

CLOS DU MONT OLIVET COTES DU RHONE, VIEILLES VIGNES

Grenache, Carignan and Syrah. Brilliant ruby. One of the most complex Cotes du Rhones made. Ripe cherry and dark berries on the powerfully scented nose and in the mouth. Appealingly sweet black raspberry, cherry compote and lavender pastille flavors pick up a hint of succulent herbs with air. Broad and spicy on the gently tannic finish, the floral and smoke notes linger impressively. Elegant, aromatic and long-lived, this wine reflects not only the rich character of southern Rhône terroir but also the subtle, spicy personalities of the region's native grapes.

Clos du Mont Olivet's Côte-du-Rhone vineyards are situated to the north of Bollène on the border between the Vaucluse and Drôme departments. The grapes are from different plots situated in the Montueil and La Levade localities and grow on a largely clayey and gravelly soil, which, with the age of the vines, gives rise to a powerful, fat and unctuous wine. A partial destemming takes place and the vats are gravity filled. The wine is made avoiding maximal extraction; on the contrary, the sought-after qualities are elegance and freshness. The free-run juice and the press juice are raised separately, mainly in concrete tanks where they undergo their malolactic fermentation. After the final blend is made, the wine continues to mature in large oak barrels and vats.

The wines of this estate, which traces its history back to 1547, are among the finest of Chateauneuf-du-Pape. In 1932 Seraphin Sabon created the domaine Clos du Mont Olivet. It is now his great grandchildren Thierry, David, Celine and Mylene who own and manage the estate. They took over from Pierre, Jean Claude and Bernard Sabon.

They are the children and grandchildren of Joseph Sabon. Thierry, who formerly studied physics, is the winemaker. They make traditional wines that can show supple and remarkably forward fruit, yet remain powerful and complete as they age gracefully. The 29-hectares of Chateauneuf du Pape that the domaine holds (there are an additional 17 hectares in Cotes du Rhone) are spread out over dozens of parcels from the north to the south of Chateauneuf-du-Pape. The soils and microclimates are very varied, including quartzite colluvium, sandstones and marine clays. Much of their plantings are from Grenache vines that are close to 90 years old. Their oldest vines are located on the stony terroir of La Crau. Those Grenache vines are over 100 years old. Viticulture practices are sustainable; the vineyards are plowed, and pheromone traps are used to avoid insecticides.

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Tasting Note:

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Grenache, Carignan & Syrah. Aromas of ripe cherry & dark berries; flavors of ripe, sweet berries & lavender pastille with a hint of succulent herbs; broad & spicy gently tannic finish; lingering floral & smoke notes.

Shelf Talker:

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