



— LOUIS BERNARD —

HARVEST 2017

Limited quantity, a vintage that promises to be high in quality

Sylvain Jean, the head winemaker, is the guarantor of the « Louis Bernard » style, which is very much focused on **Grenache**, the king of grape varieties in the **southern Rhône Valley**. He explains the main characteristics of the 2017 vintage:

'... a record small harvest resulting in **concentrated wines**, a vintage very promising in quality'.

2017 is one of the most atypical vintages we've ever seen due to high temperatures with no rain during the growth cycle until the harvest. There were no disease issues of any kind. In the southern Rhône, wines suffered severe "*coulure*" (poor flowering resulting in poor fruit-set) affecting the Grenache. This coulure, coupled with drought conditions, resulted in yields that were down 30% to 50% depending on the appellation. **Older vines** were not affected by the drought conditions thanks to their deep root network and ability to find sufficient humidity deep underground.

"Our various winegrower partners in the Rhône Valley were very successful at adapting to the particular conditions of the 2017 vintage".

We started harvesting the **Viognier and Roussanne** grapes quite early, around 20th-22nd August, and ended with **Mourvèdre** around the end of September. "We made several trips to the vineyards to taste the grapes and the juice", explains Sylvain. "It was essential to preserve the aromatic potential of the **white grapes** under these unusual conditions". The results have turned out **wonderfully**.

The **rosés** were kept under constant observation to ensure they retained their pale colour and freshness.

The harvest produced small bunches, small berries with thick skins, very promising for great **red wines**. "We played around with the Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre blends to strike the perfect balance", continues Sylvain. The alcoholic and malolactic fermentation operations were quickly set in motion. "Again the wines are excellent, uber-aromatic and promising, coated in silky and elegant tannins".

"We learned some lessons from the 2013 vintage. We didn't do as much blending and prioritised aeration so the tannins softened as much as possible". In the end, alcohol levels are reasonable and acidity is fresh, providing wines with beautiful balance.

At **Château Noël Saint Laurent**, the Viognier has notes of apricot and the White Grenache offers "pêche de vigne" (vine peach) flavours. The red grapes offer very intense colours and a great tannic richness.

At **Domaine la Crau des Papes** in Châteauneuf du Pape, the tastings of the first wines show very perfumed and well-balanced character, suggesting a great vintage for wines with considerable ageing potential.

The small yields could lead to increased prices for what looks like a very good, ageworthy vintage.

In Provence, the yield was also down, with small berries and high concentration.

The 2017 vintage is expected to be outstanding.



SYLVAIN JEAN
OUR WINEMAKER