

HERMITAGE BLANC DOMAINE J-L CHAVE

Style
Complex, full-bodied, dry, white Rhône.

Region
Northern Rhône.

Producer
Jean-Louis Chave.

Appellation
Hermitage.

Cépage
80% Marsanne and 20% Roussanne.

Tasting Note
Typically the Chave Hermitage blanc exhibits diverse aromas of apricots, honeysuckle, white peaches and grilled nuts and an equally complex palate of candied citrus fruits, honey, vanilla, almonds and minerals underscored by a fine acidity which imparts its great longevity. This is a wine that can 'close down' and become somewhat mute in adolescence (at around 5-7 years of age) but that then re-emerges at around 10 years-old showing even greater concentration and complexity.

Serve
This seminal white Rhône always merits decanting and should be served chilled but not overly chilled (around 11 °C). This is one of France's great gastronomic wines and classic food matches include pike quenelles, Bresse chicken with truffle and foie gras sauce, fish with cream sauces, grilled lobster and griddled scallops.

Cellarage
Approachable when young this wine is best drunk at 2-3 years of age or after at least seven years cellarage. Superior vintages can age well for decades (30+ years).

Vinification
The grapes are rigorously harvested by hand at optimum maturity, from four different lieu dits (L'Hermite, Peleat, Maison Blanche and Rocoules) from vines subjected to minimal treatments and short pruning. The grapes are bladder pressed before a 24-hour debourbage (settling) and the juice is then transferred to cask (circa 80%) and stainless steel (circa 20%) for fermentation. After alcoholic and malolactic fermentation the wine is racked clear and lightly sulphured. After the lightest of finings and at least 12 months élevage the final assemblage (blending) takes place. The wine is then left to 'harmonise' for several weeks before a very light plate filtration and eventual bottling.

History
'De Père en Fils Depuis 1481' is the impressive statement that graces every bottle of this legendary wine. The Chaves farm 13.9 hectares (of Hermitage's 132 hectares) comprising 9.3 hectares of Syrah spread across 7 different climats and 4.6 hectares of Marsanne and Roussanne (in an 80% to 20% respective ratio). Gérard Chave started working with his father in the late 1960's and was joined by his son Jean-Louis in 1992. The Chaves are famous for their fastidious and skilful blending as their extensive vine-holdings give them a very broad palette of fruit to work with. In 2006 Jean-Louis Chave became President of the Hermitage Wine-Producers Association.

