

# RHONE VALLEY HERMITAGE

# Rhone Valley

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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:

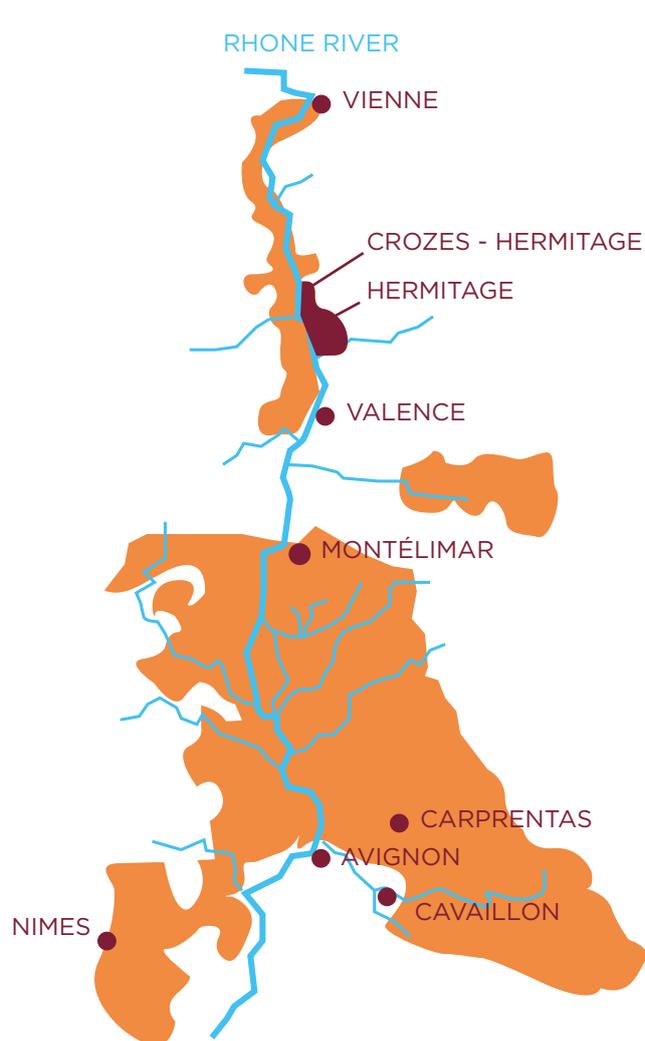
- **Northern Rhone:** Côte-Rôtie, Condrieu, Château-Grillet, Saint Joseph, Crozes-Hermitage, Hermitage, Cornas and Saint Péray
- **Central-Southern Rhone:** Vinsobres, Rasteau, Gigondas, Vacquerays, Beames de Venise, Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Lirac and Tavel.

## 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.



## HERMITAGE (136 HECTARES)

The name of this area is likely derived from the hermits (among which appears the name of the cavalier de Sterimberg), which settled here after returning from the Crusades. Found on the left side of Rhone with a continental climate. The exposition, as often occurs in the southern part of the Rhone, is entirely in the south, with soils largely made up of granite. The only varieties cultivated here are the Syrah for reds, and the Marsanne and Roussanne for the whites. The red wine classified as Hermitage can be made with up to 15% Marsanne and Roussanne. More than 70% of the total production of the appellation is red Hermitage and the rest is white Hermitage.

## CROZES - HERMITAGE (1500 + HECTARES)

This area is located on the 45th parallel, to be more precise, on the left side of the river. In fact, it represents the 'tail' of the Hermitage. The northern part of this appellation is usually more temperate, but also very much influenced by the winds, which can bring mild temperatures as well as storms. Geologically, the Crozes-Hermitage, created in 1952, is composed of pebbles alternating with veins of granite and clay. This geological variation - associated with subtle inclines, as in the Hermitage - gives the wines a certain immediacy and enjoyment. The varieties cultivated are the Syrah for reds, as well as the Marsanne and Roussanne for whites.

# Hermitage Red

## 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)

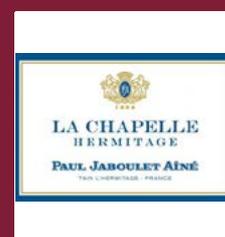
 MEDIUM (10-15 years)

 LONG (more than 15 years)

98

 **Hermitage red La Chapelle 2014**  
PAUL JABOULET AÎNÉ

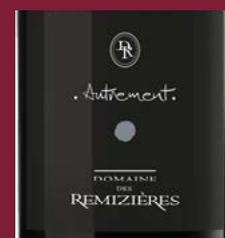
Syrah from Bessards, Mèal, and Rocoules. This trio of geographically diverse parcels demonstrates the different characters of the vine variety: fruity, flavorful, and spicy. For those who love descriptors, it takes off on blood orange, followed by red fruit variations, and creole cocoa. Great drink. Acidic tannins.



94

 **Hermitage red Cuvée Autrement 2015**  
DOMAINE DES REMIZIÈRES

A cuvée not produced every year. From plants grown on granite fissures. Aromas of cherry and blackberry with balsamic touches that recall both anise and camphor. In the mouth, the wheel turns around cherry, ending with an earthiness of gentian and a seductive flavor, a sensation that recurs in the tannins.



94

 **Ermitage red le Méal 2013**  
M. CHAPOUTIER

The letter H is missing since this hermitage derives from a single plot. Dark aromas of blackberry and mulberry, but also balsamic and even green tones. This green feeling recurs in the mouth, even if at times, without very precise maturity. However, this flaw never disfigures the gustative profile of the wine with a salty and never wide finish.



93

 **Hermitage red le Gréal 2014**  
M. SORREL

Decisive fruit on the nose, ample blackberry and cassis both fresh and preserved. The same sensations appear in the mouth, though expressed in a denser and more compact manner, aspects not so common especially in a vintage such as the 2014. The drink is kept afloat by flashes of spices and aromatic herbs. Flavorful tannins.



93

 **Ermitage red le Pavillon 2013**  
M. CHAPOUTIER

Granite and century-old plants with southern exposure: the simple recipe for a dense and compact wine with aromas of stereophonic blackberry that leave little room for others, except earthy and smoky notes. The mouth always takes off amply on fruit that is made less round thanks to more acidic tones of sour cherry and nuances of dry spices, olive, and ink. Flavorful tannins.



# Hermitage White

## 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)

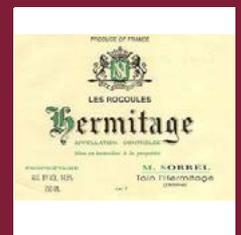
 MEDIUM (10-15 years)

 LONG (more than 15 years)

95

 **Hermitage white Les Rocoules 2014**  
M. SORREL

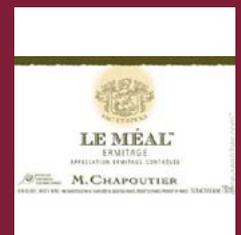
*From a rather heterogenic area with pebbles, clay, and limestone. Typical aromas of citron, mirabelle plum, and honey turn the preview into a clean sip with fruit that dominates on newly honeyed sensations, at the same time flavorful and balsamic. Long finish with a very controlled sour peak.*



95

 **Ermitage white le Méal 2013**  
M. CHAPOUTIER

*The first of the white Hermitages to be harvested. Only Marsanne. Much yellow fruit adorned by a spicy delicateness. In the mouth, the fruit is embellished by an almost exotic guava aspect and a rich catalog of nuts and spices. Almond characterizes the finish in combination with a captivating flavor.*



93

 **Hermitage white Chevalier de Sterimberg 2015**  
PAUL JABOULET AÎNÉ

*A prevelance of Marsanne cultivated on very steep and geologically heterogeneous terrains. The rock gives characteristic flavor to the sip during all of its noteworthy length. Abundant white and yellow fruit, followed by nuts (peanuts). A brioche finish, as the varietal wishes. Beginning next year, 100% organic.*



93

 **Hermitage white Cuvée Emilie 2015**  
DOMAINE DES REMIZIÈRES

*Only Marsanne partially vinified in oak for half a year. White fruit, translated into tropical and sweet citrus such as citron. Therefore, the complexity in the mouth has a fruity, albeit mentholated stamp. Spicy touches of Tonka bean and turmeric are present throughout the sip.*



93

 **Ermitage white Ex-Voto 2013**  
E. GUIGAL

*Almost all Marsanne in exclusively new wood. The oak is not obvious on the nose or mouth, due to the strong material of the almost century-old plants. More floral than fruity nose. The situation capsizes at the sip where, after an attack of acacia, there appears an abundant dose of fruit. Light and typically sour finish.*



# Crozes-Hermitage Red

## 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)

98

 **Crozes-Hermitage red Cuvée Autrement 2015**  
DOMAINE DES REMIZIÈRES

*Produced only in some years. The plants grow on rich white terrains of kaolin. Many, if not all the small dark juicy and sour fruits, translate little by little into a jammy version. No sweetness since balsamic notes of juniper immediately appear, along with a flavor derived from tannins and sensations of brined olives.*



94

 **Crozes-Hermitage red 2014**  
E.GUIGAL

*Bottled on February 22. The fruit dominates the smell and taste by invading both with very pleasing, juicy, and at the same time, rich sensations. In particular, rugged wild strawberries that at mid-sip give way to sweet notes of mixed berry jam. Discrete overall balance, merit of an impression that recalls pomegranate. Acidic tannins.*



94

 **Crozes-Hermitage red Cuvée Christophe 2015**  
DOMAINE DES REMIZIÈRES

*Aromas of cherry and cassis, as well as a note of green banana most likely attributable to the oak that still needs to be disposed of throughout. Mouth once again juicy, rendered more dynamic by balsamic tones from flowers (geranium) and those of aromatic herbs (mint and laurel). Acidic tannins.*



92

 **Crozes-Hermitage red Les Meysonniers 2015**  
M. CHAPOUTIER

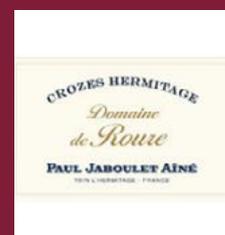
*Clay and pebbles especially in a vintage such as this wine of impact. Evident, though not strong aromas of blackberry, jammy raspberry, and some spices on the side. In the mouth, a metallic attack, after which returns the fruity, sweet-acidic leitmotiv, in a less convincing manner with respect to the nose. Spicy finish.*



91

 **Crozes-Hermitage red Domaine de Roure 2014**  
PAUL JABOULET AÏNÉ

*Wild aromas that underscore a subtle vintage such as the 2014. In the mouth, the fruit, while noticeable, is still missing balance between the juicy and the ripe parts. The berries are therefore those sour ones of mulberry and elderberry. Willowy and balsamic finish of anise and mint, at times rather thin.*



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RHONE VALLEY - HERMITAGE  
RANKING BY  
**LUCA GARDINI**

TASTING PERIOD  
**MARCH 2017**

