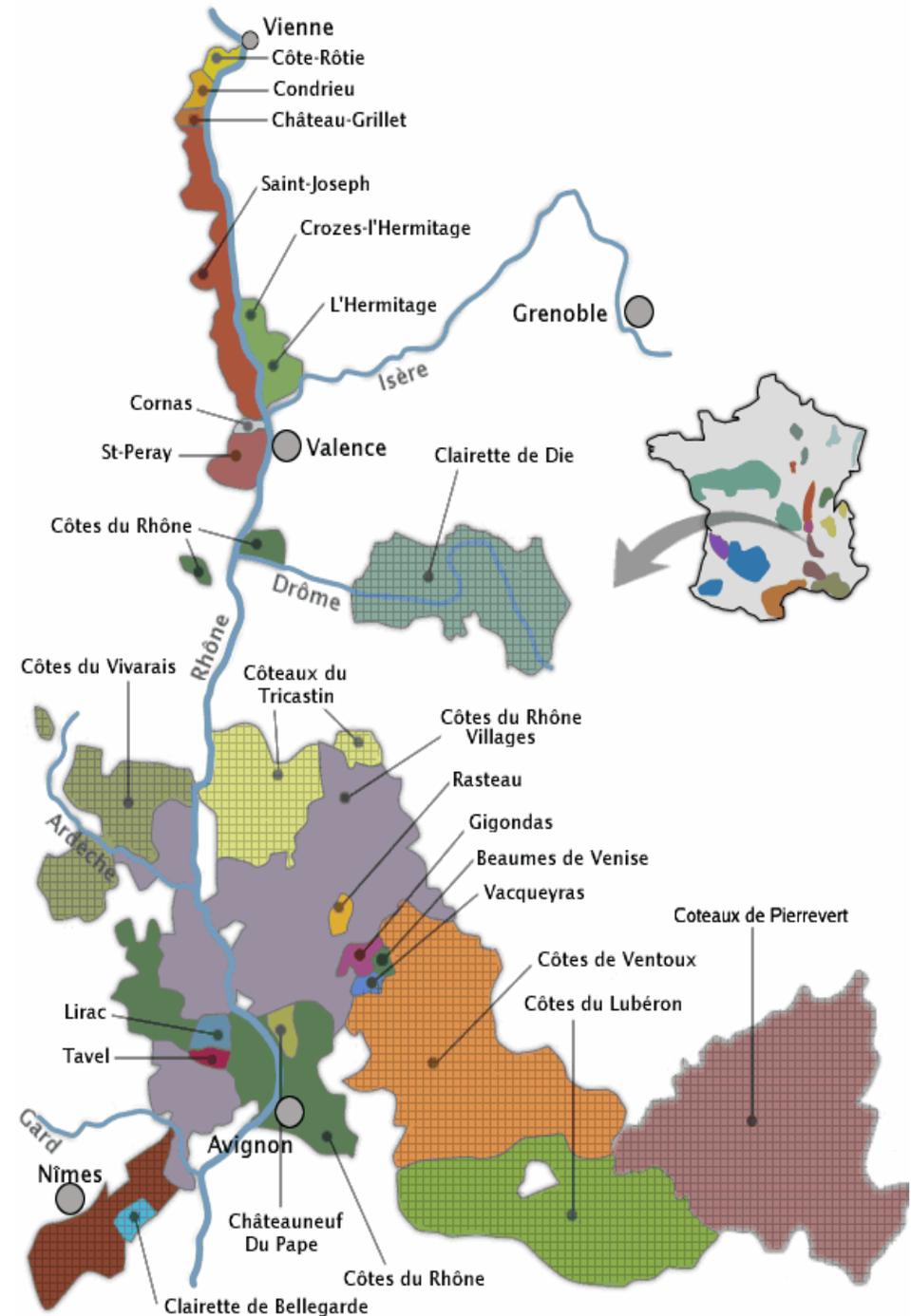


Rhone Valley

History

- Wine growing was brought in this region by the Phocaenans, Greek settlers in 600 B.C., whom would trade with the Gauls. The Rhone River provided a natural gateway for trade from the Mediterranean to Northern Europe. The Roman conquest insured that the Rhone continued to grow vines.
- The Romans built the vineyards in Cote Rotie, St. Joseph and Hermitage. They had huge digging projects to build on the steep slopes and terraces.
- Wine making in the Rhone almost disappeared during the Barbarian invasions in the first millenium, surviving only thanks to local monasteries
- 1st record of wine in the Rhone 71 AD recieved praise from Pling the Elder when he praised the dark grape coming from Viene
- There was a decline in in the 14th-16th century because the Duchy of Burgundy imposed high tarrifs on Rhone wines as they came up the Soane. He did this so he can sell his Burgundies to London and Paris.
- When railroads and better roads were built Rhone wines were able to be transported other than by the river.
- The Rhone came into spot light when Louis XIII gave praise to wines of the North
- 1737 an edict by the King had all casks used for carriage and sale were branded with "C.D.R." It wasn't until 19th century that the classifaction Cote Du Rhone included the wines ofthe left bank.
- 1787 Thomas Jefferson said that "the reds are full bodied with exquisite flavors and whites the best in the world.
- Turn of the century Rhone Valley is devastated by Phylloxera, War and Depression
- Not until 1970's did it regain notoriety.
- 1978 Marc Guigal's "La Landonne" was praised as one of the best wines... brought revitalization to the Rhone
- Today the Rhone wines range from the most concentrated and sought after wines of Cote Rotie and Chateaufneuf-du-pape to the basic everyday drinking wines of Cote-du-Rhone



Geography

Rhone River runs North to South lining villages on either side of its banks. Important in the wine trade and consumption of Rhone wines

Northern Rhone: Vienne (Cote Rotie) to Valence (St. Peray)

Southern Rhone: Montelimar to the valleys east of the Rhone River

There are 15 crus in the Rhone valley:

NORTH: COTE ROTIE, CONDRIEU, CHATEAU GRILLET, ST. JOSEPH, HERMITAGE, CROZES-HERMITAGE, CORNAS, ST. PERAY

SOUTH: VINSOBRES, GIGONDAS, VACQUERAYS, BEAUMES-DE-VENISE, LIRAC, TAVEL, CHATEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE.

It is 2nd largest French AOC in area and production. 79,870 hectares and 6,000 estates

419 million bottle sold

Climate

It is a Mediterranean climate. Most important is the Mistral, a strong wind which is caused by atmospheric pressure from north and south.

It known for hot temperatures, heavy rains and a lot of sunshine.

Northern Rhone: Cooler, wetter & Steeper than the south. Heavy winds; trees are planted to block winds...winds are also a plus because they deter frost and dry wet vines.

Southern Rhone: Warmer and drier than the North. Made up of more valleys than hill-sides. Vineyards face north to escape the intense heat from the south

Soil Types:

Shingle Clay, stony “argilo-calcareous”, layered stones (on Mountains):

these provide vines a regular source of water and at night give off heat. Good for aging.

Loess & Sandy soils: for a more irregular water supply and good for producing light reds and roses.

Viticulture

Traditionalists: make wine in the old way, old barrels, fermentation, no destemming

Modernists: use the latest technologies and gizmos

Pragmatists: weigh pros and cons; use what's best for them

ALL AGREE ON LOW YIELDS = better quality

In north syrah is fermented in cement, stainless steel, and old wood

Whites are used in red blends:

Marsanne/Rousanne in Hermitage & Croze-Hermitage up to 10%

Viognier in Cote Rotie up to 20%

Syrah:

Native to the Northern Rhone, it comes from an offspring two South French varieties; Dureza and Mondeuse blanc.

In the Northern Rhone it is big & powerful, dark, spicy grape. With thick skin it loves the sun. Typically has a leathery, plummy, blackberry characteristic with black pepper. In the South it adds structure to the wines based in grenache.

It is the same grape as Shiraz, coming from the old name Cyras in France.

It is not the same as Petite Syrah, which comes from Durif, a hybrid of Syrah and Peloursin.

Many stories of its origins, some say that it came from the city of Shiraz in Iran where wine making possibly originated 7000 yrs ago. They say that a crusader named Guy De'Sterimberg brought it to the Rhone valley. He became a hermit and built a vineyard on a steep hill now known as Hermitage.

DNA shows that it originated in France in the Rhone region. It is a cross of Dureza (native to Ardeche) and Mondeuse Blanche (native to Savoie).

Australians were very fond of Syrah. It was brought to Australia from cuttings of Chaptouier by James Bugsby. There they blended it with Cabernet & its success inspired many growers in the Rhone to experiment with new innovations.

Australia's use of Syrah also inspired the new world in working with the grape.

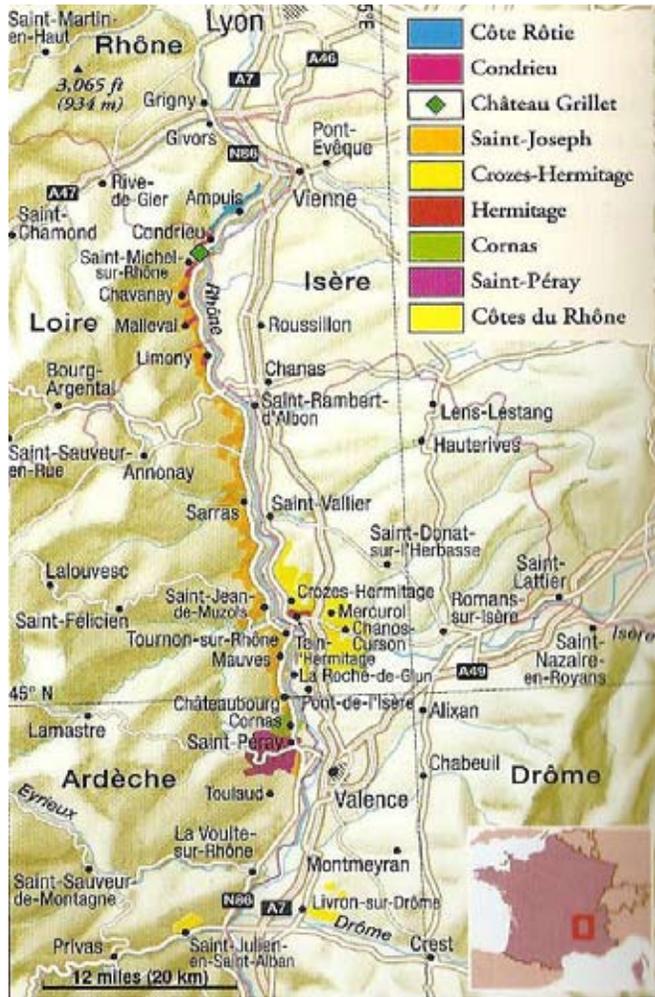


Viognier: France is its homeland, it was almost extinct and in recent years has made a come back. It is linked to the wild vines in the Dauphine. It is a difficult grape to cultivate because it is prone to mildew in humid or damp climates. Because it is difficult to grow it can be expensive. Viognier is rich, powerful with complex aromas. Over ripened apricot, orange blossom, acacia. It is a good wine for chardonnay drinkers because of its weight and aromas are upfront.



Marsanne: It is a grape which does not do well in too cool or too hot climate. It is best known for blending in the Rhone. It has low acidity so it's best when young. Some characteristics are a waxy texture, bright gold color with aromas of almonds, citrus, floral and sometimes rubber cement. In Hermitage it is the white grape of choice.





The Northern Rhone

The main grapes of the Northern Rhone are Syrah, Viognier, Marsanne and some Rousanne. The reds are fermented in cement vats, stainless steel tanks and old wooden barrels. Very few AOC's make white wines. However, they use Viognier and Marsanne to blend with reds and add aromas. The stand out appellations are Cote Rotie and Hermitage.

COTE ROTIE: "Scorched Slope"

Vineyards are on steep slopes made of granite
 Town of Ampus divides Cote Rotie
 Cote Brune to north: Clay Soils = Sturdier wines
 Cote Blonde to South: Sandier Soils = more refined

Summers are hot and winters are extremely cool...important in creating structured wines.

Cote Rotie-Hermitage are steep slopes facing southeast facing the river. Allows for direct heat from sun and indirect from the glare along the river.

Syrah is the Red grape and can be blended with up to 20% Viognier

Cote Rotie are smoky plums, berry, blackcurrant, orange peel;
 tend to have toasty and vanilla notes when aged in oak.
 Poor vintages need 5years, 10 years on good vintages

CONDRIEU

Coin du rieux "Stream Place"

100% viognier
 Soils are on steep slopes and are chalky, with schist & mica which great subtle and layered viogniers
 the slopes are well ventilated which reduces rot, which viognier is prone to

CONDRIEU is a difficult to grow because viognier needs to ripen to achieve that musky perfume; however it can become alcoholic, overly sugared and loose acidity if too ripe.
 the best white in the world can be found here.
 These wines are meant to be drunk young;

rich, apricot, peaches and pears with honey.

A method for dessert wine is called "a l'assiette". Where a plate is put under the vines and then shaken, the overripe grapes drop on plate. Fermentation is stopped early by using sulfur and retains a high level of residual sugar. It is then chilled and put through sterile filtering so it won't ferment in the bottle.

Ideal pairings for Condrieus are Thai and Vietnamese cuisine, Dungeneous crab and shellfish.

CHATEAU-GRILLET

CHATEAU GRILLET is a village with its own AOC named after it.
 Not as ripe and concentrated as Condrieu, but it is expensive

100% viognier.

HERMITAGE:

Syrah Country on left bank of river w/ south facing slopes
Reds are 100% Syrah will blend with Marsanne
Whites are Marsanne

Hermitage reds were once used to bring body and color to Bordeaux prior to AOC rules.

It was in Tain d'Hermitage where the Crusader Sterimberg settled..."hermit" to dwell. It was here where Thomas Jefferson fell in love with Syrah.

Best vineyards are:

"Le Bressards": granite based making sturdy, spicy wines
"Le Meal": Limestone soils making perfumed and subtle wines

Best producers blend from different vineyards

Climate is warmer on the hills of Hermitage = fuller, richer, more tannic wines than Cote Rotie.

Smoky flavors, fruit flavors with spicy cedar tones.

Hermitage reds need a minimum of 8 years to age; A great 1978 vintage still has not reached its peak.

Wines can range from light, fresh and full of raspberry, intended to drink early with a bit chill.

To tannic and powerful with raspberry and black currants, cherry and plum; which need to be aged for 5 years.

Hermitage Whites:

full bodied & creamy, honeyed peaches, apricots.

are at best when aged 15 years: aromas show nuts, flowers and toast

"Vin de Paille" = Straw Wine.

Bunches are dried on straw mats which create intense butter, orange marmalade, nuts, apricots & peaches. These are made to age.

ST. JOSEPH:

once was a small appellation with granite rich soils; in 1969 it spread from 222 acres to 17,300 acres. Most of those areas were unsuitable
It is now downsized but remains the largest Appellation of the Northern Rhone

Reds are 100% Syrah

Whites are blends of Marsanne and Rousanne

Reds are fruity and intense

Whites are not so spectacular but are a good value

CROZES-HERMITAGE:

Vineyards near the town of German making the finest wines such as "les Chassis" and "les Sept Chemins" = GRANITE SOILS on the hills
Most wines are made on flatter gravel areas on the Plains the town of Tain l'Hermitage

Wines of Crozes-Hermitage can vary from being very similar to hermitage in that they can age to similar to beaujolaise, light and fruity

CORNAS:

on the west bank of the Rhone River, has Granite Soils and is warmer and drier than Hermitage

It once was known for whites but now only makes red wines

Small appellation with small production

the Heat and deep old vines create rustic reds. Big dark Black wines with tons of tannins.

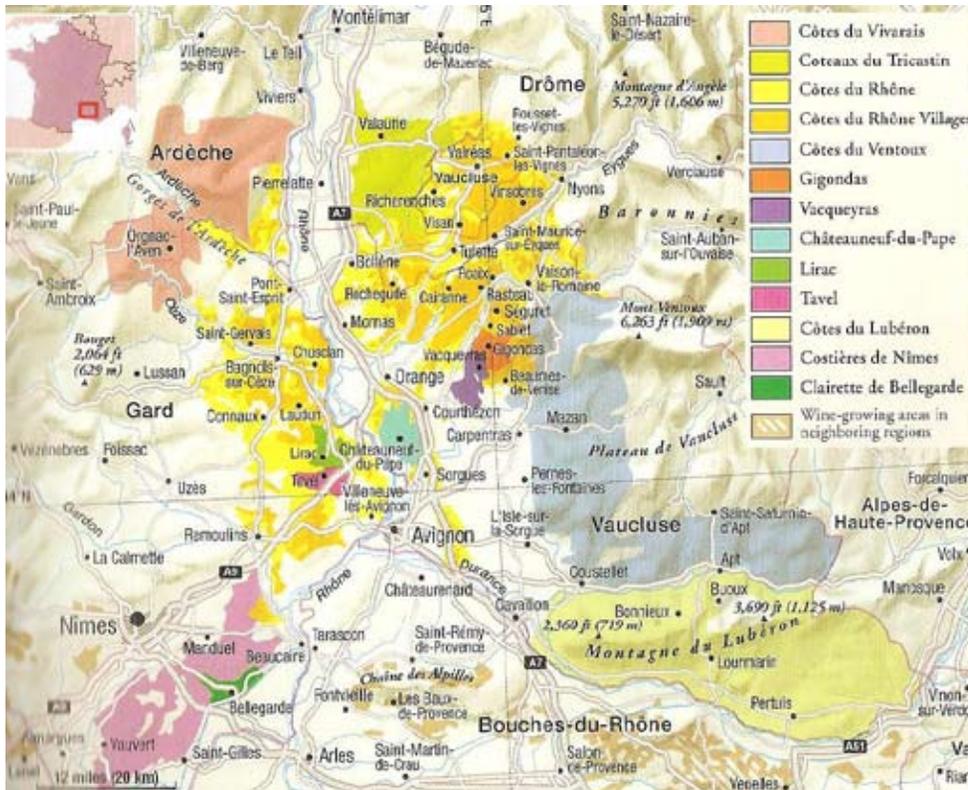
Cornas reds need 10 years to age

ST. PERAY:

The smallest Appellation of the North 146 acres
It was once known for simple sparkling wines
Now it has a reputation for fine whites
Marsanne is the choice grape in this region

CHATEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE

“The Pope’s new castle”



The Southern Rhone

Southern Rhone makes 95% of all Rhone wines

GRENACHE COUNTRY!! production is easy but good wine is difficult. When grenache is overcropped it can be alcoholic without color or flavor. As yields decrease you get more flavor & color but it doesn't provide enough tannins for structure. Grenache can also be prone to oxidation.

What do they do to deal with such a difficult grape?

- 1) Cut yields so that they are lower
- 2) Blend with Syrah & Mourvedre which act as antioxidants

Monks from Rome were the first to clear the land and cultivate vines in this area. The bishops were instrumental in seeing through the cultivation. 1157 Geoffry, the bishop of Avignon, planted and managed vines on his personal estate.

Under Pope John XXII (1309-1377, Chateauneuf was supplied to the papal residency. He was responsible for bringing glory to this appellation which became known as “Vin du Pape”

He built the famous Castle in Chateauneuf which is the headquarters of “Echansonnerie des Papes” a brotherhood which bears the reputation of Chateauneuf-du-pape.

The reputation of Chateauf lasted even through the wars, heavy frosts and epidemics; until 1866 when phylloxera desimated all the vines. Prior to that very little was known about the actual varietes in the area.

Cirac was planted in 1830 to enhance the wines. other than that it wasn't until **Joseph Ducos** of Chateua de la Nerthe, carefully selected the grapes to replant the vineyards.

Chateauneuf-du-pape is made up of 13 grapes and is the most well known appellation

REDS: Grenache, Syrah, Mourvedre, Cinsault, Counoise, Vaccarese, Terret noir, Muscardiin

WHITES: Clairette, Bourboulenc, Rousanne, Picpoul, Picardin

Chateauneuf-du-pape recipe was crated by Joseph Ducos of Chateau de la Nerthe

20% cinsault/grenache	=	for warmth, liqueur sweetness & mellowness
40% syrah, mourvedre, muscarduin, vaccarese	=	for solidity, durability & color
30% counoise/picpoul	=	for the bouquet, freshness & charm
10% clairette/bourboulenc	=	finesse, fire & sparkle

Today, few use all 13 varieties except for Beaucastel and Cht. de la Nerthe
Most use 70% grenache & remainder with syrah and mourvedre

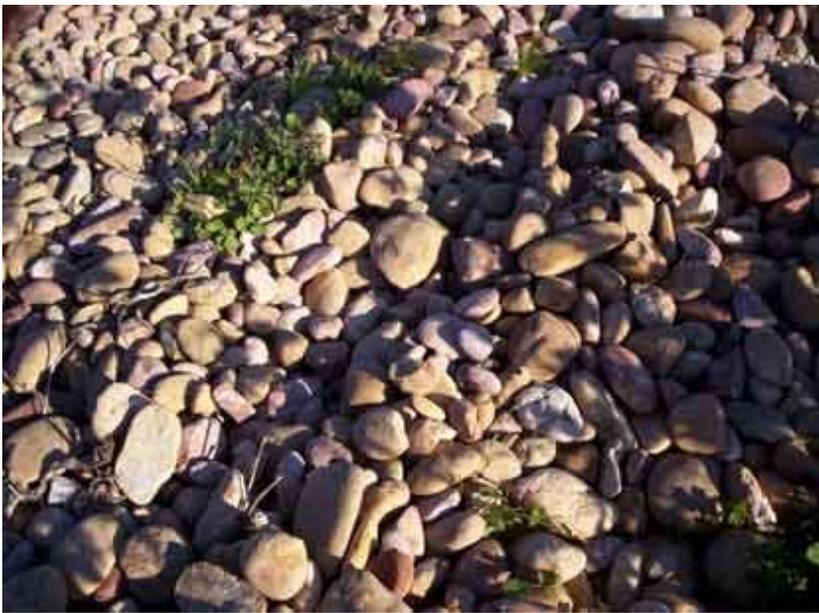
1894 a wine growing syndicate was formed to insure consumers that the wine purchased came from their land.

1919 Baron de Roy and the syndicate drew up lines for the AOC Classification with rules and borders.

The soil of Chateauneuf is made up of the pepples brought down from the Alps during the melting of the Ice Age. It is also made up of terraces along the river from natural erosion. “Castelpape Vineyards”

Climate is warm with long hours of sunlight, and winds which reduce rain fall

Characteristics: generous. structured and tannic. They can have a delicate mouth feel wihtout being flabby. roses, violets, prunes, berries are known to be key components. Lusty fruit, Thyme, and herbs are good discriptors



GIGONDAS

“pretender of Chateauneuf-du-pape”

There is a wider range of grapes being used here, mostly grenache, but no more than 80%
 the region is cooler than Chateauneuf-du-pape which means that syrah and mourvedre are more difficult to ripen.
 they have less body, sweeter fruit, and are ready to drink younger, lavender spice

VACQUERAYS

was part of cote du rhone and was classified in 1990 as an AOC
 it is to Gigondas as Gigondas is to Chateauneuf-du-pape, more rustic and drink sooner.

LIRAC

on the opposite side of the river of Chateauneuf-du-pape
 dark and rustic wines. The Original Cote du Rhone.

COTES DU RHONE

Most are found in the south, it is a general characterization for wines that come from the Rhone region and are not tied to an AOC.
 96% Cotes du Rhone are red

The name for wines that are not made within a cru. They vary in quality and styles. The best come from actual villages attached to the name.

Some of the best Cotes du Rhone come from producers who make AOC's

There are 6 outer appellations of Cote-du-Rhone

Appellation du Diois, Cotes du Vivarais, Coteaux du Tricastin, Cotes du Ventoux, Cotes du Luberon, Costeries de Nimes

There are 16 villages that can have their name on the label of Cotes du Rhone; usually of a higher quality:

Beaumes-de-Venise, Cairanne, Chusolan, Laudun, Rasteau, Roaix, Rochegude, Rousser-les-vignes, Sablet, St. Gervais, St. Maurice-sur-Eygues, St. Pantaleon-les-vignes, Seguret, Valreas, Vinsobres & Visan

Many Roses are made from these Villages

TAVEL is the only rose district

Rose flavors: Strawberries, raspberries, red currants, banana, cherries, toasted bread and caramel

WHITE COTE-DU-RHONE =

grenache blanc = floral, rich, full body

clairette and bourboulenc = lighter and more acidic wines

many use viognier and make more quality wines

Best whites are from Chateauneuf-du-pape where viognier is outlawed

Flavors: Acaia, Peach, broom, lime-blossom, apple, anise, and exotic fruits

RED COTE-DU-RHONE=

Grenache, Syrah, Cinsault, Mourvedre, Carignan

Flavors: Black Currants, Strawberries, raspberries, cherries, blackberries, prunes, spices, pepper, cinnamon, violets, coffee, tobacco, liquorice, musk, venison, undergrowth & truffles

BEAUMES-DE-VENISE muscat blanc a petit grains

Vin' doux Natural = proceeds of adding grape spirit in partly fermented wine.

Creates floral & rich wines with apricots, marmalade & barley sugar; they are very sweet but not cloying.

Rasteau make s a vin'doux natural with red grenache, not the same quality.



Rousanne: Like Marsanne it is also more known as a blending grape. Unlike Marsanne it has acidity. It is also revered for its aromatic tones of flowers and tea. It is ageable and has had some great success in parts of the north and south. In the new world, it is casked in oak which gives it a bright golden color. In warm climates it gets to be honey and pears with a full body.



Grenache blanc: It is very similar to Grenache in that it too is resistant to drought and survive in hot climate. It too originated in Spain and is now used in the Southern Rhone. It is blended in Chateauf-neuf-du-pape to add acid, flavour and length to the floral and rich Roussane. It has a straw yellow color with high alcohol, bright acidity, herbaceous notes and citrus.



Clairette Blanc: This grape is a native of Southern France where it loves the hot weather and stony soils. It has powerful fruitiness and a floral quality. It is used in blends to bring finesse and a lively burst of flavor to whites. It is an indigenous grape of France, from the Mediterranean.



Bouboulenc: This variety loves the heat and thrives in the hottest areas where it can ripen early. It has a lower alcohol level with great aromas. It contributes freshness, balance and length to blends. It has a floral aroma, fruity character and hints of straw and exotic fruits. This variety was first created in the Mediterranean region of France.



Grenache: It needs a hot dry climate because it ripens late. It tends to have a high alcohol level, low tannins and little color. It tends to be spicy with berry flavors such as blueberries. Floral tones such as roses can be common. Many believe it comes from Sardinia, made its way to Spain and then over the Pyrennes to France. DNA links it to origins in Aragon. It is known for the wines in Priorat. Grenache has an extensive family there is Noir, Gris and Blanc.



Mourvedre: As darker, thicker-skinned variety than Grenache, producing a firm-structured, often tannic, brambly, blackberryish red with notable funky, meaty and animal-like characters. More often than not it's blended with other southern French varieties. It can be spicy and ages well. It can have a meaty wet fur quality. It was brought to the Rhone by Spanish travellers, it originates in Spain.



Cinsault: It is believed to originate in the Herault, it could have been brought by traders from the Mediterranean. It is drought resistant and likes the heat. In wet climates it can rot. It has low tannins and takes the edge off other reds. It has a strong aroma, meaty, musky and strawberry. In South Africa it was cloned with Pinot Noir to create Pinotage.



Carignan: A red grape which originated in Carinena, Aragon and was brought to the Rhone by travellers. Today it's most success has been in Chile. It is a tannic grape which is most commonly known for its vegetal quality and green pepper. It is a late budding grape and requires a warm climate to ripen. It is difficult to work because it has high acid, tannins and astringency. It used to blend to give a deep color to reds.