

RHONE VALLEY

CÔTE-RÔTIE

Rhone Valley



The **Rhone River Valley** is located in southeastern France. Here, the vines date back to antiquity, thanks to the Roman conquests along the river's tributaries that resulted in the widespread cultivation of grapes.

In terms of geography, the cultivation area is almost 250 km long, in addition to being rather narrow. It comprises practically all of the territories that the river touches before emptying into the Mediterranean Sea near Marseilles. For the sake of simplicity, the valley can be divided in two, with a total of about 250 villages and 16 appellations:

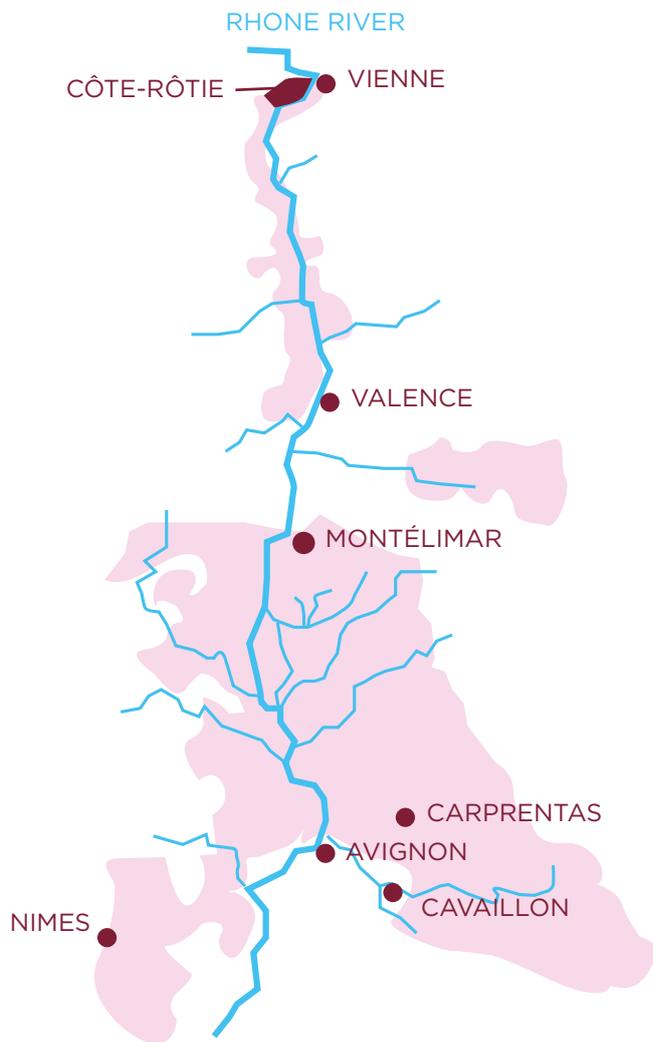
- **Northern Rhone:** Côte-Rôtie, Condrieu, Château-Grillet, Saint Joseph, Crozes-Hermitage, Hermitage, Cornas and Saint Péray
- **Central-Southern Rhone:** Vinsobres, Rasteau, Gigondas, Vacquerays, Beames de Venise, Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Lirac and Tavel.

GRAPES

The varieties cultivated along the Rhone Valley are many. Among the white grape varieties are Viognier, Marsanne, Roussanne in the Northern part and in the rest of the area: Grenache Blanc, Borboulenc, Clairette, Marsanne, Roussanne, Picpoul, to name a few. For red grapes, in the north we generally find Syrah, while in the south, Grenache, Mourvèdre, and Cinsault. The majority of these are still wines, even if there also exist small productions of fortified wines, called vin de paille (straw wine), and a small, as well as historical, tradition of sparkling wines in the Saint Péray area.

NORTHERN RHONE

The northernmost part, in other words the area closest to the city of Vienne, is called the Côte-Rôtie, while the most southern appellation, also happens to be the most famous area, that where Hermitage (red and white), Crozes-Hermitage (red and white), Saint Joseph (red) and Cornas (red) are produced.



CÔTE-RÔTIE (276 HECTARES)

The vine variety used in this zone is the Syrah, but also cultivated here Viognier, which is generally added to the Côte-Rôtie, to make it fresher. A continental climate in which the vines that climb the hills along the riverbanks, are cultivated by terracing. The most common soils in this area are schist and to a lesser extent, granite. In total, this zone has over 75 different lieux dits (locales). The most evident division however, is that between the côte de blonde and the côte brune, capable of, in the first case, giving life to elegant wines, while in the second, contributing to the production of a strong, spicy wines.

Côte-Rôtie

GARDINI NOTES WINE RANKING

The targets are three: short (5-8 years), medium (10-15 years) and long (more than 15 years), which denote the aging potential of the wine.



SHORT (5-8 years)



MEDIUM (10-15 years)



LONG (more than 15 years)

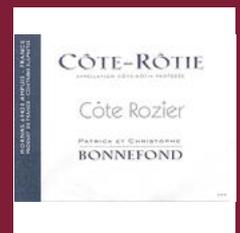
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Côte-Rôtie Côte Rozier 2015 (sample cask)

PATRICK & CHRISTOPHE BONNEFOND

An almost 50-year-old vineyard from one of the most famous and well-respected lieux-dits. Fruity from citrus and cherry both on the nose and in the mouth. The rest of the sip is bolder from tamarind, red peppercorn, and coffee bean. Finish of some comfort with touches of cacao bean and sweet-hot spices. Flavorful tannins.



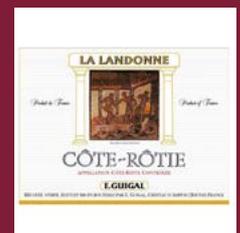
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Côte-Rôtie La Landonne 2013

E. GUIGAL

Queen of the Côte Brune? Possibly. Even with the 40-months long aging in oak and the subtle vintage, the crown still shines with jewels of fruit, such as bitter orange and blackberry, along with coffee notes, tobacco, and that intense, fruity mix of spices that takes off at mid-sip and never stops. Flavorful tannins.



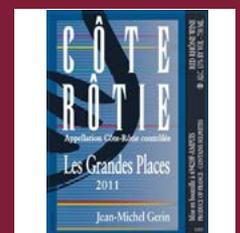
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Côte-Rôtie Les Grandes Places 2013

JEAN-MICHEL GERIN

The rains that preceded the harvest did not take away from the superb quality of this vintage. Plants almost a century old and an elevated cultivation increase the delicateness of this wine. The resulting complexity recalls blackberry, mulberry, earth, spices, and truffle.



96



Côte-Rôtie La Turquie 2013

E. GUIGAL

A touch of Viognier adds grace to the Syrah. The many, well-tempered spices in the mouth accompany, rather than cover the dense fruity but never dark aspect, pairing ripe blueberry with juicier and more acidic notes recalling pomegranate. Finish dominated by coffee and acidic tannins.



WINE RANKING

96

**Côte-Rôtie La Belle Hélène 2013**

STÉPHANE OGIER

Grapes from Côte Rozier, precisely those of the oldest plants. Not too opulent despite the vintage, revealing a fruity and floral nose, on which the fruit is ripe and juicy. In the mouth, taut with good balance. Blackberry and cherry add sweetness, while earth and camphor confer rigor and typicality. A spicy, complete finish and at times, powdery from cinnamon.



94

**Côte-Rôtie Champin le Seigneur 2014**

JEAN-MICHEL GERIN

Just a touch of Viognier - less than 10% - adds freshness. Aromas of cherry, both fresh and lightly roasted. Red fruit in the mouth as well, surrounded but never overdone, by notes of red and black peppercorns with other, softer spices. Flavorful and at the same, acidic tannins. Length and drinkability, both very good.



94

**Côte-Rôtie La Landonne 2015 (sample cask)**

RENÉ ROSTAING

Bunch pressed with no oak in the aging. A rigorous wine, not excessive in relation to the producer's philosophy, though perhaps taking something away from the power of the terroir from which it comes. There is fruit, especially dark, but without opulence or over-extraction. The rest is rose hips, medicinal herbs, earth, and olive. Acidic tannins.

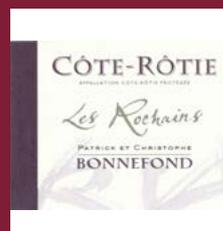


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**Côte-Rôtie Les Rochains 2015 (sample cask)**

PATRICK & CHRISTOPHE BONNEFOND

Syrah from a cru near the Landonne. Despite the importance of this wine and closeness of the cru, the grapes do not live on reflected light. Red fruit and balsamic notes on the nose. In the mouth, crisp cherry expressed also in the macerated version. The alcoholic thrust is lightened by tones of medicinal herbs and rhubarb. Salty tannins.



94

**Côte-Rôtie la Mouline 2013**

E. GUIGAL

From the Côte Blonde, a Syrah-based wine finished with about 10% Viognier. Dried rose followed by more typical dark fruit and violet notes, on the nose. After a fruity attack in the mouth, a list of spices that would put an Arab bazaar to shame, takes the wheel. Finish on exotic notes of sandalwood. Flavorful tannins.



93

**Côte-Rôtie 2014**

JAMET

Syrah planted in different lieux-dits. The vintage is what makes the wine for this producer. In the glass, a fragile but noticeable fruit, whose tones are summarized by medicinal herbs, camphor, earth, and cacao bean. The acidic tannins lengthen the sip and emphasizes the ease of the drink.



WINE RANKING

92

**Côte-Rôtie Carmina 2014**

JEAN-PIERRE VILLA

All Syrah translated in an elegant manner, thanks to the vintage. The characteristic that best identifies this label is its drinkability. The fruit is subtle though noticeable with ample cassis, pomegranate, and cherry. An evident complexity, due to graphite, earthy, and iodized notes. Flavorful tannins.

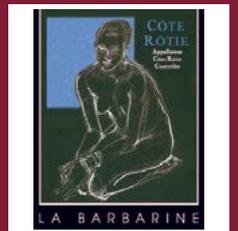


92

**Côte-Rôtie La Barbarine 2014**

YVES GANGLOFF

Not only Syrah from some of the Côte Brune crus. Typical aromas of dark and red fruit, but also black olive. The sip, because of the vintage is not too muscular. The drink benefits, made agile from a very juicy fruit, as well as impressions of earth, salt, and licorice. The acidic tannins reiterate the nimble silhouette of the sip.



92

**Côte-Rôtie Château d'Ampuis 2013**

E. GUIGAL

Syrah from more than seven different terroirs subdivided between the Côtes Blonde and Brune (and a small amount of Viognier). The complexity of the areas is noticed in the wine, particularly in the mouth, while the aromas remain somewhat anchored in sensations of blueberry and graphite. Ample mouth but also juicy, spicy, and mineral. Flavorful tannins.

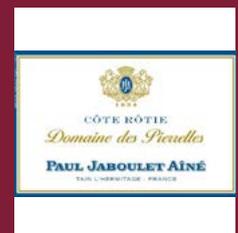


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**Côte-Rôtie Domaines des Pierrelles 2014**

PAUL JABOULET AÎNÉ

Blackberry and mulberry characterize the nose. Dark fruit recurs in the mouth, though the fruity ensemble is not the protagonist here. The true stars of this rather compact sip are the hints of black olive, rhubarb, and ink. The flavorful tannins give length; while at the same time render the sip less monolithic.

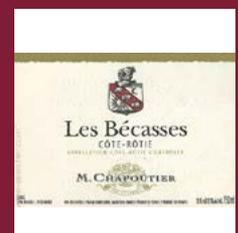


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**Côte-Rôtie Les Bécasses 2014**

M. CHAPOUTIER

Balsamic aromas of geranium are followed by sensations of a fruity mix. The sour cherry in particular, more evident on the sip, becomes the protagonist until the end. The initial "green feel" of the nose returns in the mouth, with notes of oak and green olive in brine. Acidic tannins.



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RHONE VALLEY - CÔTE-RÔTIE
RANKING BY
LUCA GARDINI

TASTING PERIOD
MARCH 2017

