

CORNAS: CLAPE

Style

Full-bodied, complex, dry, red.

Region

Northern Rhône

Producer

Auguste, Pierre & Olivier Clape.

Appellation

Cornas, on the west bank of the Southern Rhône just above Saint Péray.

Cépage

100% Syrah.

Tasting Note:

A dense, dark, brooding wine which sets the benchmark for the appellation. Typically a bouquet of red fruit with underlying hints of leather, spice and wood-smoke precedes a palate of profound concentration and structure with a wealth of dark, black fruit and peppery flavours over rugged tannins, which soften and sweeten with age.

Serve

With game, roast lamb or beef or Roquefort cheese.

Cellarage

An unashamed Vin de Garde that will age well for 5-20+ years.

Vinification

The grapes are picked at optimum ripeness from 25-60 year old vines, grown on the south west facing granite hillside. Circa seven days of fermentation (with stems) at up to 34°C is followed by 3-7 days maceration to extract optimum tannins. Malolactic fermentation then takes place in wood followed by an 18 month élevage. Each lieu-dit is vinified separately and assemblage takes place just prior to bottling to produce the complex and distinctive house style.

History

The Clapes farm 5.38 hectares of vines at Cornas with further parcels classed as Côtes du Rhône and Saint-Péray. Although there have been Clapes at Cornas for at least 250 years, Auguste (who has ostensibly retired but is still on hand to give sage advice) is a first generation vigneron having acquired his vines through marriage to his wife Henriette, his first vintage was in 1949. Auguste was joined by his (then 40 year-old) son Pierre in 1989 (who is now the President of the local growers union) and he has been joined in turn by his son Olivier. The entire Clape operation is infused with a sense of cautious modesty and genial simplicity they have secured a profound international reputation by consistently producing top quality wine.

