



Wines of the Northern Rhône

Tuesday, February 19th, 2013

Reception Wine: 6:00 PM, Formal Tasting: 6:20 PM

Faculty Club, Univ. of Toronto, 41 Willcocks Street, Toronto

Members' Fee: \$82; Guests'/Non-Members' Fee: \$97

The Côtes du Rhône region is located in the Rhône river valley south of Burgundy and north of Provence. It is believed to be some of the oldest vineyards in France. The region is made up of two distinct sub-regions, each with its unique climates, soils, terrains, and grape varieties. The North sub-region with its continental climate produces red wines from the Syrah grape and white wines from Marsanne, Roussane and Viognier grapes. The South sub-region with its Mediterranean climate produces a more diverse array of grapes. The relatively small appellations of the north produce less wine than those of the south but they are equally famous if not more so. According to Janice Robinson, Northern Rhône wines are “dry, sometimes beefy red wines designed for ageing.”

Within the Northern Rhône region, the most northerly appellation is Côte-Rôtie (the roasted slope). The slopes on which the grapes are grown are precipitous but the wines are so fine that vigneron will always persist here despite the difficult conditions. There are two main slopes, Côte Brunes and Côte Blondes and are just as they sound with darker Brunes soils consisting of thick clay and iron, producing firm and robust wines, while the lighter soils of the Blondes slope contain more slate and limestone, making elegant, soft wine. White wines (100% Viognier) are produced south of Côte-Rôtie in Condrieu, which consists of 500 acres of hilly terrain along the Rhône River. Within the Condrieu AOC is Château-Grillet, a small appellation of approximately 9 acres owned entirely by a single vineyard. Further south along the Rhône is Saint-Joseph and Crozes-Hermitage, which are the second and first largest appellations in the Northern Rhône region, respectively. Wines produced in these regions, however, are less regarded compared to those produced by Côte-Rôtie and its southern neighbour Hermitage. The hills of Hermitage are regarded by some as the spiritual home of the Syrah grape. The vines in the appellation grow on the southwest side of a steep granite hill facing the afternoon sun. The wines of Hermitage are considered the finest in the region. In the 19th century, Bordeaux was often blended with Hermitage so that it could be sold for a higher price. South of Hermitage is Cornas AOC, which unlike the other appellations in the Northern Rhône is shielded from cold winds and is therefore often the first appellation to begin harvest. Producers of the region produce traditional style wines which are typically aged in the barrel for 6-7 years. Finally, the most southerly part of the Northern Rhône region is Saint-Péray AOC, which produces sparkling and still wines of Marsanne and Roussanne. The Appellation d'origine contrôlée (AOC) designations allow for Côte-Rôtie to include up to 20% Viognier, while Hermitage can contain up to 15% Marsanne and Roussanne and Cornas AOC can include only Syrah grapes.

In February, our wine selection features eight reds from the Northern Rhône region: three from the northernmost Côte-Rôtie, two from Hermitage and three from Cornas. Our Côte-Rôtie selection includes a 2003 Domaine Yves Gangloff, and a 2004 and 2005 Domaine Jamet. From Cornas we will taste a mini vertical of Franck Balthazar from 2005 and 2006 and a 2006 Domaine Arènes Sauvages. Finally from Hermitage we will taste a 2006 Domaine E. Guigal and 2007 Domaine Ferraton Père & Fils. Given the diversity across the region and the quality of the wines, this tasting is one not to miss.

As always, we will start our evening with a reception wine. We will first taste the 8 wines blind and then light appetizers will be served once we've had a chance to nose and sample the wines.

REGISTER/ BUY TICKETS

Click [here](#) to register/buy tickets online. You must register online and then can pay by credit card or by cheque. **ALL ticket sales/reservations are final.** Cheques must be received by Friday, February 15th. The cheque-payment option will be disabled at midnight Tuesday, February 12th after which only credit card sales will be accepted until midnight Sunday February 17th or earlier if the event sells out. You will be sent an email confirming your registration. If you tried to register but did not receive your confirmation, please contact torontovintners@onlineregistrations.ca before trying to register again.



Tasting Notes and Information

2003 Domaine Yves Gangloff, Côte-Rôtie La Barbarine \$110

92% Syrah, 8% Vigonier. Gangloff is considered one of the largest of the prestigious Côte Rôtie appellation so much so that fans snapped its various vintages. Also famous vintage upscale La Serene Black Gangloff the area produces a wine called La Barbarine. This wine is more accessible than its predecessor; offers a fresh wine, but balanced and rounded. The 2003 vintage can be enjoyed now after 2 hours in decanter. Wine Enthusiast: 92/100.

2004 Domaine Jamet, Côte-Rôtie \$105

Approachable, but with ample structure for the vintage, this features lots of grilled sage, black olive, beef and black cherry notes allied to a tangy, iron and herb-filled finish. Should settle in nicely with some moderate cellaring. Best from 2009 through 2017. 2,500 cases made. *Wine Spectator*, James Moleworth: 92/100

2005 Domaine Jamet, Côte-Rôtie \$105

Intense, with warm roasted fig, currant confiture and melted licorice notes that almost gush forth, but the briar patch, sweet tobacco, mineral and incense notes lend both definition and refinement. The long, long finish shows terrific intensity and a lingering note of sweet macerated black olive. Best from 2010 - 2020. 2,000 cases made. -JM. "Rubyred. Musky raspberry, cherry and spiced plum aromas are complicated by fresh flowers, incense and cured meat. Minerality emerges with air, carrying onto the palate and supporting the sweet raspberry and blueberry flavors. Becomes even fresher on the back end, finishing with outstanding sappy persistence. Boasts wonderful clarity and fine-grained tannins." (Jan/Feb 08) *Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar*: 93-94 points / 100.

2005 Domaine Franck Balthazar, Cornas Chaillot \$69

Still rather tight, with reticent red currant and plum fruit held in check by a taut texture and additional iron and lavender notes. The sinewy finish needs to unwind more in the cellar. Best from 2009 through 2013. *Wine Spectator*, James Moleworth 90/100. *Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar*: 93/100.

2006 Domaine Franck Balthazar, Cornas Chaillot \$65

Very focused, with taut minerality and garrigue hints leading the way for dark cherry, iron and tapenade notes. There's solid underlying grip, with a very sappy, kirsch-, pepper- and sage-filled finish. This fills out nicely as it airs. Drink now through 2016. 350 cases made. -JM. *International Wine Cellar*: 92/100.

2006 Domaine Arènes Sauvages, Cornas \$45

Nicely packed, with warm fig sauce, currant paste, coffee and bittersweet cocoa powder notes, this is muscular and dense, but has the buried minerality and balance to reward cellaring. Best from 2009 through 2015. *Wine Spectator*, James Moleworth: 91/100

2006 Domaine E. Guigal, Hermitage \$73

The 2006 Hermitage exhibits classic, quintessentially Hermitage aromas of graphite, creme de cassis and acacia flowers. Full-bodied, rich and viscous, these wines are meant to be aged for two decades or more. Robert Parker Jr., *erobertparker.com*, Feb. 2011. 94pts.

2007 Domaine Ferraton Père & Fils - Les Miaux, Hermitage \$75

Dark and lush, with velvety-textured cocoa, fig and black currant, laid over a loamy edge. The finish is solid and toasty. Drink now through 2014. Score - 91. *Wine Spectator*, James Moleworth: 9/100