

WHITE SAINT-JOSEPH SAINTE-ÉPINE

Single Vineyard



DE LAS
Vignobles de la Vallée du Rhône

APPELLATION

WHITE SAINT-JOSEPH

VINEYARDS : the Saint-Joseph vineyards stretch from Chavanay in the North, to Guilhaud in the south, over about fifty kilometers along the right bank of the Rhône: it covers 23 "communes" in the Ardèche region, and 3 in the Loire.

SOILS : the soils consist of light schist and gneiss over a granite bedrock.

CLIMATE : the climate is moderately continental, with hot and dry summers, and normal rainfall the rest of the year.

EXPOSURE : south and south-east.

HISTORY : this wine was reputed in the 16th century for its delicacy, and was poured at the table of the kings of France. It was the Jesuits (a monk community) of Tournon who gave the area its current name, in the 17th century. Between 1956 and 1969, all the vineyards from this area which used to be named "Côtes du Rhône" were regrouped and established under the appellation Saint-Joseph.

SURFACE AREA UNDER PRODUCTION : 1,095 hectares (2 705 acres), for an annual crop of 40,000 hectolitres (444,444 cases). Authorized maximum yield is 40 hectolitres/ hectare (2.3 US tons/acre).

CHARACTERISTICS

The cuvee is a vineyard plot selection planted on granite and decomposed granite. Grapes come exclusively from the plot known as Sainte-Épine, planted on steep, south facing terraces along the Sainte-Épine Valley. The name "Sainte-Épine" ("Holy Thorn") refers to the legend of an old templar settlement located in this area where supposedly a thorn of Christ's holy Crown of Thorns was brought back from the crusades. Grape varieties: 40 year old marsanne vines.

WINE MAKING

This wine is made in a very traditional approach. The grapes are harvested by hand and immediately pressed. The must is non-protectively handled (i.e. no use of dry ice and no sulphur until after 'débouillage'). On the contrary, the must is hyperoxidized and left to settle overnight.

MATURING

After a light 'débouillage', the wine is filled into one year old "allier oak" and left to ferment at its own pace over several weeks, letting the ferment increasing in temperature. A full malolactic fermentation and a light bâtonnage contribute to adding amazing length and texture to this wine.

TASTING NOTES

The appeal of this wine lies as much in its unique balance between freshness and secondary aromatic complexity, as in its soft, velvety, yet dense texture and incredible length.

FOOD AND WINE PAIRING

Poularde with chanterelles, capon with morels, partridge in a light sherry sauce... Selected cheese, as well...

