

Côtes du Lubéron Cuvée le Châtaignier Rosé Domaine de la Citadelle 2006

In 1989, Yves Rousset-Rouard purchased an ancient Provençal farmhouse with 8 hectares of vines—situated on the northern slopes of the Luberon Mountains, at the confluence of the Rhône and the Durance rivers. Natural farming (no chemical fertilizers or herbicides), low yields, and strict selection of fruit at harvest have helped create elegant versions of the typical wines from this neglected appellation. His le Chatagnier rosé, based primarily on Cinsault, is delicate in texture with hints of cassis and raspberry on the nose and brighter acidity than might be expected from a rosé.

Regional History

Phocaean Greeks established viticulture in the Rhône as far back as 600 BC, but until the 14th century the wines were not seen outside the region. The establishment of the Avignonese Papacy (1305-1377) brought fame to the region's wine—so much so that their Burgundian neighbors to the north banned wines from the Rhône in 1446, a measure that effectively cut off trade with England and other Northern European markets for over 200 years. Stretching southward from Lyon to Avignon, the Rhône produces a wide variety of wines, with the appellations north of Valence producing the least (in volume), and the towns south of Montélimar producing prodigious amounts. As in other regions, the most interesting wines come from small farms. The Côtes du Lubéron, east of Avignon, gained its appellation in 1988. Though it is technically in the Rhône valley, its culture is strictly Provençal and the wines show the more open fruit and aromatics typical of Provence.

The marvelously varied cuisine of Provence and the Southern Rhône is defined—but not limited—by its geography. Proximity to the sea and the mountains often results in plates that combine fish and meat and produce, along with the ubiquitous olive tree. Two classic regional dishes reflect this diversity: *brandade* melds salt cod, potatoes, garlic, olive oil and fresh cream; *bouillabaisse* brings together local fish such as *racasse*, langoustine, skate, and squid, plus sausages, served in saffron-scented stews. Abundant game adorns restaurant menus: boar, duck, antelope, and rabbit (often as *rillettes*) are common plats du jour. Game birds like capon and pigeon are roasted with the wide variety of local herbs. Lamb, also a staple, sometimes appears in form of lamb *a la ficelle*, a leg hung by rope over an open flame. Anchovies from Collioure are eaten grilled and served with rosé. The distinctive olive oils produced here are blended with fresh olives and herbs to make *tapenade*.



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