

Château de Beaucastel®

CHATEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE

The summer of 2020 saw a succession of long, warm days but not as hot as 2019, for example, cooling a little at night (and when the Mistral blew down the valley) and intermittent light rain allowing the grapes on the vines to develop fully with optimum freshness. The vintage has been described as generous both in terms of quality and quantity.

The harvest in the Beaucastel vineyards started quite early on August 26th with the white Côtes du Rhône in Coudoulet and continued until the end of September with the Mourvèdre at Beaucastel itself. The September weather offered idyllic harvest conditions so that each plot could be harvested at perfect maturity. Grapes were juicy and ripe with reasonable (but not excessive) alcohol levels, good acidity and already a great balance.

Marc Perrin summarised the vintage as 'one of the all-time classics; the wines have superb intensity, wonderful poise, finesse and elegance. When asked which vintages were similar, Marc referenced the greats of 1990 and 2010 noting that the wines will be enjoyable in their youth and also be great keepers. Certainly, these are both top vintages, good company to be in, indeed.

I wrote about the tasting at Beaucastel on my blog (October 27th) so here's the relevant extract:

First, the whites, all in the bottle already. **2020 Coudoulet Blanc** is the usual blend, by which I mean it contains a good amount of Viognier (not allowed in Châteauneuf-du-Pape, just about the only local variety that isn't) as well as Marsanne, Bourboulenc and Clairette. It is a classic Coudoulet Blanc: fresh and fruity with perky acidity and good length. I could drink this now quite happily. **£180 per case of 12 x 75cl IN BOND**

The red wine flight started with the three *cru* wines, first of all the **2020 Vinsobres "Les Hauts de Julien"**, a particular favourite when I am reaching for something a little less Grenache heavy. There is officially 50% Syrah here (maybe more but 50% is the legal limit) and it shows: there is oak evident but it cannot mask the delicious black fruit and the superb balance of the wine. Gorgeous. **£111 per case of 6 x 75cl IN BOND**

Of course, if it is Grenache you want, you can do little better than the **2020 Gigondas "Vielles Vignes L'Argnée"**. This is so pure and sweet but never

too much so. I am thinking of some of those Grenache wines which are so sweet you think you need to stop by the dentist after tasting them. This is not like that: it is about as perfect as a wine can be. The nose follows through perfectly to a rich palate, fantastic mouthfeel and great length. I would happily drink this now but I know it will continue to develop over several years so, if I can squirrel away a case for myself, it will be one of those wines I luxuriate in charting its progress over time. **£210 per case of 6x 75cl IN BOND**

After this, the **2020 Gigondas Domaine du Clos des Tourelles** had a harder time convincing me but it succeeded when I gave it a few swirls. At first, more reserved than L'Argnée, it opened up to reveal a more structured wine which offers, perhaps, a wider range of flavours and, potentially, greater longevity. There's plenty going on here; it just needs time. **£210 per case of 6 x 75cl IN BOND**

As mentioned, the **2020 Coudoulet Rouge** is a wine I could enjoy now. I think, after two heavily Grenache-based wines, the Mourvèdre element of Coudoulet combines so well with the Grenache to bring out a new dimension. Full on the nose, rounded and very smooth. Lovely. **£145 per case of 12 x 75cl IN BOND**

Then onto the **2020 Château de Beaucastel Châteauneuf-du-Pape Rouge**. If you don't like Mourvèdre, stop reading now. The heady perfume dominates the nose and then the palate of this dark, seriously lovely wine. Black, gamey fruit and liquorice. A "wow" wine which has every chance of being one of the most beautiful Beaucastels I have tasted. **£280 per case of 6x 75cl IN BOND**

We are also offering the delicious **2020 Vinsobres 'Cornuds'**, tasted subsequently. As always, this is a blend of Syrah and Grenache but, as with the Hauts de Julien cuvée, the Syrah is singing more loudly at present. Understandably less intense than its bigger sibling but this is, as usual, a lovely expression of what the southern Rhône does so well in its northernmost outreaches. **£72 per case of 12 x 75cl IN BOND**

If you would like to order any of the above wines, please email:
sales@bigredwine.co.uk