

# DOMAINE JEAN-LOUIS CHAVE / Rhône Valley



## Owner / Winemaker

Gerard & Jean-Louis Chave

## Appellation

Hermitage

## Presentation

Jean-Louis Chave represents the 16th generation of a family growing vines since 1481. Gérard Chave took over in the early 1970s, consolidating 15 hectares of top Hermitage sites, including Les Bessards, L'Hermite, Méal, Peléat, and Les Rocoules. He vinifies parcel by parcel, using hand harvesting, natural fermentation, minimal new oak, and traditional cellar practices.

Jean-Louis joined the domaine in 1992 and now leads alongside his father, maintaining a focus on terroir expression, precise vineyard management, and sensory-led decisions. Today, the domaine is widely regarded as one of the Northern Rhône's most respected and iconic producers, admired for the consistency, depth, and longevity of its wines.

## Wines produced

SELECTION MON COEUR COTES DU RHONE (RED)  
SELECTION OFFERUS SAINT JOSEPH (RED)  
SELECTION CIRCA SAINT JOSEPH (WHITE)  
SELECTION SILENE CROZES HERMITAGE (RED)  
SELECTION SYBELE CROZES HERMITAGE (WHITE)  
SELECTION FARCONNET HERMITAGE (RED)  
SELECTION BLANCHE HERMITAGE (WHITE)  
L'HERMITAGE ROUGE (RED)  
L'HERMITAGE BLANC (WHITE)  
SAINT JOSEPH (RED)  
CLOS FLORENTIN SAINT JOSEPH (RED)

## Grape varieties planted

Syrah  
Marsanne  
Roussane

## Size of vineyard

26 hectares.

## Average age of the vines

The vast majority of the vines are over 50 years old. In Les Bessards, Les Rocoules and Peléat, many are over 80 years old.

## Location

The Chave residence and cellars are on the other side of the river from Hermitage, in the unremarkable village of Mauves, between Tournon and Cornas.

Almost all the Chave vineyards are in Hermitage, dotted all over the hill, with plots in 9 of the 18 climats. White grapes are grown in Les Rocoules, L'Hermite, Peléat and Maison Blanches. The backbone of the red blend comes from a significant 2 hectare holding in Les Bessards, supplemented by 6 other climats.

## Soils

Domaine Jean-Louis Chave's vineyards grow predominantly on granite soils, with small variations. Les Rocoules has clay-limestone, ideal for expressive white varieties.

## Viticulture & Winemaking

Domaine Jean-Louis Chave is renowned for its meticulous, traditional viticulture rooted in respect for terroir. The Chave family farms their parcels organically, emphasizing soil health and biodiversity without chemical fertilizers or herbicides. Each of the estate's many lieux-dits is tended individually, with work carried out by hand due to the steep slopes. Yields are kept low through careful pruning and green harvesting to ensure concentration and balance. Replanting is done with massal selections from old vines to preserve genetic diversity. The estate's philosophy centers on expressing the unique character of each site through attentive vineyard stewardship, allowing the Hermitage terroir to speak clearly in the wines.

**White:** the grapes are hand-picked when fully ripe (but not overripe). They are immediately pneumatically pressed, and settled for at least 24 hours, chilled if necessary. Fermentation is one third in cask, two thirds in stainless steel, at 20°C. After malolactic conversion, the young wines are racked off the lees, and the wines are transferred to barrel for around 18 months. New oak is avoided, except to replace damaged or leaking barrels. After blending, the wine is left to harmonize, and then lightly filtered (by gravity) before bottling.

**Red:** Chave is one of the latest to harvest, because he believes that tannin and extract are more important than acidity in giving the wine ageing ability. The grapes are usually destemmed to eliminate astringent tannins, but in ripe years, he may leave 50% of the stems. Fermentation and cuvaion lasts 2-3 weeks, with temperatures allowed to rise above 30°C, particularly at the end of the fermentation when extraction is critical. Chave uses a mixture of old open oak vats (with pigeage by foot), cement cuves and stainless steel, depending on the individual needs of each parcel. Malolactic fermentations takes place in vat or in cask, and press wine may or may not be blended back, depending on the year. The reds are aged 15-18 months in cask or in old Hungarian oak foudres of 1300 litres. A maximum of 10% new oak is used, but Chave prefers second-hand barrels which he buys from reputed winemakers. After careful racking, the blend is painstakingly assembled.