

Selections



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Introducing Domaine Roger Sabon's Great Châteauneuf-du-Pape



There is probably no better way to introduce you to Domaine Roger Sabon than to quote Robert M. Parker from his book 'Wines of the Rhône Valley' (Simon & Schuster 1997). After all, the 1988 Le Secret des Sabon was the **first Châteauneuf-du-Pape to receive a perfect 100 rating from Mr. Parker.**

“Roger Sabon is one of the more intellectual and forward-thinking vignerons in



The-Sabon-team: at the table from the left - Denis, Gilbert and Jean-Jacques Sabon. Standing from the left: Didier Négron, Delphine and Julien Sabon.

Châteauneuf-du-Pape. Perhaps because the Sabon name has been associated with Châteauneuf du Pape since the early seventeenth century, he seems more concerned about the future than many vignerons. ... Sabon is a traditional winemaker. He has moved toward raising his red wines in small oak casks (all old since he does not like the effect of new oak). After having been pressured by his oenologist and European clients to do more fining and filtering, Sabon decided to make a qualitative rather than business decision, and for the last half decade or so has refused to filter any of his wines. In fact, he is an outspoken critic of the oenologists who

consistently advocate an intense filtration, not recognizing that it can harmfully remove much of the aromatics, body and flavours of a wine. ... This estate has been making

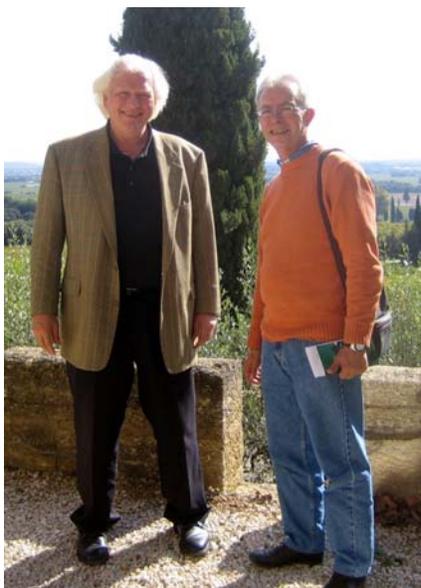


Jean-Jacques extracting a sample

They were divine. We also tasted the marvelous wines we are proudly introducing in this issue of 'Selections'.

exceptionally high-quality wines for years, but recent vintages seem to have risen to a new level of quality. Moreover, Sabon's wines have not yet been discovered by the masses, so prices are surprisingly reasonable. Readers should be also be aware that Roger Sabon produces a very delicious Côtes du Rhône and Lirac from vineyards holding those appellations."

The next Sabon generation, brothers Jean-Jacques, Denis and Gilbert, is now at the helm of the winery and is ably assisted by the succeeding generation, Didier Négron, Delphine and Julien Sabon. We had the opportunity to spend some time with Jean-Jacques in early October. What a delightful experience it was. The 2006 harvest had just been completed and the new juices were happily gurgling away in their tanks. We visited the immaculate and very modern wine-making facilities and then sampled the 2005 unassembled wines directly from their vats and barrels.



Jim and Jean-Jacques in Château-Neuf-du-Pape

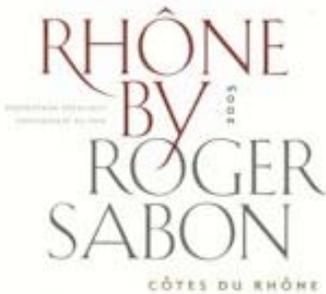
The domaine is made up of two different properties on opposite sides of the Rhône River – 17 hectares of the renowned Châteauneuf-du-Pape on the left and 28 hectares of Lirac, Côtes du Rhône and Vin de Table on the right. The family has been in the wine business since 1560 and makes their wines in a very precise and traditional manner. The average age of their vines is unusually high with some of them dating back to the early 1900s. The vineyards and wine-making facilities are meticulously maintained and yields are kept very low. The winery is located on the outskirts of the quaint village of Châteauneuf-du-Pape with its haunting castle, good restaurants and excellent Bernard Castelain chocolate factory and outlet. The Sabons have built a most hospitable retail shop and tasting room at the winery and visitors who venture onto the domaine are warmly welcomed. Find out more about this fabled estate at www.rogersabon.com02.com

The Wines of Domaine Sabon

As Parker notes, “The 2004s are a success at Sabon, and my instincts suggest that overall they are probably superior to the 2003s and the best vintage Sabon has turned out since 1998 and 2001.

All of the Domaine Roger Sabon wines come in **six-bottle** cases. Due to the rarity of the highly rated Châteauneuf-du-Pape (our first ‘Super Selection’ offerings) and high world-wide demand for them, we must order the wines by the **end of November**. Don’t miss out – they really are outstanding.

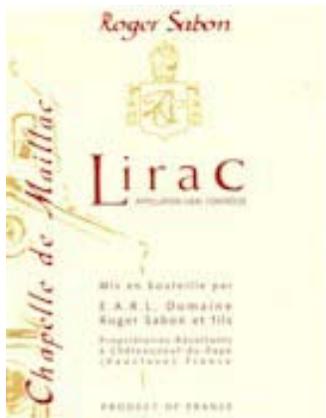
2004 Côtes du Rhône Rouge “Rhône By Roger Sabon” – (13.5% Alc./Vol.) \$16.95



This wine comes from the vines of the Chapelle de Maillac domaine and is made from approximately 80% Grenache, 15% Syrah and 5% Cinsault. All of the grapes were de-stemmed to ensure delicate tannins. This wine is a sparkling ruby colour and has a lovely aroma of plums, raspberries, new leather and flint. In the mouth there are wonderful, round tannins, more red fruit and a hint of vanilla in the surprising long finish. This is a young wine and while lovely to drink now will improve for several years. It will go beautifully with just about any barbecued red meat. Order

this Sabon-styled Côtes du Rhône for real drinking pleasure.

2004 Lirac “Chapelle de Maillac” Rouge – (14.5% Alc./Vol.) \$21.95



Lirac has been called the forgotten appellation (established in 1947). It is one of the Côtes du Rhône-Villages that achieved its own appellation status due to the high potential quality of its wines. It has its own unique character, much lighter in body, more flowery than the nearby reds from the Côtes du Rhône-Villages or Châteauneuf-du-Pape. Robert Parker cites five “Excellent” Lirac producers, one of which is Roger Sabon.

This wine, made from vines that average over forty years of age, is a dark cherry colour. The combination of grapes is similar to that found in their Côtes du Rhône. Consistently, cherries are also found in the aroma along with smoke, spices and red berries.

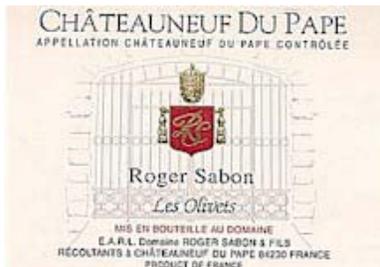
It too possesses silky tannins and will develop notes of tobacco, mushrooms and pepper as it ages, which it will do nicely for several years. We were very impressed by this lovely, gentle wine. To order, please click [here](#).



The following two collectible wines are the first of many we will be offering under the banner ‘Super Selections’. These wines are widely sought after by collectors around the world and are not available through the LCBO. Due to their limited supply, we will have to act very quickly to secure a small quantity for our Members.

2004 Dom. Roger Sabon Châteauneuf-du-Pape “Les Olivets” – (14.5% Alc./Vol.)

\$37.95



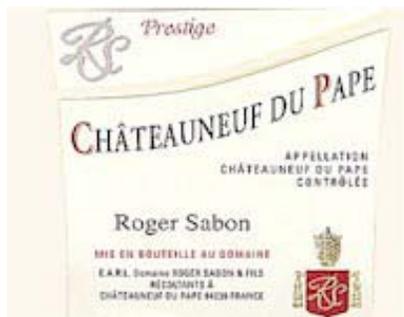
“The 2004 Châteauneuf-du-Pape Les Olivets, as always, is peppery, spicy, with loads of sweet cherry and plum-like fruit, dark garnet color, good acidity, medium to full body, and a heady finish. It is a wine to drink during its first 7-8 years of life. Estimated cost - \$US 37.00. Rating: (87-88) points.” Robert Parker: Wine Advocate #163 (Feb. 2006)

“Supple flesh, with stylish notes of red currant, cocoa, game and garrigue that glide through the long, elegant finish. Drink now through 2021. 1830 cases. \$US 40. Rating: (91) points.” James Molesworth: Wine Spectator (Nov. 2006)

I found this wine to be quite closed with the usual wonderful Sabon tannins. It is interesting to note the quite different impressions of the two American wine oracles. My notes were closer to Parker’s and I think the higher Wine Spectator rating is due to the extra half year of aging. Note that the wine is still very young and needs at least another two to three years before broaching. This is an excellent Châteauneuf-du-Pape for less than forty dollars. Get some for your cellar by clicking [here](#).

2004 Domaine Roger Sabon Châteauneuf-du-Pape “Prestige” – (14.5% Alc./Vol.)

\$74.95



“The super-rich 2004 Châteauneuf-du-Pape Cuvée Prestige has a dense ruby/purple colour and a big nose of melted liquorice, Provençal herbs, figs, black currants, and cherries. Full-bodied, layered powerful, and expansive with moderate tannin and tremendous depth and length, this wine is best put away for 2-3 years and drunk over the following 12-15. Estimated cost - \$US 60.00. Rating: (91-94) points.” Robert Parker: Wine Advocate #163 (Feb. 2006)

“Very supple, with pure, Burgundy-like notes of red and black cherry, raspberry and incense, followed by a long, super silky finish that lets the fruit, mineral and garrigue notes play out beautifully. Subtle now. Should put on weight in the cellar. Drink now through 2026. 1,165 cases made. Estimated cost - \$US 65.00. Rating: (94) points.” James Molesworth: Wine Spectator (Nov. 2006)

Once again I favour Parker’s description. This is a dark ruby, round, massive, smooth wine with monumental tannins and heaps of counter-balancing fruit. This is definitely for collectors who cherish old-style, traditional Châteauneuf-du-Pape. While \$75 might seem like a lot (one can always share a case with a friend or two), the regular Beaucastel of the same vintage is over \$90. Click [here](#) for a classic addition to your cellar.

Note: The term “garrigue” is commonly used by wine writers to describe wines from the Rhône Valley and southern France. Garrigue is the wild, marvellously aromatic underbrush that thrives in the hills and mountains there and is a real tinderbox for wild fires.

Delivery Update

We are constructing a new section of our website to provide you with delivery progress reports on the wines you have ordered. It is expected to be completed within two weeks. In the meantime, here is the latest news on the whereabouts of your wine:

Cave de Lavilledieu du Temple – cleared by the LCBO on October 18th and mostly delivered except to those outside the GTA. Please let us know when those out-of-town deliveries occur. If you don’t have your wine by Friday, November 10th, please contact your local LCBO outlet. Also, please let us know what you think of these wines.

Champagne Forget-Brimont – has arrived at the LCBO Toronto warehouse and should be cleared by Friday, November 10th when local deliveries will begin; add two to three weeks for out-of-town deliveries.

Château Saint Jacques d’Albas – our fourth d’Albas shipment should be arriving at the LCBO Toronto warehouse any day now and will be cleared quickly because it is a repeat order (no lab testing required). These should be delivered in November.

Château Beauferan – was picked up from the winery on October 9th and is due at the LCBO on November 13th. We’ll keep our fingers crossed for a pre-Christmas delivery.

Château Robin – was picked up from the winery last Friday and is due at the LCBO warehouse on December 1st. With much luck we might have it by Christmas but I think early January is more likely given the workload at the LCBO during the holidays.

Domaine Palon – scheduled to leave the winery November 3rd and to arrive at the LCBO December 8th. This will be a January delivery.

A Minervois Evening (or two)

The Wednesday, November 22nd evening sold out immediately for this wine and food pairing dinner at Bodega but there are still **four places available for the Thursday**. You can find all the details in our last issue of ‘[Selections](#)’. Please click [here](#) if you are interested.

Soon to Emerge from Arthur’s Cellar

Next will be the remarkable Côteaux du Languedoc wines from Domaine la Croix Chaptal, the brilliant white Vins de Pays Duché d’Uzès (a recent find) from Domaine Chabrier Fils, the storied wines (literally – get all the information in advance from the delightful book, ‘Virgile’s Vineyard – A Year in the Languedoc Wine Country by Patrick Moon) from Domaine Virgile Joly, some special Côtes du Luberon from Château de l’Isolette, more wonderful Minervois from La Famille Léonore, some more Parker rated Châteauneuf-du-Pape from Mousset-Barrot, nectar from the Burgundian house of Alex Gambal and many others.

Member Feedback

We really appreciate your feedback because it allows us to improve and better respond to your requirements. Many of your suggestions have already been put into place and we are working on several others. Thank you and please keep the comments coming (jaswalker@arthursellers.com).

For the wine club to be successful, we need as many wine buying members as possible – please forward this newsletter to likely prospects and keep those referrals coming.

Thank you and cheers,

Hélène and Jim

PS: Our wines are also available for restaurants and other establishments that serve beverage alcohol by the glass – their prices will be a little lower because PST is not charged. If you are aware of any that might be interested, please let us know.

www.arthursellers.com
jaswalker@arthursellers.com