

CHATEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE: VIEUX DONJON BLANC

Style

White, Dry, Medium bodied

Region

Southern Rhône

Wine Maker

Lucien & Claire Michel

Appellation

Châteauneuf-du-Pape, on the east bank, 18 km north of Avignon.

CÉpage

A blend of 50% each of Clairette and Roussanne.

Tasting Note

This relatively new offering from Lucien Michel has a wonderful purity of fruit and a long, elegant finish. A mid-weight palate of complex white peach, apricot and fig flavours is untainted by oak and is underscored by a clean acidity.

Serve

With smoked fish, poultry or substantial salads

Cellarage

Drink young, but will happily absorb 3-5 years bottle age.

Vinification

The grapes are hand harvested at optimum ripeness from 10-year-old vines. They are then fermented at 18°C with malolactic fermentation being blocked to preserve the wines freshness. The wine is vinified in enamel vats prior to being fined and bottled the month after the following years vendage.

History

Featured by Robert Parker as “one of the great unheralded estates of Chateauneuf-du-Pape” in his book The World's Greatest Wine Estates, Le Vieux Donjon continues to garner accolades for its wonderful wines.

It is a relatively new creation, having been founded after the marriage of Lucien and Marie José Michel in 1979. Despite their huge success, the modest Michels (these days ably assisted by their daughter Claire) go about their business with the minimum of fuss, producing just the one red and one white wine and eschewing the practice of fancy special cuvées.

Over 75% of the 32-acre estate comprises vines that are more than 80 years old and are situated on the sweet spot plateau of the appellation near Mont Redon and Les Cabrières.

The town itself is named after the castle of Pope John the 22nd that was built there between 1318 and 1333. Having survived centuries of conflict it was almost entirely destroyed by retreating German forces in August 1944.

