



KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

CLOS SAINT-JOSEPH

Country: France

Region: Provence

Appellation(s): Côtes de Provence

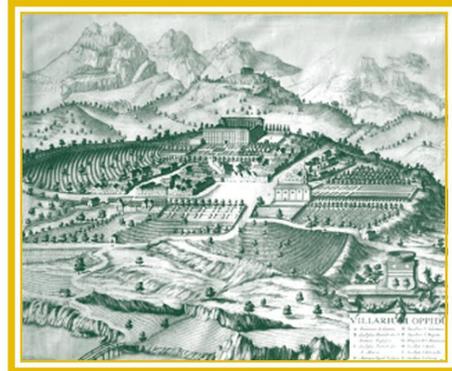
Producer: Roch Sassi

Founded: 1987

Annual Production: 1,650 cases

Farming: Biodynamic (practicing)

Villars-sur-Var



Clos Saint-Joseph

The picturesque stone village of Villars-sur-Var lies a thirty-minute drive north of Nice, in the heart of the Provençal pre-Alps. Perched high above the banks of the Var river and surrounded by massive limestone façades, the town is a small oasis of vineyards amid dense woodland and craggy bluffs: Villars has a long tradition of winemaking, and many residents still vinify a barrel or two every year for home consumption.

Roch Sassi of Clos Saint-Joseph (named for his great-grandfather) is the only grower to bottle any wine eked from these incredibly rocky slopes. His wines fall under the Côtes de Provence appellation, even though the much cooler *terroir* here has little relation to the rest of the AOC. Villars in fact represents an isolated enclave of Côtes de Provence that enjoys a unique microclimate, the dry heat buffered by cold air currents from the surrounding mountains. These conditions allow for full ripening at remarkably low alcohol levels, maintaining lively fruit and bright acidity in the wines.

A proud ambassador of Villars' winemaking history, Roch farms his five hectares organically and has also introduced biodynamic practices to the vineyard, such as the use of herbal preparations to boost the vines' immunity and ward off disease. Rigor in the vineyard means top-quality raw material and less need for intervention in the cellar: "I don't like working in the *cave*," Roch jokes. Accordingly, his wines are fermented naturally, he does not block malolactic fermentations, and he bottles without fining and minimal filtration.

In all three colors, it is the freshness and stoniness of this remote *terroir* that have the last word. The cellar-worthy reds express density with restraint; Syrah in particular shows a special affinity to the extreme environment of this less-traveled side of Provence. Roch's *blanc* combines a textural fullness with the precision and salinity all-too-often lacking in southern whites, while the rosé of Clos Saint-Joseph is what every Provençal rosé aspires to be: delicate, ethereal, and mouth-watering, with no lack of flesh.

Thanks to this rare combination of an exceptional *terroir* with meticulous, tasteful winemaking, it was love at first sniff with the wines of Clos Saint-Joseph.



CLOS SAINT-JOSEPH (continued)

<u>Wine</u>	<u>Blend</u>	<u>Vine Age</u>	<u>Soil Type</u>	<u>Vineyard Area*</u>
Côtes de Provence Blanc	40% Rolle, 30% Ugni blanc, 25% Sémillon, 5% Clairette	5, 30, and 90 years old	Clay, limestone	1.7 ha
Côtes de Provence Rosé	40% Grenache, 35% Mourvèdre, 15% Barbaroux, 5% Rolle, 5% varied	5 and 90 years old	Clay, limestone	0.5 ha
Côtes de Provence Rouge	50% Syrah, 20% Mourvèdre, 15% Grenache, 10% Cabernet-Sauvignon, 5% varied	5-10 years, 30-40 years, and 90 years old	Clay, limestone	2.5 ha
Côtes de Provence Syrah “Les Planches de la Gardivole”	98% Syrah, 2% Cabernet-Sauvignon	20 years average	Clay, limestone	0.5 ha
I.G.P. Méditerranée Rouge	50% Syrah, 30% Mourvèdre, 10% Grenache, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon	N/A	Clay, limestone	N/A
I.G.P. Alpes Maritimes Rouge “Grassenc”	Grassenc	Planted in 2010	Clay, limestone	0.35 ha

* “ha”=hectares; one hectare equals roughly two and a half acres

VITICULTURE / VINIFICATION

- Hand-harvested
- Rigorous sorting takes place in the vineyard during harvest
- Fermentation occurs naturally with indigenous yeasts

Rosé:

- 50% direct press, 50% *saignée*
- Fermented and aged in stainless steel tank for 6 months
- Wine completes malolactic fermentation



CLOS SAINT-JOSEPH (continued)

White:

- Ugni Blanc fermented in cement tanks
- Sémillon fermented in *barriques*
- Rolle fermented in *demi-muids*
- Aged in *barriques*, *demi-muids* and concrete tank for 6 months
- 10% new oak
- Wine completes malolactic fermentation

Reds:

- Fermentation in concrete tank
- Light pump-overs at beginning of fermentation followed by light punchdowns
- Côtes de Provence Rouge aged in *barriques* and *demi-muids* for 12 months
- Côtes de Provence Syrah aged in *demi-muids* for 18 months
- 15-20% new oak
- Unfined and unfiltered

I.G.P. Alpes Maritimes Rouge “Grassenc”:

- 50% of grapes are de-stemmed, 50% whole-cluster
- Light punchdowns
- Vinified in concrete tank
- Aged in *demi-muids* (5 years old) for 1 year

I.G.P. Méditerranée Rouge:

- In June 2017, a hail storm destroyed most of Clos Saint Joseph’s production of red grapes. A portion of this bottling comes from the domaine's vines, but the vast majority comes from donated grapes from a large group of Provence’s top growers (an organization called Rouge Provence, intended to create solidarity among growers and promote Provence’s historic red wines) including Domaine Tempier, Domaine Hauvette, and Domaine de la Tour du Bon. All these grapes come from different AOCs (Bandol, Les Baux, Coteaux d’Aix, Coteaux Varois, Côtes de Provence), which is why the wine’s designation is IGP Méditerranée instead of AOC Côtes de Provence.
- Fermentation in concrete tank
- Light pump-overs at beginning of fermentation followed by light punchdowns
- Aged 12 months in *barriques* and *demi-muids*
- No new *barriques*
- Unfined and unfiltered