



KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

DOMAINE LA ROQUÈTE

Country: France

Region: Rhône

Appellation(s): Châteauneuf-du-Pape

Producer: Frédéric & Daniel Brunier

Founded: 1986

Annual Production: N/A

Farming: Lutte raisonnée

Website: www.vieux-telegraphe.fr



In September 1986, René Laugier wanted to retire but had no successors to take over La Roquette (as it was then known), his domaine in Châteauneuf-du-Pape. When Daniel and Frédéric Brunier bought the domaine, it was a logical choice. The Brunier brothers had been proving their worth as rising young stars of the appellation. The Bruniers had a long history of working tough soils—they farm the La Crau plateau, which boasts some of the most challenging vineyard terrain and most pedigreed soils of Châteauneuf. Daniel and Frédéric farm twenty-nine hectares of vineyards at La Roquette, each parcel with its own distinct identity.

At Châteauneuf, for many the greatest appellation of the Southern Rhône, vineyard specificity plays a role almost as critical as it does in Burgundy. Geography here is as important as geology. La Roquette's three largest vineyards are all situated on prime real estate along the Piélong plateau, a high altitude location north of the village of Châteauneuf-du-Pape with similar soil and weather patterns as *La Crau*. Adjoining vineyards *La Roquette* and *Pignan* are situated to the east, at the foot of the *Piélong*, adjacent to the western end of the famous *Le Rayas* vineyard. *Galets roulés* scatter the vineyard floor, but the elegance of the wines is most attributed to the sand in the soil. To the southwest of the village is the vineyard *Colombis*, where a thin topsoil of clay gently covers a bedrock of hard limestone.

The combination of these three vineyards imparts a surprising finesse—only surprising in contrast to the earthy, deeply structured style of Vieux Télégraphe. John Livingstone-Learmonth quotes Frédéric Brunier in his classic *The Wines of the Rhône*, “ ‘Daniel and I can make wines of similar aromas, but here there is less tannin, less alcohol and less general power – that’s the nature of the *domaine*.’ ” The Brunier brothers have made great strides since taking over in 1986. The elegance and velvety texture in these wines make them easy to appreciate in their youth, with generous, rich, red fruit, uncharacteristic freshness, and beautifully integrated tannins. Their impeccable balance is extraordinary in such a warm climate. Its finesse and drinkability make it *the* Châteauneuf-du-Pape for restaurant lists and for those wine lovers who do not have a cellar for aging.

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DOMAINE LA ROQUÈTE (continued)

<u>Wine</u>	<u>Blend</u>	<u>Vine Age</u>	<u>Soil Type</u>	<u>Vineyard Area*</u>
Châteauneuf-du-Pape Blanc “Clos La Roquette” (fruit sourced from <i>lieu-dit La Roquette</i>)	35% Clairette 35% Roussanne 30% Grenache Blanc	21 years	Sand on red clay and <i>galets roulés</i>	2 ha
Châteauneuf-du-Pape Rouge (fruit sourced from 4 <i>lieux-dits</i> : <i>Piélong, La Roquette, Colombis, and Pignan</i>)	70% Grenache 20% Syrah 10% Mourvèdre	45 years average		27 ha
Châteauneuf-du-Pape “L’Accent de La Roquette” (fruit sourced from 2 <i>lieux-dits</i> : <i>Piélong and Pignan</i>)	<i>Approximately</i> 90% Grenache 10% Mourvèdre	60 years		

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

VITICULTURE / VINIFICATION

- Grapes are sustainably farmed
- Harvested by hand
- Two rigorous sortings of grapes following the harvest
- Grapes are pressed gently by pneumatic press

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Blanc “Clos La Roquette” :

- 25% of grapes fermented in *cuve*, 75% in *barrisques* and *demi-muids*
- Wine ages in *cuves* and in barrel for 7 months before bottling

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Rouge :

- 50% of grapes are sourced from *Piélong*, 30% from *La Roquette* and *Colombis*, 20% from *Pignan*
- Grapes are partially de-stemmed
- Traditional fermentation lasts 25-30 days in temperature-controlled cement *cuves*
- Wine rests in *cuves* for 10 months, and then ages for another 10-12 months in 50-70 hl-*foudres*
- Bottled unfiltered after 20-22 months of aging

Châteauneuf-du-Pape “L’Accent de La Roquette” :

- Cuvée is a proprietary tribute to Grenache, the King of the Southern Rhône; fruit is sourced from old-vines Grenache in two *lieux-dits*: *Piélong* and *Pignan*
- Only 4,000 bottles produced in only the finest vintages
- Grapes are partially de-stemmed
- Traditional fermentation lasts for 30 days in temperature-controlled cement *cuves*
- Wine rests for the first year in *cuves*, and then ages for another year in 30 hl-*foudre*
- Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered after 2 years of aging