



American Wine Society

- a non-profit corporation

Rochester Chapter AWS Tasting Notes

Wines from the Southern Rhône

March 15, 2008

Committee Chair Brian Thomas welcomed a group of almost 50 attendees and presented a brief overview of the Southern Rhône area, its history, and its wines.

The Rhône wine region in Southern France is situated in the Rhône river valley and is generally divided into two subregions—the Northern Rhône and the Southern Rhône. The Southern Rhône has a warm Mediterranean climate with milder winters and hot summers. Few Southern Rhône vineyards are close to the river, as is the case in the north, because of the warmer ambient temperatures.

In the Northern Rhône, the Syrah, Marsanne, and Roussanne grapes are prominent. In the Southern Rhône wines, Grenache, Syrah, and Mourvèdre are often used, and the most well-known wine, Châteauneuf-du-Pape, is blend of up to 13 varieties of grapes (allowed under terms of the appellation) from vineyards near the village of Châteauneuf-du-Pape.

Châteauneuf-du-Pape roughly translates to “New castle of the Pope.” In 1308, Pope Clement V relocated the papacy to the town of Avignon. He and subsequent “Avignon Popes” were said to be great lovers of Burgundy wines and did much to promote them during the seventy-year Avignon Papacy.

Côtes du Rhône is an appellation that encompasses both the northern and southern sections of the valley and is typically only used if the wine does not qualify for an appellation that can command a higher price.

Eighteen villages are designated as Côtes du Rhône Village. They have better growing conditions and are required to adhere to stricter wine growing and wine making regulations.

Below are the data from the Southern Rhône tasting.

Tasting Order	Wine	Price	Tasting Voting Results
Opener	2006 Perrin Reserve Côtes du Rhône	\$8	
1	2005 Domaine du Vieux Lazaret Châteauneuf-du-Pape	\$28	Third Place
2	2005 Les Abeilles (Jean-Luc Colombo) Côtes du Rhône	\$9	
3	2003 Vacqueras Reserve (Chapelle St Arnoux	\$9-11	
4	2003 Gigondas (Guigal)	\$20	Fourth Place
5	1999 Gigondas (Domaine Les Pallieres)	\$30	
6	1999 Châteauneuf-du-Pape Cuveé de mon Aieul (P. Usseglio)	\$39	Second Place
7	2001 Châteauneuf-du-Pape Les Cailloux (Brunel)	\$35	
8	2003 Châteauneuf-du-Pape (Guigal)	\$33-37	First Place