

Château de Beaucastel

Among the prominent people in the town of Courthezon during the sixteenth century was the Beaucastel family. In 1549, “Noble Pierre de Beaucastel” bought “a barn with its land holdings, containing 25 saumées at Coudoulet”. More than four centuries later, this remarkable domaine, known today at Château de Beaucastel, is producing what most people acknowledge to be the finest wines of Châteauneuf-du-Pape.

In 1903, a young chemical engineer and mathematics professor named Pierre Perrin, together with his father-in-law, began to restore the domaine following the ravages of phylloxera. His son, Jacques Perrin, took over the domaine in 1953 and introduced many innovations such as improved grape varietals, integrated pest control, and a flash-heat exchanger.

Today, the third and fourth generations of Perrins, François and Jean-Pierre and Jean-Pierre’s sons Pierre, Marc and Thomas, continue in the tradition of their father and grandfather. The vineyards of Beaucastel are treated as a garden: no chemical fertilizer, no chemical weed killers or sprays are permitted. Organic fertilizer comes from compost and only a minimum of traditional sulphur-copper spray is used in the vineyards.

The vineyard is planted in all the traditional grapes of Châteauneuf-du-Pape: Grenache, Mourvèdre, Syrah, Cinsault, Vaccarese, Counoise, Terret Noir, Muscardin, Clairette, Picpoul, Picardin, Bourboulenc, and Roussanne. For their red wines, Mourvèdre has the largest percentage (over 30%), followed by



Grenache (30%), Counoise, Syrah, and Cinsault. All thirteen varieties may be used in the final blend.

Château de Beaucastel Blanc is made from an unusually high percentage (80%) Roussanne, the rest Bourboulenc, Clairette, and Grenache. No other estate in Châteauneuf-du-Pape uses this much Roussanne for its white nor as much Mourvèdre for its red.

Château de Beaucastel Blanc Vieilles Vignes is 100% Roussanne from vines that are at least 65 years old. “Has the palate presence of a great grand cru Burgundy.” *Stephen Tanzer, International Wine Cellar.*



Jean-Pierre, François, Matthieu, Pierre, Marc and Thomas Perrin



The yields at Beaucastel are extremely low. The appellation limit is 35 hectoliters per hectare, although at Beaucastel the average is well below that limit. Each variety is harvested separately to ensure optimum maturity.

When the harvest at Beaucastel arrives in the cellar, it is carefully culled by hand to eliminate any flawed grapes. It is destemmed and the harvest is flash-heated to help the transfer of aromas and color and avoid the addition of the SO₂ usual in classical vinification. The grapes are then immediately cooled and the vinification is traditional: fermentation on the skins for fifteen days, racking of the free run juice, emptying out of the pumice and pressing.

Each variety is vinified separately to maintain its own character and originality, and when fermentation is finished, each wine is carefully tasted before making a single blend. The wine is then transferred to large oak barrels to age for approximately one and a half years before bottling. The wines are unfinned and unfiltered, and after only two or three years in the bottle, will throw a sediment, making decanting necessary. 100% of Beaucastel wines are estate-bottled, and since 1980 and the construction of a large underground cellar, the entire vintage is *mis en bouteille* at the same time, thereby preventing any bottle variation in a vintage.

“The results are stunning. The red wine is usually a black/ruby or purple color, loaded with layers of fruit, tannins, and a multitude of fascinating scents and aromas...age, usually a minimum of six to ten years, brings forth its majestic richness and compelling array of aromas.” *Robert M. Parker, Jr. The Wines of the Rhône Valley and Provence*

In very exceptional years, beginning in 1989, a special cuvée in honor of Jean Pierre and François' father has been made. The Château de Beaucastel Hommage à Jacques Perrin is a special selection of the best of a great vintage, yielding small quantities of intensely ripe and concentrated wines that are truly unforgettable – “...a modern-day classic.” *Robert M. Parker, Jr.*