vallon' which is more focused on textured harmony. All in all, they are both very finely balanced. Both would offer of their best if consumed in their youth ie. before 2012.

2007 Condrieu, Les Terrasses du Palat

@ £290 c/s IB (12 bts per case)

2007 Condrieu, Le Grand Vallon

@ £310 c/s IB (12 bts per case)

Les Vins de Vienne

Established just over a decade ago, this exemplary grower/negoçiant business is the result of a thrilling collaboration between 3 of the Rhône valley's most frontier-challenging winemakers - François Villard, Pierre Gaillard and Yves Cuilleron. Gaining their inspiration for this impressive new venture from a desire to restore the vineyards of Seyssuel to their former glory (writings by Pliny and Plutarch give mention to vines of Seyssuel!), they set about replanting this area that faces Côte Rôtie from the opposite bank of the Rhône. The pioneering triumvirate planted 60 acres of vines here purely with Syrah and Viognier, all on high-density spacing and all on steeply terraced slopes - very much the mirror image of Côte Rôtie itself. This, then, is their 'cradle' but the majority of their requirements originate from close knit contracts with like-minded growers up and down the valley.

The three of them view 2007 as a vintage with "a fantastic end of season that saved the day! Lovely fruit, elegance & balance. A bit like 2006 but even more stylish."

2007 Taburnum, Vin de Pays des Collines Rhodaniennes

@ £145 c/s IB(6 bts per case)

100% barrel-fermented Viognier from the Seyssuel vineyards. High class, multi-faceted and easily the match of top Condrieu. Drink over the next 3-4 years.

2007 Sotandum, Vin de Pays des Collines Rhodaniennes

@ £145 c/s IB (6 bts per case)

100% barrel matured Syrah from the Seyssuel vineyards. As impressive as the Taburnum with layers of rich, heady black fruit and a fine mineral streak. 2011-2018.

2007 Hermitage Rouge, Les Chirats de St Christophe

@ £425 c/s IB (6 bts per case)

Regularly one of the very best cuvées here. Wonderfully complex aromas of briar, black olive and violets, laced with spice & hints of tar. The tannins are so ripe and so harmonious that the over-riding palate sensation is one of pure satin. Powerful, for sure, but elegant at the same time. Superb Hermitage. 2011-2020

Domaine des Hauts Chassis

Franck Faugier inherited the domaine from his father in 1998. He produces three cuvées: Esquisse, Les Galets and Les Chassis. We have selected two. Both are 100% Syrah wines showing beautiful linear fruit and freshness, allied to real minerality. The 'Les Chassis' cuvée is the most intense. For drinking from next year and over the ensuing 3-4 years.

The 12 hectare domaine is situated in the heart of the Les Hauts Chassis village towards the south of the Crozes-Hermitage appellation. The majority of the property is planted to Syrah with 70% of the vines averaging 20 years old and the remaining 30% more than 50 years of age. The soils are composed of alpine glacial alluvium with a sub-soil of sand and clay. The large pebbles on the surface collect the heat during the day and transfer the heat to the vines during the night. The grapes are harvested by hand and with no intervention of chemical products.

Franck opined "2007 gave us some very pretty fruit style thanks to the great end of season."

2007 Crozes-Hermitage Rouge 'Les Galets'

@ £110 c/s IB (12 bts per case)

Bottled in July 2008, the wine possesses a wonderful bouquet that is all black olive paste and minerals. Real focus and concentration, with svelte ripe tannins. Great value

New Crozes discovery. 2009-2012

2007 Crozes-Hermitage Rouge 'Les Chassis'

@ £145 c/s IB (12 bts per case)

The bottling is planned for November 2008. A deeper more concentrated cuvée than the above. So ripe, pure and stylish with shapely, appropriate tannins. Hints of tapenade enhance the aromas of dark briary fruit. Long and very refined. 2010-2013.

All wines to be shipped autumn 2009. Wines are offered In Bond, London (excluding duty and Vat which will be charged at the prevailing rates at the time).

Neil Sommerfelt MW

Buying Director

November 2008

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