



KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

DOMAINE MONIER

Country: France

Region: Rhône

Appellation(s): Vin de Pays des Collines Rhodaniennes, Saint Joseph

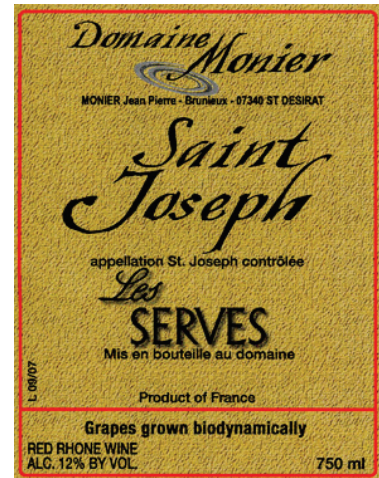
Producer: Jean-Pierre Monier

Founded: 2001

Annual Production: 2,500 cases

Farming: Organic (since 1996), Biodynamic (certified since 2007)

Website: N/A



Jean-Pierre Monier is as happy and as grateful a *vigneron* as one finds. His small production wines certainly have not made him wealthy (far from it), but his effortless calm, natural sensitivity, and quiet conviction give him an enviable air of simplicity. He is the third generation of his family to be farming in Brunieux, a *lieu-dit* in the hills above the village of St-Désirat in the Northern Rhône appellation of Saint Joseph. Like his forefathers, wine is only part of his farm's overall production. Apricot orchards complement the vineyards, and everything is farmed biodynamically. Between 1977-2001, Jean-Pierre sold his fruit to the local *cave cooperative* in St-Désirat, but the noticeable quality his vines were producing was enough to encourage him to bottle wines under his own label. Heavily influenced by the teaching and research of the German biodynamic guru, Maria Thun, Jean-Pierre earned certification in 2006.

Northern Rhône expert, John Livingstone-Learmonth has developed a category for select *vignerons* of the region called STGT (Soil to Glass Transfer), of which Domaine Monier is a part. He explains, in his definitive classic, *The Wines of the Northern Rhône*,

This is a numerically small group, one that has survived the onslaught of marketing campaigns, press hype, fashions in winemaking, and wine school orthodoxies. There are a few other domaines that occasionally turn out unfettered wines in the STGT vein, but without the consistency. A sincere wish, of course, is that this group should grow in the coming years. (xiv)

With only five hectares of land to farm, all on gentle, higher altitude slopes, one might question the interest in working by such stringent standards. For a joyful artisan like Jean-Pierre, purity and authenticity are paramount, and his viticultural methodology is merely the most genuine manifestation of these ideals.



DOMAINE MONIER (continued)

<u>Wine</u>	<u>Blend</u>	<u>Vine Age</u>	<u>Soil Type</u>	<u>Vineyard Area*</u>
Vin de Pays des Collines Rhodaniennes “Marsanne”	90% Marsanne 10% Viognier	6-30 years	Granite	.35 ha
Vin de Pays des Collines Rhodaniennes “Viognier”	Viognier		Granite	.3 ha
Saint Joseph <i>Blanc</i>	Marsanne	30-35 years	Granite, Loess	.73 ha
Vin de Pays des Collines Rhodaniennes “Syrah”	Syrah	6-30 years	Granite	.7 ha
Saint Joseph <i>Rouge</i>	Syrah	15-30 years	Granite, Loess	5.47 ha
Saint Joseph “Terre Blanche”	Syrah	33 years	Granite	1.1 ha
Saint Joseph “Les Serves”	Syrah	33 years	Granite, Loess	.55 ha
Saint Joseph “Chatêlet”	Syrah	15 years	Granite, Loess	.61 ha
Saint Joseph “Laliefine”	Syrah	N/A	Granite, Loess	N/A

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

VITICULTURE / VINIFICATION

Starting with the 2008 vintage, Jean-Pierre Monier entered into a working relationship with Philippe Perréol to combine their resources in order to meet the increasing market demand. Perréol works his vines just like Monier. They currently have three labels, depending on vineyard origin and legal reporting requirements: Domaine Monier, Domaine Perréol, and Domaine Monier-Perréol.

Whites:

- Grapes are pressed, then fermented in cement, egg-shaped *cuvés*
- Wines are raked into 1-3 year-old barrels
- Wines age anywhere from 4 months to 1 year, depending on the vintage

Reds:

- All reds ferment in temperature-controlled cement *cuvés*
- Wines age for 1 year in *tonneaux* (except for the Saint Joseph “Les Serves,” which ages in both new barrels and 1-3 year-old barrels)
- Saint Joseph “Laliefine” is made from the concentrated juice that’s been resting on the lees from each barrel. This *cuvée* has the most intense contact with the lees of all the wines. The wine is decanted off the lees and is aged for 3 months before bottling



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DOMAINE MONIER (continued)

MISCELLANEOUS

Monsieur Monier likes farming. He lives in humble splendor way up in the hills above the Rhône River surrounded by cherry, apricot, and peach orchards, grapevines he farms biodynamically, birdies singing, and bees a-buzzin'. He is living the life of a 19th-century vigneron. Monier told me that he had it figured out: he makes about three dollars an hour in his little winery. "But I'm so happy," he said.

His is an almost regal Saint Joseph, loaded with character and luscious, juicy Syrah fruit.

Kermit Lynch