

**YEAR
2023**



Le Château de Rouanne

Christophe Botton, ink - 2023

YEAR 2023

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CHATEAU DE SAINT COSME



CHATEAU DE ROUANNE

Editorial

Following the 2022 booklet that you have appreciated, we have decided to open our forum to other artists. In 2023, you will discover, in addition to some inks of yours truly, productions of Pierre Grieu (he is unavoidable here in Saint Cosme), of Esther Seignon, of Alix Barruol, of Denis Plat (Denis is a graphic designer and draftsman. He collaborates with our friend the geologist Georges Truc in producing illustrations of viti-eno-geology) and Christophe Botton.

What does it mean to be a winegrower in 2023 ?

The question may seem trite if you consider the answer to be simple. But in actual fact, there seems to be genuine confusion about the issue, which makes the question all the more founded. If you take a closer look at the situation in 2023, you realise that not everyone has the same approach – the world of wine is replete with players who do different things, at different echelons, with very variable levels of quality.

The term winegrower cannot match such a variety of definitions, and would otherwise lose its initial meaning.

I would like to share my concept of this profession with you – this will then shed light on what we are striving to achieve at Saint Cosme and Rouanne.

A winegrower is someone who, through their work, offers a translation of terroir for those who taste their wine. Because wine is the most accurate and surest means of 'savouring' our planet in general and a specific site in particular, there can in no way be a disconnect between the notion of winegrower and the idea of origin. Conveying terroir through a fermented beverage we call wine is to offer an aesthetic approach which conjures up the birthplace of that product in the taster's imagination. Could there be anything more amazing than to offer a rendition of a location through the conduit of our senses? This implies, obviously, that the aesthetics deliver and can elicit pleasure and sometimes emotions. So there has to be at least some form of

communion between the winegrower and the wine taster – sharing. It can be likened to when we contemplate a work of art – there can only be pleasure and emotion if this truly unique bond of understanding is established between the creator and the person who thrives on the pleasure. All of this seems to make perfect sense and can apply to every culture in every era. And we must also accept the fact that a message that is not comprehended, does not exist. For example, if I give some 1990 Romanée Conti to a Chechen lumberjack, whose culture is to find Dutch courage in vodka, there is every likelihood that the greatness of the wine will neither be understood nor perceived.



Chechen lumberjack - Denis Plat - 2023

But let's get back to this much-vaunted and highly significant translation of terroir. Site-expressiveness really reaches its peak, at least in the world of fine wines, when wines become mature. In its youth, wine is primarily about fruit, then with age – provided its terroir has genuine pedigree – it reveals the full magic of the soil, mineral elements, earth and origin. For this to occur, though, the fruit needs time to gradually evaporate and usher in the magic of mineral expression.

Which brings me to the concept of 'quality'.

The noble process of conveying terroir by a conscientious winegrower is pointless if there is no control over quality. After all, every wine's dream is to turn into vinegar. Once wine has become vinegar, it has reached the most stable stage of its existence – a winegrower should never forget that. It is important to understand that myriad evils are constantly poised to jeopardise our wines – volatile acidity which turns wine into vinegar, oxidation which destroys the refinement of expression, reduction which produces unpleasant barnyard aromas, brettanomyces yeast which literally decapitates aroma and dries the tannins of the affected wine, bad bacteria which makes the wine so acidic that it loses its gentleness and softness. I could continue for pages, but there's no point.

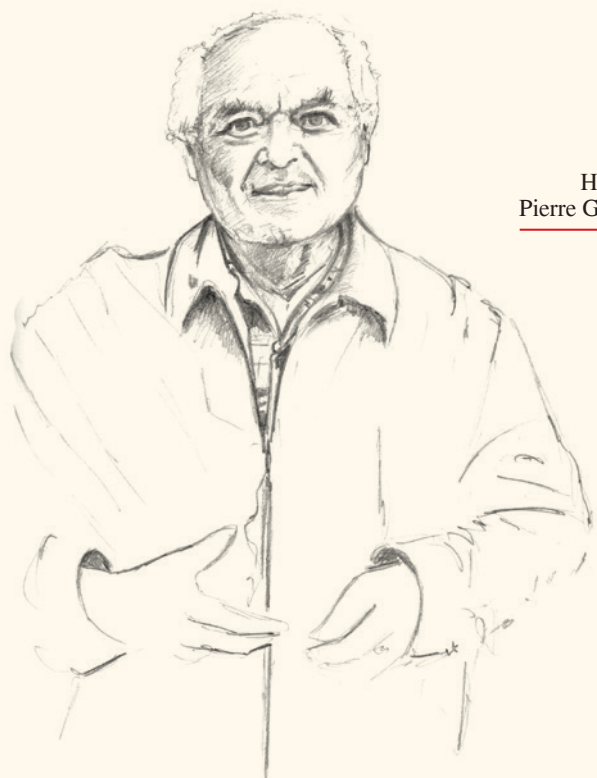
Moving terroir-driven wines are unlikely to be young. All of us know full well that we have experienced our greatest wine emotions with bottles that were not young. On no account can moving terroir-driven wines be technical failures.

Akin to a musician interpreting a musical score, the winegrower who offers an interpretation of his or her terroir can only do so with true technical proficiency. Make of it what you will. Who wants to listen to a musician who plays an instrument poorly? Who wants to drink wines whose poor execution has destroyed any possible terroir expression from the outset?

As Georges Brassens so aptly summed it up – *"Talent without technique is merely a bad habit"*.

At Saint Cosme and Rouanne, we strive to follow the route mapped out by my father Henri Barruol. He had a profound love of nature, birds and organic farming. He was always a practitioner of non-intervention winemaking based on the simplest techniques there are. Gifted with a scientific mind, he developed a passion for oenology and an understanding of living things – both are extraordinary allies for winegrowers who sincerely want to let the land speak. Because he had been a high-class cabinet maker in a previous life, it was only natural that he should approach his work as a winegrower by placing a quest for beauty at the heart of his work and his life.

And this, my dear friends, is what I wanted to say to you very briefly about our job as winegrowers.



Henri Barruol
Pierre Griefu, pencil - 2023

Forge and Rouanne, animals with a kindred spirit

I am often asked certain questions, one of them being, Why as a Gigondas winegrower would you create Forge Cellars, 6,000 km from your base in a very cold climate and in relatively uncharted territory?

Or, Why did you buy Château de Rouanne in Vinsobres?

Obviously, the origins of each story are different but all the ideas developed at Saint Cosme are driven by the same values and principles. For example, when we bought land at Saint Martin to plant vines and produce our white Deux Albions label there, the aim was to acquire a prime limestone site to make precise, balanced, fresh white wines. Saint Martin was 'only' classified

as PGI 'Principauté d'Orange' but we developed the project anyway because the terroir and potential to make quality, hallmark wines was definitely there.

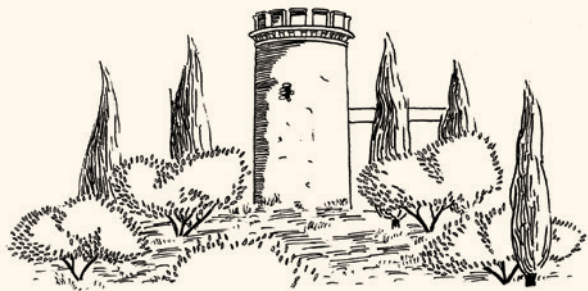
The same reasoning drove me to establish Forge Cellars with Rick Rainey in 2011. Seneca Lake Rieslings had garnered little recognition but the opportunity to produce world-class Riesling there was self-evident. So we forged ahead – no pun intended – and accepted the fact that recognition would require a lot of time, work and patience.

The decision to buy Château de Rouanne mirrors the same criteria. When you have the chance to farm such an outstanding vineyard site, you must seize that opportunity, irrespective of the reputation and appellation image for that particular site.

We will never develop projects in areas that are already recognised because we do not 'follow the pack'. The driving forces for us are the beauty of the location and the genuine potential of the terroir.



Team of Saint Cosme and Rouanne



CHATEAU DE ROUANNE

In Vinsobres, in the county of Grignan,
in the Rhone Valley between Dauphiné et Provence.

Year 2023

Château de Rouanne in Vinsobres, which we acquired in 2019, is a magnificent historic estate surrounded by an outstanding, unbroken, 62-hectare vineyard in an exceptional winegrowing site. Rouanne has incredible soils with the ability to create some genuine epiphany moments, in a location which is “inhabited” by its own geographical configuration and by the souls of all those who have lived and worked here for aeons.

The village of Vinsobres obtained Cru status in 2006. Although not as well-known as its peers, its classification puts it on a par with Gigondas, Chateauneuf-du-Pape, Cote-Rotie and Hermitage, which speaks volumes about the quality of its terroir. Located along the edge of the Alps, Vinsobres boasts first-rate geology and a cool climate. The village itself has had a long and eventful history, shaped by the presence of the Lords de Verone who owned Rouanne from the Middle Ages through to the Revolution. The youngest branch of the family bore the title of ‘Lord of Rouanne’ for 600 years.

Set on a Gallo-Roman site, which formerly housed a farm or ‘villa’, Rouanne is named after its Late Roman Empire owner (2nd/3rd century AD), possibly a certain ‘Rugius’, as etymologists suggest.

Behind its present-day chateau, a grooved column adorned with a carved capital, pottery, ‘dolia’, numerous fragments of tiles, fibulae and dressed stones, to name a few, have been found. It isn’t hard to imagine life at that time in this marvellous, well-populated, fertile site where myriad springs provided water, not far from the river Eygues and the Roman Way.

In the Middle Ages, the family de Verone, who owned the entire hillside, built a fortified castle.

In 1611, Charles I de Verone was “*Seigneur de Rouanne*”.

In 1649, Charles II de Verone was “*Seigneur de Royne*”, the change of spelling is noteworthy. Concurrently with this, Francois of Verona, cousin of Charles II, was the “co-lord” of Vinsobres and probably lived in the castle of Verone which still stands today. He represents the oldest branch of the family.

In 1710-1714, Jean-Louis de Verone (son of Charles II) was called “*Sieur de Royne*”. It is interesting to see how the spelling of Rouanne has changed, sometimes quite rapidly, down through the ages. If we put them side by side, chronologically the result is this:

1594: Roany

1611: Rouanne

1641: Roane

1649: Roanne or Royne

1649 then 1710: Royne

End of the 18th century (map of Cassini): Roanes

1891: Rouane

Contemporary period: Rouanne

Unfortunately burnt down during the French Revolution, Rouanne was restored, rebuilt and extended in the 19th century, after which the property changed hands several times in short succession. Subsequently, Château de Rouanne experienced both good times, but also very challenging times. It is practically a miracle that this unbroken 62- hectare block of old hillside vines survived unscathed and was not divided into countless pieces through inheritance.



Château de Rouanne hillside

300 m from the chateau, at the end of a pretty wood that you have to cross to get there, the beautiful farmhouse complete with dovecote was built in around 1830 on pre-existing buildings that were probably ancient. A constantly flowing spring, harnessed in Gallo-Roman times, is an ever-present feature of the property, gushing into its ponds. Everything has been grown at Rouanne: vines, olive trees, lavender, vegetables, fruit and cereals, and sheep farming was pivotal to the property. Rouanne truly is a land of plenty. The present-day farm houses a magnificent concrete vat house but the beautifully crafted, vaulted basement ageing cellar was once used to mature an altogether different breed of stock – sheep! This is where we now mature our wines.

Rouanne's impressive hillside, home to the named vineyard sites 'Les Côtes', 'Rouanne et les Crottes', 'Guérin' and 'La Palud', has a geographical profile, an incline and a south-east aspect that can be likened to Burgundy's Côte de Nuits: the location's propensity for growing wine is self-evident. The soils stemming from the Messinian, Tortonian and Pliocene ages contain red clay, limestone marl and sand. The prime terroir at Rouanne often promotes distinctive aromas of violet, peony and particularly gingerbread in the wines. The palate is always fresh, rounded and balanced with a signature trait - its salinity. Rouanne's wines age incredibly well and for many years emotion invariably implies patience!

Rouanne's vineyards were mainly planted between 1955 and 1975. They are home to massal selections of Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre that provide us with substantial genetic diversity, a prerequisite in the world of fine wines. Like Saint Cosme, the vines are farmed organically. As with Gigondas, we use whole cluster fermentation and native ferments and do not filter the wines.

The location of Rouanne is highly significant. As Vinsobres is the northernmost of the southern growths or Crus, it is important to understand that the Alps begin to rise just 9 km from Chateau de Rouanne. This proximity creates a cool micro-climate set within a temperate Mediterranean climate. The "Pontias" wind, which picks up cold air as it crosses the Alps, constantly cools the Eygues valley beneath Rouanne.

At Rouanne, we will monitor every step of the way how the essence of the place furthers our understanding. I would be delighted to welcome you and share with you the joy of being a part of its resurrection.



Roses at Château de Rouanne

News of ROUANNE

Since we took over Château de Rouanne in 2019, I value the decision to have done so every single day. Gradually, we are becoming familiar with this extraordinary vineyard site. Gradually, we are bonding with this location. And gradually, it is becoming a part of us and we are becoming a part of it. The goal is that there be as few secrets as possible between us so that we can become as like-minded as possible.

We conducted all the 2021 blends a few days ago and the experience was absolutely incredible. As we mature wines without ever touching them, exposure to oxygen during blending sometimes offers up some quite dazzling quality revelations. In some ways, this is what happened this year. Seeing Rouanne produce such profound wines in a vintage that was challenging for everyone is quite astounding. You will be able to form your own opinion when you taste the 2021s.

In a few weeks' time, we will be planting part of the large 'Côtes' block which was pulled up at the end of the 2019 harvest. The Grenache vines will be planted using great massal selections which fully encapsulate all the required genetic diversity.

Our sparkling wine adventure continues. Every year we make progress by constantly fine-tuning our approach to them. The 2021 iteration of the rosé Brut Nature de Rouanne is particularly convincing. From this perspective, it has to be said that Champagne is both an extraordinary source of inspiration and a fertile learning ground. Discovering the extensive work required to achieve aesthetically pleasing sparkling wine is a requisite for becoming literate in their production.

In soils as cool and with as much limestone as Rouanne, it is a real joy to develop such a unique style, finesse and energy.

In 2022, we began restoration work on the farm at Rouanne which houses our cellars. This beautiful location, surrounded by centuries-old trees where the babbling brook harnessed by the Romans sets the tempo for life, deserves to be restored to its former glory. After the roofs have been replaced, the finer

work designed to make the location more practical and more beautiful will commence. And the farm at Rouanne will revert to its erstwhile splendour.



Claude Barruol
Pierre Griefu, pencil - 2023



CHATEAU DE SAINT COSME

Located in the heart of the Gigondas appellation, Saint Cosme is an historic estate of a unique kind. Its Gallo-Roman winery, with its fermentation tanks hewn into the rock, has successfully withstood the test of time unscathed. It gives us a precise idea of how our close ancestors, the Gallo-Romans, must have lived. Acquired by our family in 1490, the property has been home to fifteen generations of wine growers. It boasts 25 hectares of old vines whose average age is 60 and yields are diminutive. The soils of Saint Cosme are a geological mosaic brought about by the upheaval of the Dentelles de Montmirail. They are located at the point where two geological faults meet and the microclimate is cool and causes late ripening. Balance, freshness and finesse characterise our wines.

Saint Cosme chapel, located in the heart of our vineyards, is a jewel of Romanesque art. Built in the 11th and 12th centuries, it mirrors the purity of Romanesque art with its sobriety, simple lines and balanced spaces. Its majesty lights up our vineyards and exudes an atmosphere of peace. It fully deserves the short walk leading up to it. We show our devotion to Saint Cosme by striving to maximise the extraordinary potential of its soils and old vines. Time-honoured wisdom, biodynamic viticulture and an understanding of the soils are our guiding lights.

By 1972, my father, Henri Barruol, was already convinced that organic wine growing served a purpose. He used it in deference to his vineyards, to produce environmentally friendly wines and protect the eco-system in the vale of Saint Cosme, particularly its bird population. His belief was based on common sense at a time when wines were sold in casks. We continue such

vital work, using no weed killers, chemical fertilisers, pesticides or synthetic products. Hoeing and tillage are used in all our vineyards. Our ecosystem is dynamic and balanced and our soils are living.

In 1997, I drew on this wine growing background to create a merchant wine business that combines a wine growing perspective with classic shipping. On my travels around the Rhone, I got the impression that top quality wine areas were still underdeveloped, unrecognised or neglected. Some places appealed to me and made me want to try my hand. So I chose to become a wine merchant in the old-fashioned sense of the word, basically shipping wines with the mindset of a wine grower. This implied seeking out the spirit of soils and vineyards, working painstakingly with small batch fermentations, advancing hand in hand with wine growers who love what they do, transporting my wines in casks so as not to damage them and trying to add that special touch to each day.



Henri and Louis Barruol

At Saint Cosme, we do as many jobs as possible by hand. I like to make wines that show pure, precise sense of place – wines that have personality and balance. I want them to have the propensity to age.



The Chapel under the snow

SAINT COSME'S

Lieux-dits

'Le Poste'

Le Poste is the vineyard surrounding Saint Cosme chapel. It is formed of four terraces, three planted to Grenache and one to Clairette. The vineyard was replanted by my father Henri Barruol in 1963. The site has a unique history: John IV of Chalon-Arley (1443-1502) was Prince of Orange and lord of Arlay, Nozeroy and Montfort. He is an ancestor of the House of Orange-Nassau and Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands, the country's current reigning monarch. He was commonly known as John of Chalon, then Prince of Orange. In 1467, he married Jeanne de Bourbon, granddaughter of the Duke of Burgundy, John 1st of Burgundy (John the Fearless). John IV of Chalon-Arley died on April 8, 1502, aged 49.

Under John of Chalon, Gigondas was an integral part of the principality of Orange which was only annexed to France in 1703. In 1480, John of Chalon, Prince of Orange, "*sold lands for vineyards on the hillside of Saint Cosme*", thereby providing evidence of the suitability of Le Poste for growing vines. It subsequently changed hands and fell under the ownership of our ancestor, Esprit Vaton, in 1490. On the basis of this evidence, it seems highly likely that Gallo-Romans were already growing vines at Le Poste less than 100 metres away from our vats in the 1st century. In the 1930s and 1940s, our grandfather Henri Rolland would make "*white wine from Le Poste*" every year. Its quality was highly acclaimed and enjoyed by all. It was sappy and tasted strongly of gunflint. Le Poste is formed of limestone marl from the Tortonian age containing many fossils of marine shellfish. Marl from the



Henri et Suzanne Rolland with their daughters Claude and Anne-Marie, at Saint Cosme in 1935

Tortonian age (Miocene) is commonly found in the region of Alba, in the Piedmont. Le Poste is the only example of this soil in the Rhone Valley which explains the extraordinary character of the wines that grow there. Le Poste always produces the most feminine wines on the estate.

'Le Claux'

Claus, Claux, Clausas, Clausis and Clauzis, from the Latin 'Clausum' meaning 'closed', all refer to an enclosed area. This 1.8- hectare vineyard, mentioned in the first vineyard land registry records of 1902, was due to be pulled out in 1914. It was therefore certainly already quite old and was planted after phylloxera, probably between 1870 and 1880. However, the men went off to fight the war in August 1914 and the vineyard was not uprooted due to lack of manpower. In 1918, after four years of war, money and men were lacking and as my grandmother had lost two brothers, she kept Le Claux. The vineyard is still here today, which is extremely fortunate. Its soils of clay and limestone marl from the Miocene, with small sharp gravel on the surface, always produces the estate's most 'Burgundy-style' Gigondas with hallmark finesse and sour cherry aromas.

'Hominis Fides'

Like Le Claux, Hominis Fides was mentioned for the first time in 1902. It is therefore one of Saint Cosme's oldest vineyards. It is formed of sandy limestone soils with no stones that come from Swiss 'fawn sands' from the Middle Miocene dating back approximately 14 million years. The soils here have high limestone content. The bedrock, made of hard fawn sands, usually appears less than one metre below ground and in some places is flush with the surface. Its maximum depth is 500 metres. After the Gulf of Lions collapsed, a shallow inlet moved along the pre- sent-day Rhone Valley in several stages for almost 10 million years, giving it its own geological personality, between the Massif Central and the Alps. It was during this period that extraordinary amounts of sand were deposited. The combination of sandy soils and Grenache yields a uniquely textured palate and tannin profile. Hominis Fides reveals a fusion of power and softness in what is a profound, enigmatic wine.

News of SAINT COSME

2022 was my thirtieth year of working at Saint Cosme. We have come such a long way that it feels as if I began in the Neolithic Age! It is fair to say that a lot of things have changed, but at the same time, few things have changed. Fundamentally, farming this kind of terroir entails great continuity in the expression of the wines and our methods, generally speaking, have changed fairly little.

The major changes are the countless details that we now pay so much attention to, and which separate quality from excellence. In the life of a winegrower, the first steps towards the improvements we strive to make are fairly easy and quick to climb. Progress is quite visible. The hardest – and perhaps less visible – ones are the last steps which take the longest to climb. And this is what we have been doing at Saint Cosme for many years. These efforts improve the finesse, precision and purity of the wines. When precision becomes more obvious, it allows the wines to mirror their terroir and particularly vintage effect with much greater clarity.

The will to move forward is at the core of everything – and whatever the level at which we are progressing, it invariably has to be intense. Right up until the last day, you learn that the path to beauty is never-ending. Admittedly, the geological, geographical and historic resources of this estate are so extensive that the effort we devote to it is inevitably over the very long term. All this is a far cry from social media and today's world where image and post-truth seem to be more important than ever, for winegrowers included. I have always got a lot of pleasure out of answering your questions due to the difficulty of telling you about everything we do. Despite appearances, there is still a long way to go at Saint Cosme and the journey is commensurate with the intensity that fills this estate.



Alix and Louis

Some comments about the 2022 VINTAGE



James Barruol's live
at Saint Cosme
August 2021

After the 2021 vintage, which was marked by dramatic bouts of frost across the entire country, in 2022 the whole of France was affected by a lengthy heat wave combined with significant drought. Years come and go and none are alike. In fact, extremes seem to be flirting with each other and becoming the rule. I was very surprised by how the vines responded to these weather patterns – they adapted effectively by reducing the rate of growth and ripening of the grapes. This was in sharp contrast to 2003 when, in similar conditions, the vines suffered hugely and produced completely unbalanced fruit with excessive alcohol combined with poor phenolic ripeness. Plants are adapting to climate change and are even mutating, and vines are no exception. So from this perspective, the vintage taught us a real lesson in nature. In the South (Vinsobres and Gigondas, Côtes du Rhône), the red wines are really well-balanced with great fruit and fine tannins. The whites are amazingly low in alcohol (12.5 / 13%) and are fresh and balanced with beautiful aromatics.

The 2022 vintage is an absolute beauty in the northern Rhone (Côte-Rôtie / Saint Joseph / Crozes-Hermitage), with deep crimson hues, fruit, depth and very restrained, complex mouthfeels. Since the 2003 vintage, I have had a theory which is that if Syrah is picked at the right time – and not when overripe – it tends to like hot vintages. Maybe this is due to a genetic throwback linked to its Middle Eastern origins and therefore an ability to cope with soaring temperatures? Heaven knows. Whatever the case, 2022 in some ways recalls 2003 in the northern Rhone but the wines will certainly be better and much more balanced than in 2003.

Wines from the SOUTHERN RHONE VALLEY in 2021

2021 was the ultimate cold, late year with an icy spring, but fortunately Vinsobres and Gigondas escaped the frost. What do these two sites share in common? They are both located on hillsides and are both late-ripening. These are two crucial parameters for avoiding frost. It would seem that over the next few years/decades, this configuration will be the best one to have.

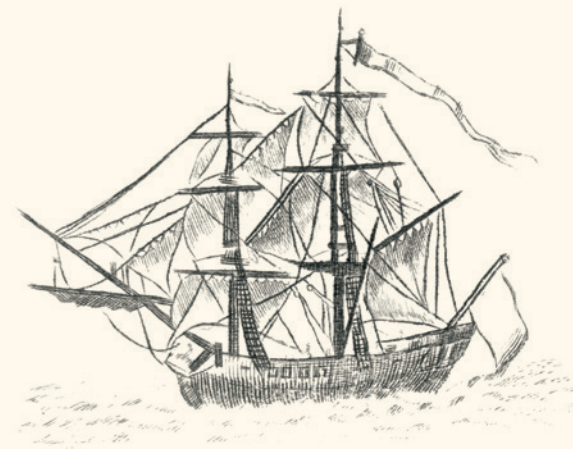
Since climate change began – which statistically has been pinpointed as the start of the 1980s, with very visible effects at the turn of the 2000s – our tasting points of reference have completely changed. This is only natural because the style of every wine has changed, so our appraisal of them has evolved too. For example, the 2021 vintage, which was viewed as fairly light in the southern Rhone, would most certainly have been considered as a top vintage if it had occurred in the 1970s. When it comes to tasting, everything is relative. Unfortunately, the number of people able to talk about it automatically dwindles year-on-year and soon, the world that once was will become a haze that few people will have experienced. The long and short of it is that 2021 is a stellar vintage in the traditional sense of the word – balanced and complex with that ‘ethereality’ that we are so fond of. There is nothing light or diluted about it. It has the elegance of cool vintages like 1999 and 2004. The maturation phase for the 2021s, as is often the case with this type of wine, was merely a long and constant progression which ended with very open, rounded and friendly wines.

Wines from the NORTHERN RHONE VALLEY in 2021

Vintages showing freshness and acidity have evolved from being the ‘norm’ for the northern Rhone Valley in the 1970s / 80s / 90s to a rare occurrence starting with the 2000s – there have only been 4 in 25 years, between 1997 and 2022. Once again, when we talk about global warming, it is best to talk about figures – it avoids any approximations.

2021 is a real cool vintage – it has all the characteristics both from a weather perspective and in terms of the style of the wines. For example, alcohol levels are fairly low and the wines are very fruity, think red berry fruits. Ironically, in these wines terroir is expressed fairly early on, unlike years defined by concentration which hide, are fairly inarticulate when young and take time to open up. To put it another way, the 2021s are best drunk before the 2020s.

For the whites – particularly Condrieu – the year could have been amazing due to Viognier’s fondness for cool years. But ultimately, this did not materialise because the frost literally dashed all hopes of a crop and energy in the wines.



News from FORGE CELLARS

Our american estate on Seneca Lake

Eleven years on, Forge Cellars is now clearly perceived by consumers, the press and the industry as a benchmark for top quality wine in the Finger Lakes region. But that's probably not the most noteworthy aspect of our still-fledgling adventure. The most important part is the style of the white wines that we have successfully defined based on what this cool climate, the Riesling grape variety and the schist-clay soils in the south-east of Seneca Lake have given us. Until fairly recently, the only reference for top white wines in the United States was Chardonnay from California. There was nothing else, or virtually nothing. Now, in a world that is getting dangerously hot, we produce a style of white wine that no other region can offer at this level of quality.



Forge Cellars
under the snow

Great whites – wines, that is, not sharks! – are always made from ripe fruit. The possibility of making fine white wines from under-ripe grapes that some have explored is a legend that has never been proven in the real world. If possible, the ripe fruit should have a low pH and a reasonable level of alcohol (ideally between 12 and 13 %). And there's the rub – to achieve both, the grapes have to ripen slowly and reach ripeness with no health issues. The Finger Lakes offer this extremely rare convergence in the world of terroir / climate couples. We are now able at Forge to produce wines from ripe grapes that have 12 % ABV. When we pick them at the end of October, their skin is



Times Square under the rain - Louis Barruol, watercolour - 2022

nicely golden, they still have great acidity and a low pH. Sometimes a little botrytis adds some concentration. Then we can begin harvesting in the cold and ferment until all the sugar has gone. Fine Riesling from the lakes is a wine with no residual sugar. Fine Riesling from Seneca Lake is a soil-driven, balanced, fresh wine suitable for gourmet foods. It ages admirably, bringing out those marvellous flavours of quince, marmalade and passion fruit. Until my dying breath, I will defend these vineyard sites tooth and nail, because they deserve it. I'll share my ideas with those willing to listen to me.



Louis & Rick in the cellar

Ultimately, terroir always triumphs. Rick and I will try and continually progress to bring you Rieslings whose bond with this amazing location gets stronger every day.



The team of Forge Cellars

Forge cellars vineyards surrounding Seneca lake, New York state



Our WINES



CHÂTEAU DE SAINT COSME

Red 2021 Gigondas

70 % Grenache - 14 % Syrah – 15 % Mourvèdre - 1 % Cinsault.

Whole cluster fermentation.

Twelve months' ageing: 20 % in new casks - 50 % in casks used for 1 to 4 wines - 30 % in concrete tanks.

Miocene limestone marl and sand.

Marzipan, wild raspberry, blood orange and heirloom rose.

Bottled unfiltered.

I have a profound love for our 2021 Gigondas, probably because its style reminds me of the vintages of my youth – 1991, 1993, 1995, 1996, 2004...

As I have mentioned previously in this booklet, our points of reference have changed dramatically and 2021, which nowadays is considered to be a cool vintage, was the norm in the 1990s. Obviously 2021 wines are not weighty wines. They are neither big, nor broad or muscular. They are more sleek, elegant, racy and ethereal but they have such spirit and expression. The aromatics and textures are particularly successful and have a more Burgundy spirit. Ironically, I like these cool vintages which encourage us to be a little bolder and look for later ripeness. You also need to have a certain appetite for risk. And if you need to do a little sorting, it doesn't matter – that's why sorting tables were invented. As a winegrower, the satisfaction of making successful wines in a cool vintage is much greater than in a hotter, 'easier' vintage. This is the mindset that drove me – with the 'cool climate' skills passed on to me by my father – to go and grow Riesling along the shores of Seneca Lake. Ultimately, Saint Cosme's 2021 Gigondas will bring us much joy for many years to come.



Château de Saint Cosme - Louis Barruol, ink and watercolour - 2023



CHÂTEAU DE SAINT COSME 'HOMINIS FIDES' Red 2021 Gigondas

Very old mixed plantings of Grenache on Miocene limestone sand in the 'Hominis Fides' named vineyard.

Whole cluster fermentation.

Twelve months' ageing: 20 % in new casks – 50 % in casks used for one wine - 30 % in casks used for two to three wines.

Violet, ash, tar and redcurrant.

Bottled unfiltered.

This watercolour was painted to try and allow you to put your finger on just how much the vale of Saint Cosme is a cool micro-climate overlooked by forests where rising or falling winds constantly wend their way across the valley floor. In geology, this is referred to as an 'alluvial fan'. It is interesting to notice that the winds which snake in and out follow the same path as the limestone as it made its way downward due to erosion. When the sky converges with the earth, the result is more or less – down-flowing wind = freshness in the wines = downward limestone. All of this explains why Hominis Fides is so cool despite its the depth that defines it. Under other climes, Miocene sand offers up very different wines.

The 2021 rendition of Hominis Fides delivers its customary fine tannin texture which flirts with the roundness and softness of the Grenache. After a fruity and saline impression, Hominis lingers on the palate and finish with a coolness worthy of the 1991, 1995 and 2004 vintages.



The vale of Saint Cosme and the Dentelles de Montmirail
Pierre Grieu, watercolour - 2023



CHÂTEAU DE SAINT COSME 'LE CLAUX'

Red 2021 Gigondas

Very old mixed plantings of Grenache in the 'Le Claux' named vineyard.
Whole cluster fermentation.

Miocene limestone marl in the Font des Papes alluvial fan.

Twelve months' ageing: 20 % in new casks - 50 % in casks used for one wine
- 30 % in casks used for two wines.

Camphor, truffle and blackcurrant.

Bottled unfiltered.

Le Claux was one of my father Henri Barruol's favourite vineyard sites. When he took over the estate through marriage in 1957, this vineyard was in bad shape. Many of the vines were diseased, others were dead and the ones that were alive were struggling to grow and produce fruit. The vineyard was planted in 1870 and was due to be grubbed up in 1914 – it never was because the men went off to war. So you can imagine in what kind of state it was in 1957.

Lack of organic matter was such that my father went to his cousin Vincent de Boissésou in Tarn to buy some sheep manure. For many years, he strove to restore balance in the soils at Le Claux, and he managed to achieve this. Nowadays the grand old lady is in fine fettle and offered us a stellar 2021 vintage. With its aromas of wild red berry fruits and its aromatic finesse, it offers an iteration of fine Burgundy Pinot. Its palate is softly textured and lingering, flowing into the salinity that is such a trademark feature of our Gigondas.



The Pavillon Serine - Pierre Grieu, watercolour - 2001



CHÂTEAU DE SAINT COSME 'LE POSTE'

Red 2021 Gigondas

Mixed plantings of old Grenache vines.

Whole cluster fermentation.

Hillsides of Tortonian limestone marl at Saint Cosme chapel, in the 'Le Poste' named vineyard.

Twelve months' ageing: 20 % in new casks - 50 % in casks used for one wine - 30 % in casks used for two wines.

Strawberries, graphite and rose petals.

Bottled unfiltered.

Le Poste was the place that my mother, Claude Barruol, favoured. It is true that the site is replete with all sorts of resources, in addition to its infinity beauty stemming from its situation and its proximity to Saint Cosme chapel. Here, you can pick fennel, thyme, figs, cherries, almond and mint. Everything about Le Poste is intense. Its terroir encapsulates all this plant life. In such a late-ripening vintage as 2021, Le Poste is often the estate's finest wine, and this is true once again of 2021. The reason for this is simple – because it is our earliest-ripening vineyard site, it reaches the required ripeness more effortlessly than others in a cool year. Conversely, Le Claux, our latest-ripening site, produces gorgeous wines in the hottest years.

2021 Le Poste wines develop their customary perfumes of the garrigue then unfurl their unmistakable saline texture that is such a pleasure to savour. Salinity is freshness that is not acidic – it is one of the backbones of balance in southern wines. It is always amazing to find the same salinity in Le Poste white wines, which probably means there is such a thing as terroir...



A close-up of Saint Cosme chapel, Le Poste and the Dentelles de Montmirail
Pierre Grieu, watercolour - 2023



SAINT COSME

Red 2020 Châteauneuf-du-Pape Rouge

50 % Grenache – 30 % Mourvèdre – 15 % Syrah – 5 % Cinsault.

Provenance: La Crau, Valori and Christia.

Whole cluster fermentation.

Ageing for 24 months in casks used for two to five wines.

Aromas of garrigue, black olives and cherries in brandy.

Bottled unfiltered.

As always, our Châteauneuf-du-Pape is a year older because we mature it for 24 months. 2020 is a great classic for Châteauneuf-du-Pape with great balance, soft tannins and aromas of dried fruits and gingerbread. The structure does not comprise a huge framework, which is totally pointless in Châteauneuf wines. In Châteauneuf, what matters is expression, the rest is of trifling importance. The 2020 vintage was a fairly hot year but the ultimate rendition is very different to the 2019s. The 2020s show less concentration than the 2019s and have gained in fruitiness – Châteauneuf is no exception.

Because the summer was hot, the Cinsauts and Mourvèdres performed very well, imparting a substantial ‘binding’ quality to the blends. It is only natural that both varieties should perform well in a hot year because Mourvèdre originated in Spain and for those whose memory stretches back that far, Cinsaut could produce wine in Algeria. The ability of both these grape varieties to perform well in hot conditions should make us stop and think about what should be planted in the future to mitigate climate change. The same rationale applies to the white varieties Picpoul, Ugni blanc, Bourboulenc and Assyrtiko.



The former Palace of the Popes in Avignon - 19th-century lithograph



CHÂTEAU DE ROUANNE

Red 2020 Vinsobres

50 % Grenache - 40 % Syrah – 10 % Mourvèdre.

Pliocene marl and limestone.

Average vine age 50, farmed organically.

Traditional co-fermentation in concrete tanks. Wild ferments.

12 months' ageing in tanks, Burgundy casks and demi-muids.

Tar, liquorice, blood orange, gingerbread and salinity.

Bottled unfiltered.

As I have already said about the shale-clay soils in the south-east of Seneca Lake, I will always energetically defend the hillside at Château de Rouanne – it has an outstanding terroir with a natural propensity to produce outstanding wines. When we ferment wines from this site, we never fail to be astounded by the brilliance it is capable of. The intensity, the complexity, the depth and the ability to astound – everything you expect of a premier vineyard site is there. I say this as a winegrower who strives to be objective – the 2020 Vinsobres by Rouanne is our most successful achievement in the 2020 vintage. The ability of this vineyard site to develop quality in such a different vintage is remarkable – it seems that the vintage has fairly little control over the quality of the end wines. This is a strong indicator of a superlative terroir. I think that the incline of our hillside has a lot to do with this because the water supply regime borders on perfection.

With their aromas of liquorice, blackberry, tar and peony, the 2020 unfurl in a series of tiers the profound texture and salinity of the Rouanne hillside, then continue into a long, penetrating finish.



Rouanne farm - Christophe Botton, ink - 2023



CHÂTEAU DE ROUANNE 'ROUANNE ET LES CROTTES' Red 2020 Vinsobres

Grenache - Syrah.

Pliocene and Tortonian limestone marl.

Average vine age 50, farmed organically.

Traditional co-fermentation in concrete tanks. Wild ferments.

12 months' ageing in demi-muids and Burgundy casks.

15 % new – 50 % used for one wine – 35 % used for two wines.

Gingerbread, blackberry, graphite and salinity.

Bottled unfiltered.

Rouanne et Les Crottes is packed full of the estate's finest qualities. Irrespective of the vintage, Rouanne et Les Crottes always demonstrates excellence. It's as simple as that. In 2020, the vineyard site scaled the heights of finesse, roundness and profound elegance. This site speaks for itself, and it did for those who came before us such is the history it encapsulates.

A Gallo-Roman site that was well-known to specialists, it is mentioned on the first maps produced in France – the Cassini maps in the 17th century. It seems that vines have found the ultimate location to grow here. There is always a little water in the clay, but never too much because this is a rolling hill where the incline is not too steep. There is a lovely south-east aspect, ostensibly facing towards the rising sun. There is always a reasonable crop, which ripens well but not too quickly, and never rots. Vines need balance and regularity to produce fine wine – and Rouanne et les Crottes offers just that.



Someone in my glass - Esther Seignon - 2023



CHÂTEAU DE ROUANNE 'LES CÔTES' Red 2020 Vinsobres

Syrah – Grenache - Mourvèdre.

Pliocene and Messinian marl, clay and limestone.

Average vine age 50, farmed organically.

Traditional co-fermentation in concrete tanks. Wild ferments.

12 months' ageing in demi-muids and Burgundy casks.

15 % new – 50 % used for one wine – 35 % used for two wines.

Camphor, graphite, charcoal, gingerbread and salinity.

Bottled unfiltered.

Syrah's traditional playground is of course the northern Rhône Valley, but in the southern Rhône Valley there is a location which has the ability to compete with the finest northern Syrahs, and that is Vinsobres. Directly linked to the tip of the Alps, Vinsobres boasts a major cool influence.

Its south-east aspect facing the rising sun instils vibrancy in our wines. 'Les Côtes' is our vineyard site located at the highest point of our hillside. In the Pliocene and Messinian clay-marl soils beneath this cold Mediterranean climate, Syrah combines its complex, textured majesty with fresh verticality. In 2020, the Syrahs scale the heights of finesse because they ripened slower than ever yet retained very reasonable alcohol levels.

'Les Côtes' are only located 200m from the 'Rouanne et les Crottes' vineyard site and yet there is world between the two wines – in some ways like 'Hominis Fides' and 'Le Claux', that are just 20m apart.



The look - Pierre Grieu, felt tip pen - 2007



CHÂTEAU DE ROUANNE 'GUÉRIN'

Red 2020 Vinsobres

Grenache - Syrah - Mourvèdre.

Villafranchian limestone pebbles and Pliocene clay.

Average vine age 50, farmed organically.

Traditional co-fermentation in concrete tanks. Wild ferments.

12 months' ageing in demi-muids and Burgundy casks.

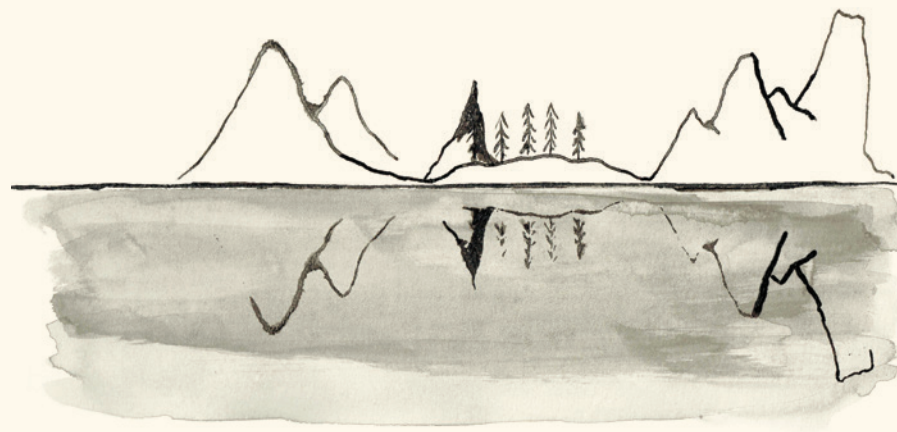
15 % new – 50 % used for one wine – 35 % used for two wines.

Marzipan, wild blackberries, coal, violet, salinity.

Bottled unfiltered.

The softness of the 2020 'Guérin' recalls the pebbles and the clay of its river-derived terroir. The essence of Vinsobres is its connection with the Alps – the powerful combination of the cold, water and tectonic forces.

The wine we produce on this beautiful Villafranchian terrace is not unlike the style and personality of Chateauneuf-du-Pape wines, because the soils are very similar. Contrary to the 'Côtes', 'Guérin' displays a lot of natural roundness. Contrary to 'Rouanne et les Crottes', 'Guérin' develops a lot of smoothness in a style more identified with the Grenache grape and its legendary sweetness. In a vintage like 2020, Grenache in this area is in its natural element as it has a real capacity to converse with the heat and a relative dryness. With its Christmas aromas (almond paste, dried fruits), it announces a smooth and round mouth that finishes with a freshness that is certainly surprising but typical of all the terroirs of the Rouanne hillside.



Where the Rhone rises in the Swiss Alps - Louis Barruol, ink - 2022



ROUANNE BRUT NATURE ROSÉ VINTAGE 2022

Méditerranée - Comté de Grignan *sparkling wine*

‘Brut Nature’ sparkling wine with no dosage.

Pliocene limestone sand.

Average vine age 30, farmed organically.

Slow pressing: we only incorporate first-press wines in the base wine.

Fermentation and ageing on the lees.

Bluish-pink hue.

Cherry pit, thyme, raspberry and flint.

On the palate: vertical freshness underscored by fine creamy bubbles.

Bottle fermentation in March 2023.

Bottled in August 2023.

Our foray into the world of sparkling wines is an absolutely fascinating initiation. It is an extraordinary hotbed of innovation, creativity and learning. Exploration of the realms of quality is very different to what we are familiar with for white and red wines. For our third vintage, we have made greater progress still on the quality of pressing regimes, study of the aromatic spectrum and bottle fermentation and the autolysis process that ensues. We have therefore developed our own method, with our own little secrets. We will definitely be extending our maturation time again after bottle fermentation – this is a truly magical moment when the aromatic profile of the wine undergoes noteworthy changes towards refinement and a creamier texture.



Rouanne's bubbles - Louis Barruol, ink - 2022



SAINT COSME

2021 Côte-Rôtie

100 % Serine (ancient variety of Syrah).

Whole cluster fermentation. Schist and mica-schist in the Semons, But de Mont, Les Bercherries, Maison Rouge, Rozier, Côte Rozier, Besset and Bodin named vineyards.

Twelve months' ageing: 30 % in new casks – 70 % in casks used for one wine.

Rose, graphite, smoke and redcurrant.

Bottled unfiltered.

Fortunately, our fairly late-ripening Côte-Rôtie vineyard sites were not affected by frost in 2021. When we speak about frost, we are of course obsessed with the idea of losing a crop and that is perfectly normal. But we should not lose sight of the fact that frost is a tremendously stressful experience for vines and their physiology. The same is true of hail which, as an aside, never produces top vintages. That's because vines need calm, balance and regularity to give their best. In 2021, Côte-Rôtie reverted back to an authentically cold vintage, the likes of which it used to experience many a few decades ago. Spring began with wintry temperatures which set ripening back. Although the summer was quite nice, we entered the harvest season significantly late which led to picking that required a lot of precision. The wines matured well with successful aromatic renditions and a 'fleshiness' that gradually established itself.

The rapid and direct expression of the soil in the glass is astounding in this type of vintage – the result is perfumed, rounded and friendly wines that display the hallmark features of their birthplace. The 2021s are pure pleasure, reverting to fruitiness – they are best opened before the 2020s.



A carrier with a hod - Denis Plat - 2023



SAINT COSME

2021 Saint-Joseph

100 % Serine (ancient variety of Syrah).

70 % Destemmed fruit – 30% Whole cluster fermentation.

Granite sand from Mallevale vale.

Twelve months' ageing: 20 % in new casks – 40 % in casks used for one wine - 40 % in casks used for two or three wines.

Peony, forest, liquorice and tobacco box.

Bottled unfiltered.

Our Saint Joseph, with its deep crimson colour, was a great success in 2021. Its open nose of fresh fruit, liquorice and tobacco ushers in a subtle, smooth palate replete with fruit and freshness. Its saline character gets you reaching for a second glass or some food, or both. The granite heralds in length and depth on the palate. As you savour the wine, you feel a million miles away from the overripe Syrahs of the New World or those grown in climates that are too hot. You do, though, feel a stylistic connection with the Syrahs grown at Rouanne. In this respect, it is interesting to note that this grape variety has the ability to elicit quality in very varied soils such as granite, schist, limestone and marl. Not all grape varieties have this incredible level of versatility.

In the village of Mallevale, the Saint Joseph production area overlaps that of Condrieu, the conclusion being that superlative soils have the capacity to produce both white and red wines.



Pruning - Denis Plat - 2023



SAINT COSME

2021 Crozes-Hermitage

100 % Serine (ancient variety of Syrah).

Destemmed fruit. Granite and clay-sandy soils.

Twelve months' ageing: 20 % in new casks - 40 % in casks used for one wine - 40 % in casks used for two wines.

Smoked ham, wild strawberries, oriental spices and incense.

Bottled unfiltered.

Crozes-Hermitage is all about softness and gentleness. To understand the major difference between the northern hillsides of Saint Joseph (the villages of Malleval, Chavanay and Saint Pierre de Boeuf for example) and the hillsides of Crozes-Hermitage (Gervans, Erôme and Larnage) you first need an explanation of the difference in climate. There is as much difference in weather between Vinsobres and Crozes-Hermitage as there is between Malleval and Crozes-Hermitage. This explains why Crozes always offers riper, suppler and 'easier' wines than its northern counterpart.

In 2021, there was admittedly less concentration than usual, but the palate is smooth – the texture cosies up with freshness after delivering a nose of fresh red berry fruits and spices. Lovely noble sourness completes the picture with a core of delicacy.



The ratchet press - Denis Plat - 2023



CHÂTEAU DE SAINT COSME 'LES DEUX ALBION' Red 2021 Côte du Rhône

Co-fermented Syrah, Grenache, Mourvèdre, Cinsaut and Viognier.

Whole cluster fermentation in concrete tanks with wild ferments.

Vatting for six weeks.

Clay hillsides (ancient alluvium), Pliocene limestone marl and pebbles on Villafranchian terraces.

Ageing in wooden tanks (conical) and concrete tanks.

Savory, lavender, peony, gingerbread, orange blossom and raspberry.

Bottled unfiltered.

Red Deux Albion always offers up considerable, complex, vibrant and profound fruitiness. Irrespective of the vintage, it invariably displays a high level of quality because its substantial percentage of Syrah lends it excellent consistency. The formula we use for winemaking is roughly identical to what my grandfather used here at Saint Cosme until 1949, the year of his dramatic and premature death. Deux Albion is fermented in our old concrete tanks whose walls are 80 cm thick – the thermal inertia in them is amazing and native yeast populations thrive in them. This is a little discussed topic in the world of wine – the ecosystems of native yeast in wineries. It's a shame because it is a fundamental aspect of the quality and identity of wines. The 2021s mirror the spirit of the 2020s – they are a kind of quintessential rendition of the Rhône Valley.



Thought precedes the winegrower's craftsmanship - Alix Barruol, pencil - 2023



SAINT COSME

Red 2022 Côtes du Rhône

Syrah.

Partially destemmed fruit.

Limestone sand, red clay and pebbles on Villafranchian terraces.

Tank ageing.

Blackcurrant, smoky bacon, cold ash, blueberry and lilac.

Over time, our Syrah Côtes du Rhône has become a house classic. After a slightly lighter, fresher 2021 than is customary, this year reverts back to the usual style – a dark colour, captivating nose of black fruits with blackberry, blackcurrant and blueberry and a lush, profound palate primarily focussing on the notion of fruit. All of this revolves around a truly assertive Rhone style with abundant yet fine, supple tannins and good salinity. I don't design this wine for cellaring but it just so happens that it matures very well

Recent blind tastings of our 2008s, 2009s and 2010s were more reminiscent of a Saint Joseph than a Côtes du Rhône. Being able to take you by surprise with a wine at this price is our unfailing mission, and one that is an inherent part of Saint Cosme. There are no secrets, just good craftsmanship, a commitment and a passion for what we do. Saint Cosme's Syrah Côtes du Rhône is a real wine for friends.



Friendship - Pierre Grieu, felt tip pen - 2008



MICRO-COSME

Grenache / Pinot noir
Vin de France Red

Solera from 1999 to 2021

Bottled in 2023

Fermentation and maturation in concrete tanks.

60% Grenache – 40% Pinot Noir

Strawberry, almond, gingerbread, cinnamon and heirloom rose.

We have now been experimenting with Pinot noir blended with our Grenache Solera for three years. It's an old idea which gradually took shape thanks to a wonderful source of Pinot noir we were able to access. So from this year, the wine is truly transitioning from the style of the Little James Basket Press (with Grenache made in the Solera style) to the Micro-Cosme style which is a proper blend of Grenache and Pinot noir. I should point out that the 'Grenache' part continues to be our wonderful Solera. The fusion of Grenache and Pinot is a great classic in the history of wine which I would like to resurrect. The two varieties, seemingly so remote in terms of character and the regions where they thrive, are actually fraternal twins which resemble each other and make good bedfellows.

The label depicts a man (an engraving from the Renaissance period) carrying a sphere. The harmony and balance of the composition are symbolised by the geometric depiction (spiral) of the golden ratio used by architects of the Renaissance, by Leonardo da Vinci, by JS Bach and other artists to reach aesthetic perfection. This quest reflects our spirit and conjures up the creativity that we are striving to instil in our wines.



The winegrower - Denis Plat - 2023



SAINT COSME

2021 Condrieu

100 % Viognier. Granite sand.

Slow, low-pressure pressing. Eight months' ageing.

Ageing: 40 % in casks used for one wine – 30 % in casks used for two wines – 30 % in casks used for three wines.

Anise, liquorice, peach and preserved lemon.

First of all, let me say that our Condrieu crop was reduced threefold due to frost. We had to accept a minute harvest. It's saddening but that's just how it is. So please excuse me when you realise how tiny the available amounts are. Saying this, 2021 is a lovely Condrieu with lots of freshness – which has not always been easy over the past few years – and aromatic expression. The beautiful white fruit aromas are the prelude to a fine texture which unfurls in tiers and finishes with Condrieu's hallmark length. As Viognier is an early-ripening variety, it was more affected by the frost than Syrah – this is a challenge we may have to face more and more frequently in the future.

This style of Condrieu can be savoured with asparagus, red mullet or blue cheeses – a good Stilton works very well.



The female grape harvester with a jumper - Denis Plat - 2023



CHÂTEAU DE SAINT COSME 'LE POSTE'

White 2021 Côte du Rhône

100 % Clairette.

Tortonian marl at Saint Cosme chapel in the 'Le Poste' named vineyard.
Fermentation in used casks and ageing on fine lees for 10 months.

Flint, fennel, grapefruit and pear.

As you may have read in the press, Gigondas was awarded permission by the National Institute of Origin and Quality (INAO) to produce white Gigondas. The Gigondas producers' organisation launched the process in 2011 – it took eleven years for it to come to fruition. Therefore, the 2023 vintage will be the first when bottles of white Gigondas will be officially released. At this moment in time, I spare a thought for my father and my grandfather who always championed the remarkable quality of Clairette in the Le Poste vineyard site and the limestone soils of Gigondas in general.

My thoughts also go to Pierre Amadiou (the founder) who, as a visionary, planted a lot of Clairette in his magnificent vale of La Romane in the 1950s and 1960s. Without them, there would be no white Gigondas appellation today, it's as simple as that. In 2021, our white Le Poste is vertical and crystal-clear. From every perspective, it matches the characters of a vintage that proved to be perfect for whites.



The Dentelles de Montmirail - Christophe Botton, watercolour - 2023



CHÂTEAU DE SAINT COSME 'HOMINIS FIDES' White 2021 Côte du Rhône

100 % Clairette.

Limestone sand from the Miocene sea, in the 'Hominis Fides' named vineyard.

Fermentation in used casks and ageing on fine lees for 10 months.

Gunflint, anise, pear and quince.

The young massal selection vines in Hominis Fides are growing, developing, putting down deep roots and producing beautiful fruit. Every year, we can see the identity of the vineyard asserting itself and differentiating itself from Le Poste. It is true that the Miocene sea sand offers a truly remarkable foundation both for Grenache and Clairette. We prune the vines as bush vines and lift them on stakes so that we never have to top the shoots in spring. I am against the use of topping in a Mediterranean climate – it makes no sense to use this mini-pruning technique and force vines to grow secondary buds just when they need their fruit to flower.

In 2021, white Hominis Fides is clean and echoes the coolness of the location where the cold that constantly flows down into Saint Cosme vale stops.



The Dentelles de Montmirail - Denis Plat, fine-point drawing - 2023



DOMAINE DE SAINT COSME 'LES DEUX ALBION' White 2022 Principauté d'Orange

A vineyard we entirely planted ourselves on the limestone soils of Saint Martin.

30 % Viognier - 20 % Marsanne - 30 % Picpoul - 6 % Clairette – 6 % Ugni blanc – 5 % Bourboulenc – 3 % Saint Côme.

Fermentation: 40 % in demi-muids, 50 % in small casks and 10 % in tanks.

Ageing on the lees.

Dried apricot, linden, white flowers and papaya.

When we planted the vineyards at Saint Martin between 2014 and 2017, we chose to use a high proportion of traditional acidic grape varieties from the Rhone Valley. We made the right decision because in a vintage like 2022 when the mercury soared, it was better to have natural freshness to produce good balance in the wines. For the first time, we harvested a significant crop from our Saint Côme plantings and obviously fermented it separately to identify the type of wines it could produce. I have to say that from every perspective the experience matched what the literature had described – the variety tends to rot easily but it is early-ripening (harvested on September 4). It is quite acidic and productive, with fairly large berries.

The wine is relatively aromatic – roughly on a par with Clairette – and develops scents of marshmallow, watermelon, pear and white flowers. On the palate, the acidity is forward or even slightly disjointed. There is great palatability. Incorporating the aptly named Saint Côme into our collection of white varieties is a worthwhile experience because it takes us back to the pre-phylloxera world of heirloom grape varieties. In 2022, the Deux Albion is fresh, clean and aromatic as always, with some great sourness on the finish – in a vintage like this, this is a surprising but welcome trait.



Tillage in the white vines of Saint Martin - Denis Plat - 2023



MICRO-COSME

Viognier / Sauvignon
White 2022 Vin de France

50 % Viognier / 50 % Sauvignon.

Cold fermentation.

Ageing in tanks.

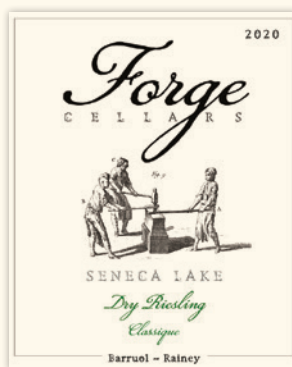
Lemon, grapefruit, boxwood, elderflower and mango.

As with the red, Little James has been superseded by Micro-Cosme, where the aim is to showcase our work in blending Viognier and Sauvignon. In some ways similar to the Grenache/Pinot noir, the Viognier/Sauvignon is an iconoclastic blend that is virtually never produced by anyone whatsoever in the wine industry. And yet, the two grape varieties go together so well, with one providing what the other lacks. The fusion of texture also works extremely well.

The art of blending elicits the sense of taste much more than winemaking principles – you have to accept the idea of experimenting, observing and witnessing without being able to explain everything. In 2022, we have a wonderful white Micro-Cosme – after a real explosion of boxwood and elderflower on the nose, freshness on the palate allows you to enjoy the wine with no afterthoughts (alcohol content is 12.5 %). Lightly textured by the Viognier, the finish is guided by the expressiveness of the Sauvignon. It can be enjoyed quite simply on its own or with shellfish, oysters and grilled fish.



Henri or Louis - Denis Plat, watercolour - 2023



FORGE CELLARS SENECA LAKE 2020 Riesling Classique

The 21 different named vineyards at Forge Cellars are farmed and fermented separately using wild ferments, in used casks and in tanks.

Aged for 9 months on fine lees.

Shale, shale clay, slate and granite.

Mineral, salinity, tropical fruits, preserved lemon, lime and marshmallow.

What a great vintage this 2020 is. It is truly one of the finest since we established Forge Cellars in 2011. An ideal spring ushered in a great summer without too much rain. Then harvest time was cold but lenient. It allowed us to wait for peak ripeness until very late in the season, towards the end of October.

Riesling in the south-east of Seneca Lake is magical – its totally golden berries, which only reach 12% alcohol with pH levels that make them fresh and indestructible, is the stuff of dreams for any winegrower aiming to produce fine, mineral-driven white wines. The 2020 Classique by Forge exudes beautiful scents of tropical fruits, lemon and camphor. On the palate, there is no residual sugar – Rick and I prefer the sweetness from the ripe autumn fruit. The richness converses with the natural freshness and the finish is driven by terroir. Our Rieslings can of course be enjoyed as an aperitif, but they are amazing allies for food – cheeses, white meats, fish, shellfish, oysters, Asian and spicy foods etc. Their ability to enhance all sorts of food is one of their countless resources.



Winter - Denis Plat, fine-point drawing - 2023



Summer - Christophe Botton, fine-pointe drawing - 2023



Autumn - Denis Plat - 2023

Events in 2023

Wine Paris

Paris, 13th - 15th of february 2023, Hall 4 - Stand C208

Prowein

Düsseldorf, 19th - 21st of march 2023, Hall 5 - Stand C 49

Découvertes en vallée du Rhône

Avignon, 3rd - 6th of april 2023

Gigondas sur Table

Gigondas, 17th of july 2023

New York Wine Experience

New York, 19th - 21st of october 2023

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