



CAVE DES CLAIMONTS

CROZES-HERMITAGE

FACT SHEET



OWNER

10 partners, from 6 different families, led by Jean-Michel and Sylvie Borja.

PRODUCTS

White Wine:

Crozes-Hermitage Blanc

Red Wine:

Crozes-Hermitage Rouge

SIZE OF THE VINEYARDS

103 hectares total, including 8ha white and 87ha red Crozes.

LOCATION OF THE VINEYARDS

The winery is in Beaumont-Monteux, 7km southeast of Tain-l'Hermitage, close to the Isère river. The vineyards are spread around the appellation: at Beaumont-Monteux, to the west around Pont d'Isère, Mercurool and La Roche de Glun, and up north on the hills of Chanos-Curson. This latter area is the coolest, and produces the bulk of the white grapes, as well as reds with good acidity.

Generally speaking, the climate is Semi-Continental, with hot summers moderated by the cooling Mistral wind. The appellation is almost exactly on the 45th parallel, ideal for the production of balanced wines.

SOIL

Beaumont-Monteux: deep, water-retaining alluvial soil, covered with pebbles.

Mercurool, Pont d'Isère, La Roche de Glun: thin alluvial with large round pebbles which store and reflect extra heat.

Chanos-Curson: thin, clay-dominated soils

GRAPE VARIETIES

Crozes-Hermitage Blanc: 100% Marsanne

Crozes-Hermitage Rouge: 100% Syrah

AVERAGE AGE OF THE VINES

White: 20 years old

Red: 30 years old, with some old vines up to 70 years in age.

AVERAGE PRODUCTION

Total 120 000 bottles - the rest is sold in bulk.



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VINIFICATION AND AGEING

The white grapes are hand-harvested and quickly pressed using vaslin presses. The musts are settled for 24 hours, and then fermented at 15-17°C for around 15 days. Malolactic fermentation is blocked to preserve acidity. The young wine is aged 6 months on the fine lees, in enamelled vats, before blending and bottling of the best lots.

For the red, the hillside grapes are hand harvested, those on the plain by machine. In good years, 50% of the stems are retained, in less good years, there is 100% destemming. Fermentations take place in stainless steel and concrete tanks. Cool temperatures ensure that fermentations start slowly, permitting a couple of days maceration before things get going; thereafter, temperatures rise to peak at 32-34°C at the end of an 8 day fermentation. Depending on the vintage, they may run off a saignée and prolong cuvaision to get better concentration, colour and tannin. The stainless steel tanks are equipped with cap submerging devices, but there wil also be regular pigeage at the beginning of fermentation, and some remontage later. Following malolactic conversion, the wines are aged 18 months in vat, with careful blending of the different lots, and eventual bottling of the best wine.

MARKETING

Much is still sold in bulk, to négociants who will bottle and sell under their own labels. The best lots are bottled at the Caves, with 50% going to French customers (private clients, hotels, restaurants etc), and 50% to export. Markets include the USA, Canada, the UK and mainland Europe.

NOTES ON THE PROPERTY

The Caves des Clairmonts was established in 1972 as a partnership of 3 families. The driving force behind the operation was Joseph Borja, one of a number of dynamic vigneronns who returned from North Africa to revitalise the French wine industry after France 'lost' its colonies. The estate is now run by his son and daughter-in-law, Jean-Michel and Sylvie Borja, who both studied oenology at Beaune.

The relatively large size of the domaine offers Rhône buyers three big advantages. Modern equipment, highly-trained personnel and economies of scale all mean very well-made wine at sensible prices. The bulk business is secure, meaning that they can make a strict selection of only the very best wine to be bottled and offered under the Caves des Clairmonts label. And vineyard holdings all over the appellation give the blender a varied palette to work with: the red combines the elegant, aromatic wines of Beaumont-Montoux with the deep coloured, sturdy, tannic wines of Pont d'Isère and Mercurol, and valuable acidity from those of Chanos-Curson. The result is a complete Crozes, endowed with fruit, structure and balance, reliable from year to year. These wines are some of the few genuine bargains left in the Northern Rhône.