

# WINE News

With a string of three fabulous Rhône Valley vintages on the market, it's hard to choose what to buy. Inside, our Rhône team picks some of their favorites to help you decide...



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## Rhône 2009-2011: Back-to-Back Home Runs Followed Up By a Double!

by Alex Pross

There may not be another region in the world that consistently turns out more values and top wines on a year-to-year basis than the Rhône Valley. Whether you're looking for a \$10 everyday value to drink, a 95-point wine that costs less than \$60 a bottle, or a show-stopping classic wine, the last three vintages will provide them. First there was 2009, a great vintage that many believed to have been the best in the last 20 years, followed by the even greater 2010 vintage. The 2011 vintage, if it weren't for the two superb vintages preceding it, would probably be the talk of the town.

Regrettably, there aren't a lot of the 2009s left, but we have a few available that stand out, not just because they have stellar reviews, but because they're from producers that I personally rank annually among the Top 10 in the Rhône Valley. First is the **2009 Château Beaucastel**

**Châteauneuf-du-Pape (PA \$89.99)**. It received 96 points *Wine Spectator* (WS), 94 points *Wine Advocate* (WA) and 93 points Stephen Tanzer's *International Wine Cellar* (ST). This is a classically-styled wine that consistently delivers the quintessential Châteauneuf-du-Pape experience for a very good price. The **2009 Clos des Papes Châteauneuf-du-Pape for (PA \$109.99; 1.5L \$219.99)**, from one of the region's most sought after producers, received 96 points WS and 95 points from both WA and ST and should not be passed up!

I am infatuated with 2009 vintage from the Rhône, but the 2010 vintage has really stolen my heart. The 2010s show a little more intensity of fruit and acidity, as well as finer delineation and balance—not by a lot, but just enough to make this vintage truly irresistible. Below are four selections that run the gamut from affordable to cellar-worthy.

**2010 Mas de Boislauzon Châteauneuf-du-Pape (PA \$34.99)** 93 points WS, 92 points WA and 90 points ST. Classic Châteauneuf-du-Pape with 70% Grenache; this wine bursts with deep, gorgeous fruit while still retaining classic hints of spice and earth.

**2010 Olivier Hillaire Châteauneuf-du-Pape (PA \$29.99)** 90-93 points WA: "...rich aromas of Asian plum sauce, raspberries, black cherries, spice box, garrigue and meaty notes. Sweet tannins, a fleshy, full-bodied mouthfeel, and a heady aftertaste make for a gorgeous, sumptuous, front end-loaded red to drink over the next 10-12 years.

**2010 Clos des Papes Châteauneuf-du-Pape (PA \$159.99; 1.5L \$339.99)** 99 points WA, 98 points and #4 on the WS Top 100 Wines of 2012, 96 points ST. What does greatness cost? In the Rhône it costs \$159.99 a bottle. If you want a truly magical experience you can't go wrong with Clos des Papes; this wine hits on all cylinders.

**2010 Domaine de Ferrand Châteauneuf-du-Pape\* (\$69.99)** 96+ points WA and 94 points ST. A perfect example of the greatness of 2010, this wine is packed with fruit, spice, earth and minerals. It will age gracefully for the next two decades. In stock.

The 2009 and 2010 vintages may be back-to-back knockouts, but this shouldn't overshadow the superior quality of 2011, which is full of stunning wines at great prices. Well-worth a serious look are: **2011 Le Vieux Donjon (PA \$39.99)** 91-93 points WA and 90-93 points ST; **2011 Clos des Papes (PA \$89.99)** 91-94 points WA and 92-94 points ST; **2011 Clos Saint Jean "Combe des Fous" Châteauneuf-du-Pape (PA \$89.99)** 93-96 points WA and 92-94 points ST, and the **2011 Clos Saint Jean "Deus Ex Machina" Châteauneuf-du-Pape (PA \$109.99)**, which got 95-98 points WA and 93-95 points ST.

# Rhône Valley Reds: Second in My Heart

Clyde Beffa Jr.

This is the first issue of our newly formatted electronic four-page newsletters, but it's all about my second love: the Rhône. My first love is Bordeaux, but many of you may not know that my second love is the Rhône Valley. In fact, it was the last category for which I gave up being the buyer. Mulan Chan-Randel took on that role and for the last seven years or so has done a great job buying for the category. For the last three years, Alex Pross has been working with Mulan on the Rhône category—his insights are on Page 1.

The Rhône Valley offers wines that are priced quite fairly in the fine wine category. In general, they are much less expensive than the great wines of Burgundy and Bordeaux. You can find highly scored and highly sought-after Rhônes for a fraction of the cost of the top Bordeaux, and the region has been blessed with three outstanding vintages in a row: 2009, 2010, and 2011. It looks like 2012 will break that streak, but we have thousands of bottles of great southern and northern Rhônes available for the collector. Some of the selections below are offered pre-arrival (PA). The 2009s and 2010s are arriving daily, and there are some serious wines here for not a lot of money.

## NOTABLE 2009s

There are lots of sweet and sexy wines from this vintage, similar to 2009 Bordeaux!



**2009 Domaine de Ferrand Châteauneuf-du-Pape\* (\$49.99)** 95 points Robert Parker: "A candidate for wine of the vintage, the 2009... is a naked expression of Châteauneuf-du-Pape that is pure fruit and complexity. Its dense purple color is followed by aromas of melted licorice, charcuterie, Provençal herbs, black currants, roasted meat, plum sauce, seaweed and licorice."

**2009 Le Vieux Donjon Châteauneuf-du-Pape\* (\$49.99)** 94 points Robert Parker: "Its dense ruby/plum color is followed by aromas of smoked meats, roasted Provençal herbs, a gamy character and lots of kirsch, black currant and blue fruits. Rich and full-bodied, it is softer than most young vintages of Vieux Donjon."

**2009 E. Guigal Gigondas (\$25.99)** I have loved the wines of Guigal since I first met Marcel in 1985. 91 points Robert Parker: "...a ripe, earthy effort displaying peppery notes intermixed with garrigue, blueberries and black raspberries, super fruit (a characteristic of this vintage), low acidity and attractive lushness as well as density. It should drink nicely for a decade."

## 2010: A CLASSIC RHÔNE VINTAGE TO BUY

Many Rhône experts think that 2010 may be better than the very rich and sexy 2009s; the vintage is more classic. There are lots of great buys from Châteauneuf-du-Pape and the surrounding regions...

**2010 Domaine Galevan "Esprit Devin" Côtes du Rhône\* (\$19.99)** The small Domaine Galevan is run by Coralie Goumarre, a ninth-

generation winegrower who took over for her parents in 1995. If the pair of Galevan Châteauneufs are out of your price range, don't worry, you can enjoy the high quality from this estate for just \$20! Mostly Grenache, with small amounts of Mourvèdre and Syrah, aged in barrel for one year.

**2010 La Ferme du Mont "Côtes Jugunda" Gigondas\* (\$23.99)** My favorite southern Rhône town, Gigondas, offers great values, especially this one! 91-93 points Robert Parker: "...Revealing exceptional potential, it exhibits a dense ruby/purple color as well as copious notes of mulberries, blueberries, black currants, licorice, flowers and damp forest floor. Full-bodied, pure and filled with personality."



**2010 Bosquet des Papes "À la Gloire de Mon Grand-Père" Châteauneuf-du-Pape (\$99.99)** 98 points Robert Parker: "Close to perfection, it is the finest example of this cuvee I have tasted since its debut in 1998. Drinking it is like drinking pure kirsch liqueur intermixed with notes of crushed spring flowers. Its superb minerality, density, purity and texture build incrementally in the mouth revealing a blockbuster red with superb elegance, precision and purity."

**2010 Domaine Bois de Boursan Châteauneuf-du-Pape (PA \$29.99)** 90 points Robert Parker: "...dark plum/purple, with silky tannins, abundant black currant and sweet cherry fruit with hints of mulberries, lavender and licorice. It is perfumed, full-bodied, rich and appealing. Drink it over the next 10-12 years."

## 2011: ANOTHER GREAT RHÔNE VINTAGE

The 2011 vintage is a little bit like 2009 and 2010 mixed together. It was particularly very good in the northern Rhône.

**2011 Clos Saint Jean Châteauneuf-du-Pape (PA \$29.99)** Here is a great value wine. It displays delicious fruit along with soft tannins, and a big, projected bouquet of crushed herbs, black cherry jam and tobacco. With good acidity as well as medium to full body, it should drink nicely for a decade or more.

**2011 Domaine Pégau "Cuvée Réserve" Châteauneuf-du-Pape (PA \$44.99)** 90-93 points Robert Parker: "...One of the stars of the vintage. Exhibiting a surprisingly deep purple color, it is a seductive, open-knit, precocious, sexy example with decent acidity, sumptuous fruit and delicious, mature flavors of roasted herbs, kirsch, black currants, raspberries, licorice and incense."

**2011 Domaine Vincent Paris "Granit 30" Cornas (PA \$39.99)** 93-95 points Robert Parker: "The fabulous 2011 Cornas Granite 30 is one of the great wines of the vintage. Elegant, with a black/blue color, sweet tannin and loads of spring flowers, crushed rocks, smoked game and blackberry fruit, this textured, loaded, supple, accessible 2011 should drink nicely for 15 or more years."

These are only a handful of the Rhône wines from this trio of great vintages that you should try. Comparing prices to scores, the Rhône Valley is definitely the best value region for great French wines.

# Stock Your Cellar with Châteauneuf-du-Pape

Mulan Chan-Randel

**Rhône lovers:** If you are looking to stock your cellar with a selection of wines from the glorious 2010 vintage, then it would behoove you to consider the many fine wines coming out of Châteauneuf-du-Pape. Over the past year, K&L has featured numerous hearty reds from this famous appellation, but the fun is not over yet! Fortunately we've been able to secure more 2010 allocations from our suppliers and contacts. Below is only a partial listing of our in stock 2010 Châteauneuf-du-Pape offering; these are wines that will reward you for years to come!

**2010 Domaine Saint Siffrein Châteauneuf-du-Pape\* (\$34.99; 1.5L \$69.99)** 94 points Robert Parker: "A blend of two-thirds Grenache and the rest mostly Syrah and Mourvèdre with a touch of Cinsault from 60-old-vines [sic], all aged in old wood foudres, the 2010 Châteauneuf-du-Pape is deep and full-bodied. One of the great buys of the vintage, it exhibits an opaque ruby/purple color as well as abundant notes of black raspberries, incense, Asian plum sauce, garrigue and licorice. With stunning concentration and purity, a full-bodied texture and a long finish, it still has some tannins to shed, so give it 2-3 years of cellaring and drink it over the following 15-20."

**2010 Chante Cigale Châteauneuf-du-Pape\* (\$32.99)**

We've been bringing in this wine directly for years, and the 2010 is a steal! 94 points Robert Parker: "... notes of charcuterie, roasted meats, garrigue, kirsch and black currants along with a full-bodied, seriously endowed, super-concentrated mouthfeel that builds like a skyscraper in the mouth. This cuvee possesses remarkable density and richness as well as the potential to last 20 years."

**2010 Domaine de la Charbonniere "Mourre des Perdrix" Châteauneuf-du-Pape\* (\$44.99)** 93 points Robert Parker:

"The opaque ruby/purple-colored 2010 Châteauneuf-du-Pape Mourre des Perdrix exhibits classic notes of raspberries, plums and cherries...it is elegant, pure and precise, veering toward a more Pinot Noir-like style than the other Châteauneuf-du-Pape cuvées. One of my favorite estates in the southern Rhône, Domaine de la Charbonniere is run with great passion and enthusiasm by Michel Maret, and more recently, by his two daughters. The Marets own nearly 44 acres in Châteauneuf-du-Pape, and one of their most under-valued and under-rated wines is their sensational Vacqueyras."

**2010 Château Sixtine (Formerly Cuvée du Vatican Reserve Sixtine) Châteauneuf-du-Pape\* (\$59.99)** 96 points Robert Parker: "The 2010 Château Sixtine Châteauneuf-du-Pape performed exquisitely...one of the top wines of the vintage. With better integration of the new oak than I have previously seen from Jean-Marc Diffonty, this wine's opaque ruby/purple color possesses lots of licorice, asphalt, graphite, blackberry and kirsch notes as well as hints of lavender, forest floor

and garrigue. This opulent, full-bodied effort is approachable, but it will not hit its full stride for another 2-4 years. It should drink well for 15-20 years thereafter."

**2010 Domaine du Clos du Caillou "Les Quartz" Châteauneuf-du-Pape\* (\$69.99)**

96 points Robert Parker: "The 2010 Châteauneuf-du-Pape Les Quartz, which is aged in both foudre and truncated oak vats, comes from two lieux-dits, Les Cassanets for the Grenache and Les Bedines for the Syrah. It reveals crushed raspberry and kirsch notes as well as a chalky stone-like character, but less of the Provençal roasted herb, lavender, and licorice notes than its siblings. Drink this dense, full-bodied, impressive 2010 over the next 15-20 years."

**2010 Domaine Durieu "Lucille Avril" Châteauneuf-du-Pape\* (\$34.99)** 94 points Robert Parker:

"The precise blend of 90% tank-aged Grenache, 6% Mourvèdre and 4% Syrah (both aged in small oak barrels) includes 100% stems, and was bottled with no filtration. It shares several characteristics with the 2007, including a dense purple color and a flamboyant, exotic nose of jammy black fruits, incense, truffles and garrigue. Slightly more firmer [sic] structured than the 2007, the 2010 must tip the scales at over 15% alcohol given its level of glycerin and mouth-coating viscosity. This sensational effort still has some tannins to shed, but it is beautifully rich, pure and multidimensional. Give it 2-3 years of cellaring, and drink it over the following 15-20 years."

**2010 Famille Perrin "Les Sinards" Châteauneuf-du-Pape (\$39.99)**

93 points WS: "Lush and inviting, with smoldering black tea weaving through the fleshy layers of melted fig, hoisin sauce, plum preserves and blackberry pudding. The dark ganache-coated finish has serious grip. Best from 2014 through 2025. Tasted twice, with consistent notes."

Additionally, we also have many vinous gems from other regions throughout the southern Rhône:

**2010 Domaine Grand Veneur "Clos de Sixte" Lirac\* (\$22.99)** 90-92 points Robert Parker:

"...one of the finest wines of Lirac. The 2010 Clos de Sixte Lirac should compete with the brilliant 2009. Black currant, spring flower, licorice and crushed rock aromas jump from the glass of this dense ruby/purple-colored, full-bodied, beautifully pure, textured and dense Lirac. It should drink well for at least a decade."



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**2010 Coudoulet de Beaucastel Côtes du Rhône (\$29.99)** 90 points Robert Parker: "The real steal...has really put on some weight and intensity since I tasted it last year. The wine displays oodles of licorice, black currant and black cherry liqueur with hints of damp forest floor and truffle. Sweet tannin, decent acidity and nice, attractive density make for an outstanding Cotes du Rhone to drink over the next 7-8 years."

**2010 Château Grande Cassagne Costières de Nîmes Rouge (\$10.99)** This is a blend of 60% tank-fermented Grenache and 40% cask-aged Syrah from vines aging nearly 60 and 40 years respectively, hand-farmed and hand-crafted by brothers Laurent and Benoît Dardé on their estate west of Avignon. It is a balanced, textured wine rich in color and flavor that exudes powerful red fruits and spice. Ripe tannins support the fruit for a wonderfully juicy, round wine that will age gracefully over the next two to five years.

### FIND HUNDREDS MORE RECOMMENDATIONS ON OUR STAFF REVIEW PAGE!

#### 2010 Domaine Saint Damien "La Louisiane"

**Gigondas (\$34.99)** 93 points Robert Parker: "...sensational notes of blueberry liqueur intermixed with kirsch, mulberries, licorice and lavender. Full-bodied and sexy with good acidity as well as sweet, well-integrated tannins, this beautiful, virginal (because of the biodynamic farming and lack of any new oak aging) red should drink nicely for 10-15 years."

**2010 Domaine les Pallières "Terrasse du Diable" Gigondas (\$39.99)** 93 points Robert Parker: "Slightly superior...the 2010 Gigondas Terrasse du Diable offers lots of black raspberry, kirsch and floral characteristics along with an undeniable crushed rock minerality. Medium to full-bodied and elegant as well as impressively built, rich, pure and beautifully balanced, it can be enjoyed now and over the next 15 years."



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**2010 Domaine Roche Côtes du Rhône\* (\$16.99; \$14.99 Wine Club)** 90 points WS: "Ripe, rounded and juicy, with a delicious core of melted licorice, plum sauce and linzer torte notes. A light tarry edge helps drive the finish. Rock-solid." Hand-harvested from 40 year old vines, the 2010 Côtes du Rhône from Domaine Roche is a blend of 60% Grenache, 25% Syrah, and 15% Carignan. Already overachieving at their price point, we expect to continue to see great things come out of Domaine Roche!



## Personal Sommelier Corner: Cellar Steals

Chiara Shannon

Looking for a Southern Rhône star for the cellar to enjoy while you wait for your 2009s and 2010s to age? Don't miss the superb **2001 Château des Tours Vacqueryas (\$59.99)**, a "beautiful, elegant, seductive 2001 Vacqueyras" according to Robert Parker. This displays layers of complexity and perfect integration - just the pairing for ratatouille! The **2007 E. Guigal Châteauneuf-du-Pape (\$42.99)**, 93 points and "one of the finest Chateauneufs made by Guigal" from Robert Parker, is in stock and available for a great price. Rich, dark and brooding, this classic is best with lamb or beef and will only get better with age. Finally, we have a limited offering of the glorious, 95 point Robert Parker **2006 Château de Beaucastel Châteauneuf-du-Pape (PA \$69.99)**. Walking the line between supreme elegance and approachability, this is will reward the patient. Due in the fall, you will not regret having a case on hand to savor for years to come...

*Love the Rhône? Design your own wine club with the K&L Personal Sommelier Service! Sign up online today or email [Sommelier@KLWines.com](mailto:Sommelier@KLWines.com) for details.*

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