

Domaine René Rostaing

Classic Côte-Rôties & Beyond

Today, three domaines wield arguably the most influence in Côte-Rôtie.

One, Guigal, is quite large. The others are far smaller: René Rostaing and Jamet. But together the three have led the resurgence of Côte-Rôtie over the past 25 years.

Yet there is another distinction dividing the three domaines.

Guigal's and Jamet's accomplishments have been the work of two generations, while Rostaing's history rests on the shoulders of one very gifted man, René Rostaing.

Only in the past year, with René's son Pierre taking over, has it been any other way.

A 50-YEAR COMMITMENT

When René became a grower in 1971, he had the perfect role model to guide him into a career of classical winemaking: Marius Gentaz, his uncle.

Then in his early 20s, René took advantage not only of his uncle's mentoring, but of historically low vineyard prices, to acquire a prized half acre each in Côte Blonde and in La Landonne on the Côte Brune.

And when he married, he acquired a second traditional role model, his father-in-law, Albert Dervieux. Both Gentaz and Dervieux retired in the early 1990s, which gave René a further ten acres of very old vines in some of the appellation's top sites.

This vineyard expansion also enabled René to quit his day job and to devote himself full time to wine-making. Over the next 25 years, he crafted a sequence of masterful wines that honored the legacy of his illustrious forebearers.



René Rostaing in La Landonne

“One of Côte-Rôtie’s finest classical producers.” John Gilman

“The fruit in his wine is always streamlined ... a studied elegance.”

John Livingstone-Learmonth

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

*Andrew Jeffords
on Puech Chaud*

GOOD, BETTER, BEST

Today, René's son, Pierre, is taking the reins at an estate that now boasts 20+ acres of the finest vineyards in and around Côte-Rôtie. The wealth of holdings results in an astonishing array of wines.

From several parcels of old vines immediately adjoining Côte-Rôtie and Condrieu, the domaine produces a gorgeous *Vins de Pays* white and red

called **Les Lézardes**. In Condrieu, a tiny parcel in **Côte Bonnette** yields some of the region's most refined Viognier.

The estate's reputation, however, is based solidly on its majestic Côte-Rôties. These are wines of intense perfume, and the combination of delicacy and power that comes from no other Syrah.

The flagship red, **Ampodium** (formerly known as “Classique”), is assembled from parcels throughout Côte-Rôtie. It is a terrific expression of the appellation, and

by itself rivals the appellation's best.

The Rostaing mystique grows further with the prized single-vineyard wines, **La Landonne** and **Côte Blonde**. These are extraordinary expressions of two very different terroirs. Landonne is dark and powerful, while Côte Blonde is lithe and explosive; yet both are imbued with the finesse for which Rostaing is famed.

CÔTE BRUNE RETURNS

Finally, with the 2013 vintage, René began to produce a separate bottling from the famed **Côte Brune lieu-dit**. This site was once the source of Marius Gentaz's legendary Côte-Rôtie Côte Brune but was replanted in the late 1990s because the vines were in poor condition.

For over 15 years, while the vines matured, the fruit was used in the Côte-Rôtie “Ampodium.” But finally, in 2013, he decided they were old enough to stand on their own. However, production is tiny.

THE STANDARD BEARER

Today, the Rostaing domaine is a beacon for Côte-Rôtie’s “Classicists”—those whose winemaking is deeply rooted in tradition. Like earlier generations, Rostaing uses up to 100% of the stems when ripe, believing they contribute to Côte-Rôtie’s ineffable perfume.

And, while René once experimented with higher levels of new wood, he came to see any evidence of new oak in the taste or smell as antithetical to Côte-Rôtie’s essence. Today, the estate employs a 6-8 year rotation of barrels, and mostly larger, time-honoured *pièce* for aging, so that no more than 15% of a given vintage sees new wood.

MODERNITY IN SERVICE TO TRADITION

Always the maverick, René has never been afraid to use technology if would help him make even more authentic Côte-Rôtie. So, in the late 1990s, René acquired horizontal, rotary fermentation tanks, but not for the same purpose as virtually everyone else. While modernists—most famously in Barolo—adopted these tanks to speed fermentations and capture more color and fruit, René adopted them to mimic

the long, gentle macerations of his ancestors.

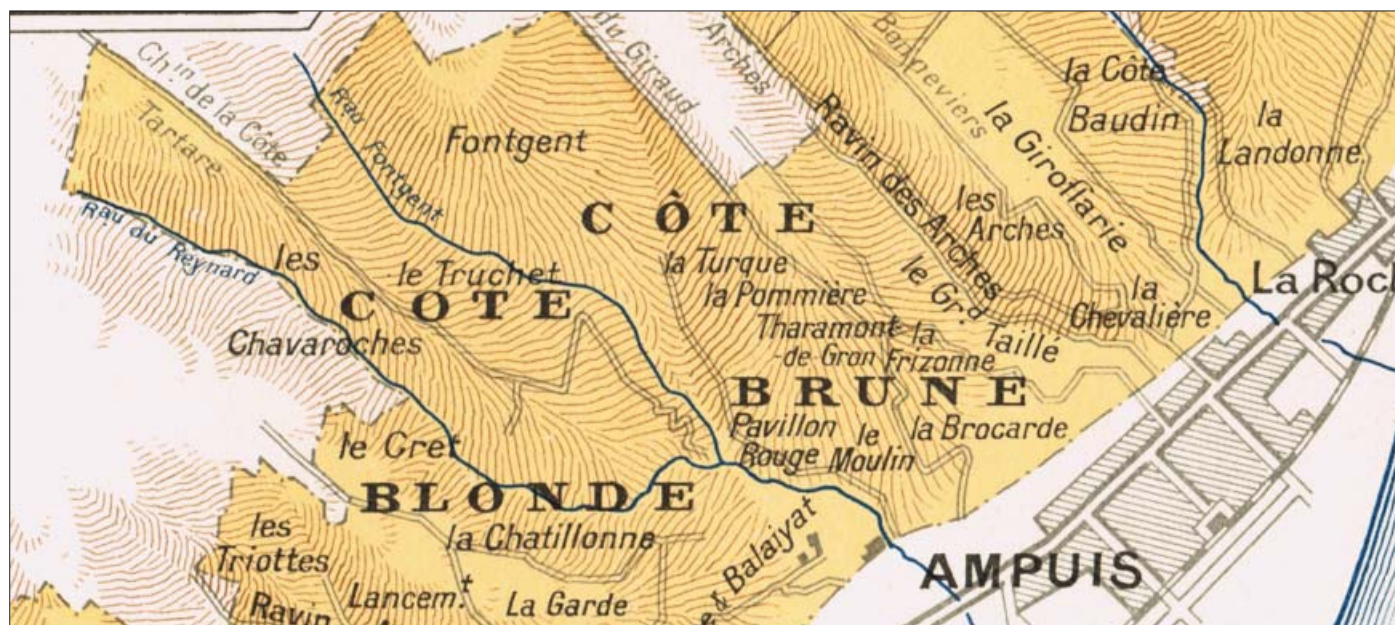
The process has much the same effect as the *cappello sommerso* employed by many of Piedmont’s staunchest traditionalists!

The Rostaings also prize mature fruit, but never to a degree of over-ripeness. For example, if you’re looking for 2003, 2009 and 2010 Northern Rhône’s with no hint of *sur-maturité*, there are no better choices than Rostaing Côte-Rôties.

In sum, the Rostaing wines represent—in our view and the view of others—among the very best of classic Côte-Rôtie. They are wines of consistency and sophistication that are true to their origins. And with Pierre Rostaing now in day-to-day control, the future for this estate never looked brighter.

PUECH NOBLE

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



Côte Rôtie in the 1940s: The Legendary Larmat Map.