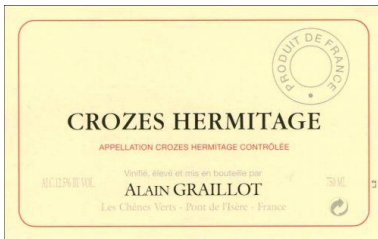




CROZES-HERMITAGE

ALAIN GRAILLOT



Owner :

Alain Graillet

Products :

White Wine:

Crozes-Hermitage

Red Wines:

Crozes-Hermitage

Crozes-Hermitage, La Guiraudes

Saint-Joseph

Location :

The Graillet residence and cellars are just outside the village of Pont de l'Isère, about 6km south of Tain-l'Hermitage. The Crozes-Hermitage vineyards are close by, on the flat, rocky land between the Isère and Rhône rivers. The best sites are at Les Chassis and Les Sept Chemins.

The Saint-Joseph holdings are in 2 separate locations: at St-Jean-de-Muzols (opposite Tain), and on the hills above Andance, 20km further north.

Size of the Vineyards :

Total 22 hectares, including 3 ha white vines, and 1.5 ha Saint-Joseph.

Soil :

Around Pont de l'Isère, the soil is formed from alluvial deposits of sand, gravel, rocks and stones. Despite being flat, it drains exceedingly well. The Saint-Joseph and Hermitage holdings are on hard granite slopes.

Grape varieties :

White Wine: 80% Marsanne
20% Roussanne

All Red Wines: 100% Syrah

Average age of the vine :

Average 30 years old in Crozes, 12 years old in Saint Joseph.

Average production :





Crozes-Hermitage Blanc: 15 000 bottles

Crozes--Hermitage Rouge: 90 000 bottles (including up to 10 000 bottles "La Guiraude")

Saint-Joseph: 5 000 bottles

Vinification and ageing :

All the grapes are hand-harvested, from severely-pruned, low-yielding vines. On arrival at the cellars, the white grapes go straight into the pneumatic press. After settling, 50% of the must is fermented in barrel (one year old oak bought from top Burgundy producers such as Sauzet). The other 50% is given a long, cool fermentation in stainless steel tanks, with temperatures controlled at 18°C. Grailot deliberately avoids malolactic, thus preserving acidity, and blends the components at the end of the winter. The wine is sterile filtered and bottled in April or May following the vintage.

The red Crozes-Hermitage grapes are not destemmed. They are loaded into lined concrete vats, and temperatures are brought down to 18°C for a 2 to 5 day pre-fermentation maceration. Once vinifications get going, temperatures rise to 30°C, and cuvaision lasts 15 to 21 days. The young wines are aged for one year - 80% of them in one to 3 year old oak barrels, the remaining 20% in vat. They are given a light filtration but no fining before bottling. The "La Guiraude" cuvée is not a specific terroir, but a selection of the year's best lots, chosen after Alain has tasted every barrel.

The Saint-Joseph is made the same way as the Crozes, but from destemmed grapes. The Hermitage grapes are also destemmed, and then fermented in a small, shallow vat with pigeage by foot. The wine is aged in one year old oak for 12 to 18 months.

Marketing :

Given Grailot's fame, demand is well in excess of supply, and stocks have to be allocated. 50% of the production goes to the export markets: notably the USA, Canada, Japan, UK and mainland Europe.

The rest is distributed in France, to loyal private clients, to specialist wine shops, and to a roll-call of the country's best restaurants: Pic, Troisgros, Loiseau, Crocodile, Georges Blanc, Lucas Carton etc.

Tasting notes :

Notes on the property :

Alain Grailot is well known to wine lovers throughout the world, and is universally regarded as one of the most talented producers not only in the Rhône, but in the whole of France. What is extraordinary is that he has built his reputation and fame in just 20 short years, and in an appellation that was until recently seriously despised by the cognoscenti. He has proved that even (or should we say particularly) from the flat land near the Isère river confluence, it is possible to make rich, concentrated reds that demonstrate everything that is exciting about the Syrah grape - the explosive black fruit, the aromatic intensity, the pepper and spice complexity, all supported by crisp acidity and good tannins. They are difficult to resist young, but patient cellaring is well-rewarded.

Grailot began making wine in 1985, having tired of life as Marketing Manager for a large French agricultural equipment company. He was lucky to benefit from the advice of friends such as Paul Jaboulet, Jean-Louis Grippat, and Jacques Seysses of Domaine Dujac in Burgundy, and immediately struck vinous gold. This led him, in 1988, to buy the vineyards he had previously rented, to which he has since added land in Saint-Joseph and even a few vines on the Hermitage hill - just enough to make 2 barrels a year !

The quality of Grailot wines is now legendary, and he has become the father-figure to a whole new generation of young Rhône producers. And if appellations such as Crozes-Hermitage and





Saint-Joseph now offer some of the best wine values in the Rhône, it is in no little part thanks to Alain's groundbreaking work.

