

René Rostaing

Great Côte Rôties & Beyond

Not counting the much larger Guigal domaine, René Rostaing is the closest thing to a true cult star that Côte-Rôtie has yet produced. A grower since 1971, his first vineyard purchases were a microscopic half acre each in Côte Blonde and in La Landonne on the Côte Brune.



Newly planted vines in La Turquie

The real breakthrough came when his father-in-law, Albert Dervieux-Thaize retired in 1990, followed by his uncle Marius Gentaz-Dervieux three years later. Between these two legendary growers, Rostaing acquired over ten acres of very old vines in some of the appellation's top sites. The vineyard expansion also enabled René to quit his day job in 1991, and to devote himself full time to winemaking.

Good, Better, Best

Today, Rostaing can boast 20+ acres of the finest vineyards in and around Côte-Rôtie. The wealth of vineyard holdings results in an astonishing array of wines. From several parcels of old vines that immediately adjoin Côte-Rôtie and Condrieu, Rostaing produces a gorgeous non-appellation white and red called Les Lézardes. In Condrieu, he holds a tiny parcel in Côte Bonnette that yields some of the region's most refined Viognier. Most of his Côte-Rôtie parcels are blended to produce the Cuvée Classique, a terrific expression of the appellation. And, of course, there are his two prized Côte-Rôtie special cuvées, La Landonne and Côte Blonde.

An Enlightened Traditionalist

In the war between traditionalists and modernists, it is impossible to pigeon-hole René Rostaing. He employs roto-fermenters, but strongly disapproves of heavily-extracted "monster" wines. He employs 20-30% new wood on his Côte-Rôties, but detests obviously oaky

wines. He prizes mature fruit, but rails against some of his neighbor's over-ripe, "Australian" wines. His winemaking is the essence of "enlightened traditionalism," marrying the best of the old and new while producing wines true to their origins.

New Challenges

In the late 1990s, René and his wife purchased a modest estate, Domaine Puech Chaud, in the Côteaux du Languedoc near Nîmes. Located in a relatively cool micro-climate, Puech Chaud gave René a chance to produce Syrah on the limestone soils so beloved by many French growers. Bolstered with small amounts of Mourvèdre, Grenache, Grenache blanc, and Rolle, Puech Chaud is now producing one of the South's most beautiful wines.

The *terroir* yields a slight *garrigue* character—the only clue you have that this isn't

Northern Rhône wine of the highest order. It may be the best example yet of the Rostaing's ethic: elegant, yet concentrated; expressive, but subtle; hedonistic, but cerebral.

"If you cannot afford or find Rostaing's Côte Rôties ... his soft, fleshy 2003 Puech-Chaud is very Côte Rôtie-like."

Robert Parker

"The Rostaing touch is evident in the perfumed fruits and elegant, silky tannins ..."

Andrew Jeffords on Puech Chaud

"Les Lézardes" blanc

"Les Lézardes" rouge

Condrieu "La Bonnette"

Côte-Rôtie "Classique"

Côte-Rôtie "La Landonne"

Côte-Rôtie "Côte Blonde"

Côteaux du Languedoc "Puech Chaud"

René Rostaing

Northern Rhône, France

OVERVIEW

Winemaker/Proprietor: René Rostaing

René Rostaing has, since 1991, emerged as one of the Northern Rhône's most respected growers. Before turning to winemaking full-time, Rostaing split his time between real estate and his small winery.

Between 1991 and 1995, he assumed the vineyards of his uncle, the legendary Marius Gentaz, and his father-in-law, Albert Dervieux. From these two traditionalist titans, he also learned to value the noble qualities of classic Côte Rôtie.

VINEYARD INFORMATION

Apart from Guigal, Rostaing may have the finest vineyard holdings in Côte Rôtie. He works 20+ ha, in 14 *lieux-dits*, including 1.6 ha in La Landonne, 1.5 ha in Fongeant, and 1.2 ha in La Viallière. A majority of the vines were planted in the 1960s and 1970s, but some of the Viallière vines exceed 100 years old!

In addition, he has a choice 1.0 ha in Condrieu, and works a 10 ha site in the Côteaux du Languedoc.

Harvest: by hand

RECENT VINTAGES

2007 – Similar to 2006, but with lower yields and concomitant concentration. Glorious Cote Roties..

2006 – A glorious year yielded fresh reds. Not as powerful as the 05s, but perhaps more expressive.

2005 – This is a profound year, with an uncommon combination of power and finesse. Very short crop.

ADDITIONAL WINEMAKING NOTES

Rostaing adapts his methods to the vintage.

Grapes can be destemmed or not. Maceration can vary from 7-20 days. All the Côte Rôties are aged in a mix of 225 and 500 liter barrels. (about 20% new). The Condrieu is fermented and aged in stainless steel.

The Wines

Côte Rôtie “Classique”

Fruit Source: Vineyards from throughout the appellation.

Grapes: 100% Syrah

Ave. Yield: 35 hL/ha

Ave. Production: 1500 cases

Côte Rôtie “La Landonne”

Fruit Source: 3 parcels of vines 20-70+ years in age.

Grapes: 100% Syrah

Ave. Yield: 30 hL/ha

Ave. Production: 600 cases

Côte Rôtie “Côte Blonde”

Fruit Source: 2 parcels of 40+ year-old vines.

Grapes: 98% Syrah, 2% Viognier

Ave. Yield: 30 hL/ha

Ave. Production: 450 cases

Condrieu “La Bonnette”

Fruit Source: 0.6 ha Côte Bonnette, 0.4 ha Ste-Agathe

Grapes: 100% Viognier

Ave. Yield: 35 hL/ha

Production: 400 cases

“Les Lézardes” Syrah & Viognier

Fruit Source: Various parcels from the northern edge of Côte Rôtie and Condrieu (respectively).

Grapes: 100% Syrah or 100% Viognier

Ave. Yield: 35 hL/ha

Production: about 600 cases each

Côteaux du Languedoc “Puech Noble”

Fruit Source: Cool vineyard site on limestone cobbles near Nîmes.

Grapes: 90% Syrah, 10% Mourvedre

Ave. Yield: 35 hL/ha

Production: 1000 cases