

MACCH

WINE COLLECTIVE

selected by Jacqueline Pirolo

ITALINA

DECEMBER 2021: RHONE VALLEY

Rhone Valley runs from North to South along the Rhone River, which runs 505 miles from the Swiss Alps to the Mediterranean Sea. Romans established vineyards in the Rhone Valley, France in the 4th century BC by using the Rhone River as a highway and planting vines up and down the hills alongside it. France has spent centuries cultivating vines by paying extremely close attention to the minute differences of wines made from different plots of land.

Northern Rhone is smaller, and has a continental climate of hot summers, cold winters, and precipitation throughout. Southern Rhone is 10 times the size of the North. It's a warmer, Mediterranean climate with long, warm summers and mild winters with less rain. The mistral is an extremely cold wind that plays an important role in creating the climate by blowing off strong storms from the sky and mildew that can gather on the fruit. It can reach speeds of more than 56 mph in the Rhône Valley, which means when fires come there is no stopping them from the winds. Northern Rhône reds typically made with Syrah are big, bold, spicy wines with a firm tannic structure in their youth, while Southern Rhône red blends are based mainly on Grenache and have rounded, warm, red fruit flavors. Perfect holiday wines. Cheers!

Remember, there is always more. Shoot me an email if you'd like to purchase another bottle (or case) of something that you loved.

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WINE 101

The climate of wine regions are classified by the characteristics of the area's weather patterns during the growing season. While variations in macroclimate are acknowledged, the majority of the world's premium wine production takes place in one of these three climate categories: Mediterranean (moderate and dry), maritime (close to a body of water that keeps temps moderate but wet), or continental climate (four full seasons and wet conditions).

#MacchInMyGlass

KITCHEN NOTE

Giardiniera

Pickled Vegetables

Cauliflower, Peppers, Mushrooms, Cucumbers, Fennel and Eggplant

Medium spice. Serve with charcuterie, on a sandwich, in a salad or however else you choose.

#MacchAtMyHouse

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CATHERINE LE GOEUIL
COTES DU RHONE BLANC 2015

Producer: Domaine Catherine Le Goeuil
Name: Cotes du Rhone
Variety: 33% Roussanne, 33% Grenache Blanc
and 33% Clairette
Vintage: 2015
Location: Cairanne, Rhone, France

Some of you may remember this producer from the Women in Wine themed box from March 2021, where we featured a glorious red from her stellar line up. I was excited at the opportunity to include a white from her this month.

Catherine Le Goeuil's courage is just one of the reasons she has become a pioneer in Cairanne, a little-known hilltop town, and home to some of the finest Grenache based wines in the Rhone Valley. Her devotion to organic and biodynamic farming, which she has been championing in France for a long time, is what has earned her some notoriety as a creative rebel of the best variety.

She'll give the credit of this favorable white blend to the dirt, but it is her technique and grit that adds finesse to this wonderful wine balanced between fresh apricot and peach, mineral, and a great burst of acidity at the end.

Serve chilled.

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CHATEAU DE LA FONT DU LOUP
CHATEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE 2016

Producer: Chateau de la Font du Loup
Name: Chateau de la Font du Loup
Variety: 60% Grenache, 20% Mourvèdre, 15% Syrah,
5% Cinsault
Vintage: 2016
Location: Chateauneuf-du-Pape, Rhone, France

The Château de la Font du Loup is the banner vintage of this estate and Châteauneuf-du-Pape is considered the benchmark of Southern Rhone. The name means "pope's new castle," and refers to a time in the 14th century when the seat of the Roman Catholic Church was in Avignon. The region has written records of vineyards dating back to 11-, but winemaking has been here longer than that.

Font du Loup produces finessed wines vintage after vintage due to soil, pebbles and a large water table just 50 meters underground. These grapes come from Grenache, Mourvèdre, Syrah and Cinsault vines, and are picked and sorted by hand. The mouthfeel is silky with notes of cherries in brandy, licorice and black pepper. This wine has a rare elegance, and can be drunk young by the impatient, but it will express its freshness for many years and can be shelved for a decade.

Pro-tip: be impatient open this bottle and if you like it order more from us to cellar and age

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CLOS DES MOURRES
POMPETTE ROSE 2020

Producer: Clos des Mourres
Name: Pompette Rose
Variety: 100% Caladoc
Vintage: 2020
Location: Vin de France, Southern Rhone, France
Follow: @closdesmourres

"Pompette" Rosé from is made from Caladoc grapes, a rarely used varietal that is a hearty cross between Grenache and Côt. This fruit forward Rhône rosé is dry but packs a juicy blast of red cherry and lush raspberry with hints of blood orange and herbaceousness. A characterful rosé for lovers of natural wine that is gorgeous in the glass and pairs well with most food.

The word pompette means tipsy and the name of the winery is a reference to a wild herb like lettuce that grows in the vineyard. See the label, that's not a palm tree.

Serve chilled.

Pro-tip: Rose isn't just for pool side livin', pop a bottle open with your holiday antipasti this year!

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MAISON CLUSEL-ROCH
COTEAUX DU LYONNAIS 'TRABOULES'
ROUGE 2019

Producer: Maison Clusel-Roch
Name: Lirac "Le Classique" Rouge
Variety: 100% Gamay
Vintage: 2019
Location: Coteaux du Lyonnais AOC, Rhone, France
Follow: @maisoncluselroch

Back in the 1950s René and Joséphine Clusel l began cultivating vegetables, fruit trees and Côte-Rôtie vines, like many other farmers in the Ampuis region. They sold the wine in bottles at a time when Côte-Rôtie wines did not yet enjoy their current reputation. Today, they run one of the best 'micro' estates in the Northern Rhône.

Their son, Guillaume, farms this tiny parcel of Gamay in one of the most exciting up-and-coming regions in France for young vigneron, Coteaux du Lyonnais. His Gamay from this 3-hectare vineyard is vigorous, wild, and quite unlike anything coming out of neighboring Beaujolais.

Serve slightly chilled.

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DOMAINE DE JONCIER
LIRAC 'LE CLASSIQUE' ROUGE 2015

Producer: Domaine du Joncier
Name: Lirac "Le Classique" Rouge
Variety: 35% Syrah, 35% Grenache, 20% Mourvèdre, 10% Cinsault & Carignan
Vintage: 2015
Location: Lirac, Rhone, France

The feisty, vivacious Marine Roussel aims to achieve balance, purity, and minerality in her wines - a noble, if not challenging, goal given the sunbaked terroirs she farms on the right bank of the Southern Rhône.

Her terraces benefit from the persistent mistral, whose regular gusts purify the vines of parasites and mildew throughout the entire year. The galets roulés in the soil provide good drainage and insulation, preventing the roots from getting too hot or too cold at any given time. In addition, Marine achieved organic certification in her vineyards in 2000 and biodynamic certification in 2011. Her soils are alive with microbiotic activity, lending a hand in both the long-term sustainability of her land and in the mineral expression of her wines. Since the vines naturally achieve such low yields, Marine seeks a gentle tannin extraction, too, an important step that provides balance to the final blends.

Serve slightly chilled.

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DOMAINE OZIL
'LA ROCHETTE' 2020

Producer: Domaine Ozil
Name: La Rochette
Variety: 100% Grenache Blanc
Vintage: 2020
Location: VDF, Northern Rhone, France
Follow: @domaineozil

This sunny and vibrant Grenache Blanc is from two young & dynamic brothers Jean-Daniel and Thomas Ozil, who tend the vines in their 5th generation polyculture farm in the south of central France's Ardèche. They also farm olives, peaches, lavender & vegetables on top of their 16 hectares of vines planted mainly to grenache, syrah, viognier, marsanne & cinsault. This 100% Grenache Blanc is hand-harvested before a direct-press in an old manually worked vertical press known as the 'clic-clac.' The juice has notes of Lychee and lemon custard.

** There is potentially a bit of CO2 trapped in the bottle, and that's common. It is not a sparkling wine, but it is the winemaker's intention that you open the bottle for a few minutes for it to blow off.