



2009 Clos Saint-Jean Chateauneuf du Pape Blanc

A Proprietary Blend Dry White Table wine from Chateauneuf du Pape, Southern Rhone, Rhone, France

Review by Robert Parker
Wine Advocate # 191 (Oct 2010)
Rating: 91
Drink 2010 - 2013
Cost: \$45-\$50

A small amount of white wine is made from one hectare of vines. This cuvee is not put through malolactic and the 2009 Chateauneuf du Pape blanc (equal parts Grenache Blanc, Clairette and Roussanne) is a winner. It exhibits copious notes of rose water, honeysuckle, marmalade, poached pears and lemon blossom in a medium to full-bodied style. The wine possesses lots of acidity, flesh and texture and should drink nicely for 2-3 years. Pascal and Vincent Maurel appear to have achieved great success in both 2008 and 2009 (and don't forget they produced three perfect wines in 2007). To say they are on a qualitative hot streak is the understatement of the wine world. This is a large estate of over 100 acres with extensive holdings in some of the finest sectors of Chateauneuf du Pape, especially in La Crau and high on the plateau north of the village. The Maurels had the foresight to bring in the gifted consultant, Philippe Cambie, when they took over in 2002 after their father's passing. 2002 was the worst year in Chateauneuf du Pape since 1932 because of the historic flooding that region experienced. Clos Saint-Jean's first successes were from 2003 when they produced some of the best wines of the vintage. They have followed those successes with wines that are in the top 10-12 Chateauneufs of the vintage every year – no easy task given the young generation that is pushing the qualitative envelope further and further with each new vintage. Everything is made with extraordinary attention to detail and a new winery has been built on the lower slopes of the village, behind Clos du Mont Olivet and Vieux Donjon. They now have the capacity to control temperature and have more space than they did in their old facility at the entrance to the village. A caveat about my comments on the 2009s. These wines had still not completely finished fermentation at the time of my visit. They were under 3 grams per liter of residual sugar, so in that sense they were essentially dry, but they possessed some CO₂. That being said, there is no doubt that Clos Saint-Jean has probably produced the wines of the vintage across the board in 2009. Yields were preposterously low with many of the parcels coming in at 15 hectoliters per hectare or less, which works out to about one ton of fruit per acre – financial suicide! This estate can produce as many as five cuvees of Chateauneuf du Pape in great vintages. Kudos to Pascal and Vincent Maurel as well as their brilliant consultant, Philippe Cambie. Importers: Eric Solomon, European Cellars, Charlotte, NC; tel. (704) 358-1565 and Paul M. Young, Los Angeles, CA; tel. (323) 222-2003
