

# Southern Rhône 2007

Rhône's 2007s have been widely heralded. Our trio of Beaufort-de-Venise, Gigondas and Vacqueyras should offer sinewy, spicy fruit says **JOHN LIVINGSTONE-LEARMONTH**

**G**rowers in the Southern Rhône are happy with their 2007s, which were simple to vinify, giving moderate levels of tannin and wines that are immediately easy to appreciate. Certainly they have been much appreciated by the trade, who have hyped the vintage, in conjunction with the big US critics. Interest has been intense. But do the wines live up to the billing?

A super September was key in 2007, saving the day, with the bonus of a Mistral wind before and during harvest, helping grapes avoid the rot that had loomed. My early impressions were that they don't have the tannic spine of the '05s and are fuller than the '06s. Their peak period will be from now to 2018.

## SOUTHERN RHÔNE REDS: KNOW YOUR VINTAGES

**2008** Lightly fruited wines, agreeable but not blockbusters

**2007** Lots of fruit and sound tannic support. Very enjoyable wines.

**2006** The wines have sinew, body, can be a little heady. Good to very good.

**2005** Excellent. Wines with clear fruit, crisp tannins; classic year to lay down.

**2004** Good wines now showing well. Lack the depth of the best years.

**2003** Big, rumbustious wines. Dry tannins have started to soften.

**2002** Sound, likeable wines, unjustly dismissed as poor. Drink now.

**2001** Very good. Poised, elegant wines, good fruit and energy. Can live well.

**2000** True Grenache expression. Good to very good. Many now mature.

### FAST FACTS

**Beaufort-de-Venise** 545ha (hectares) for red wine; 50% minimum Grenache, 25% Syrah, 20% maximum Mourvèdre, Cinsault; 5% white grapes

**Gigondas** 1,230ha for red and rosé; 80% max Grenache, 15% min Syrah, Mourvèdre, 10% max Cinsault and white grapes

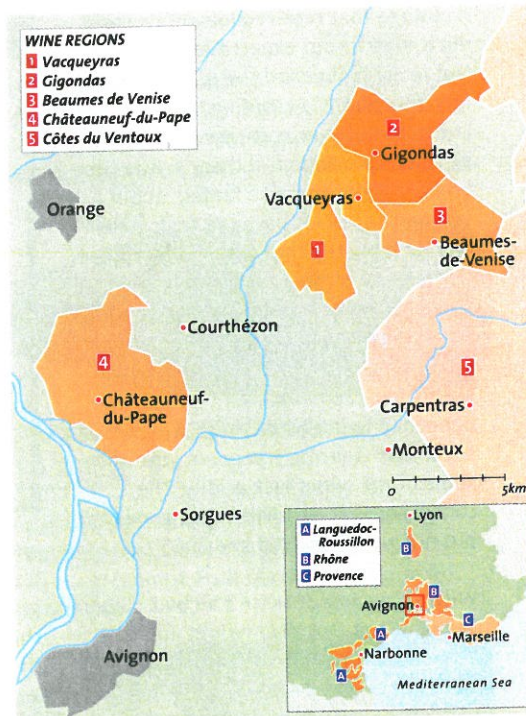
**Vacqueyras** 1,395ha for red, white and rosé; 50% min Grenache, 20% min Syrah, Mourvèdre, 10% max Cinsault

The portents were certainly good for Gigondas and 2007: a vineyard with a late-ripening profile and a vintage that fumbled to success late in the ripening season. The same for Beaufort-de-Venise, also late to ripen, and split from Gigondas by the Dentelles de Montmirail, with even higher vineyards at up to 550 metres.

Vacqueyras is different, with its core vineyard the classic sand and stony red clay-limestone plateau of Les Garrigues – provider of robust Grenache. It ripens earlier than its neighbours, and the wines have a willing potency. Any blip in August weather is more of a setback here, so it, too, had catching up to do in 2007 after indifferent weather.

Gigondas has the highest profile. Split into three zones, Gigondas also has a clay-limestone garrigue area, running from the village towards the Ouvèze, its poor terrain offering spicy, robust wines. Nearer the village there is more sand, silt and limestone, bringing refined, smooth wines. Lastly, there is the high Dentelles zone with a clipped, peppery style. Blend these and the result is a firm, sinewed wine with gracious fruit. Modern, late cropping and long maceration have softened the wines further, so traditional styles need longer bottle ageing. These days many can live up to 15 years, but an increasing number are aimed at fast consumption, and young oak is creeping in.

While Gigondas achieved its own appellation in 1971, Vacqueyras had to wait until 1990. Part of the area had been fruit producing, so wine culture was in a



more novice state. Made from 1,395ha, the wines have gained in poise over the past decade. There is more of the open book about Vacqueyras – the wines' inherent punch and fibre is apparent, with often a more overt, red fruit and pepper spice. They should be good value, but prices have crept up in recent years.

Beaufort-de-Venise first broke through internationally with its fortified Muscat, and the red wine, made across 545ha, only got full appellation status in 2004. It comes from four communes, three of which are hamlets, tucked behind the Dentelles. Beyond the limestone soil influences are deposits of red and yellow Triassic clay, producing wines high in alcohol and full-on in style that can be too potent for their own good if care is not taken. At their best, leathery, sinewed textures infuse the black fruits, while fine tannins need a few years to round out. Bouquets are spicy and earthy. **D**

## THE TASTERS

**Gearoid Devaney, sommelier, Sarment Wines; Jonathan Kinns, director, Winegrowers Direct; Isabelle Legeron MW, wine journalist & educator; John Livingstone-Learmonth, DWWA Rhône Regional Chair; Andrew Shaw, buyer, Waitrose; Steven Spurrier, Decanter consultant editor; David Wainwright fine wine consultant**

**'Great value, great terroir'**

**Steven Spurrier**

Turn the page to see the results



# Southern Rhône 2007: the results

Not as good as the hype suggested and a bit inconsistent, but wines still fêted by our panel for their value and consumer friendliness, finds **CHRISTELLE GUIBERT**

## A vintage that received lots of hype but did it match your expectations?

Not really, bemoaned the panel, citing a few 'deceptions'. According to John Livingstone-Learmonth, the wines from all three appellations did not justify such acclaim. 'Once there's a fanfare about a vintage, the wines have got to do a hell of a lot to justify that. It's a good vintage but not one of wholesale greatness.'

Steven Spurrier also felt the hype about 2007 was misplaced. David Wainwright made a good comparison: 'This vintage seems to be reminiscent of what happened in Bordeaux in 2003 – 2007 in the Rhône was also a very hot year and some of the wines lack acidity.' The consensus was that this was a good year but not great like 2001 and 2005.

## With six awards, it wasn't all bad, surely?

Certainly not. But Wainwright and Gearoid Devaney cited a 'rollercoaster of consistency'. Wainwright added: 'There was lots of variation but the really good wines were fantastic, with an avalanche of ripe fruit.' Livingstone-Learmonth agreed: 'When they are good, these are fleshy wines that immediately deliver.' The tasters felt inconsistencies were down to the winemaker more than the region. 'These appellations haven't been invaded by swarms of formula-making consultants telling producers how to make homogeneous wines,' said Livingstone-Learmonth, 'so you at least have individuality, which can result in inconsistencies in picking time, ageing and oakings.' Spurrier was positive: 'These appellations are very encouraging works in progress. Looking at the past 10 years, Gigondas and Vacqueyras have improved tremendously.' Wainwright said if there was a downside it lay in some producers trying too hard in the cellar rather than letting the vineyards speak for themselves.

## How pronounced were the differences in style and which cru stood out?

Although it won no Awards, the youngest cru was the favourite. 'Beaumes-de-Venise was consistent – a real surprise,' said Wainwright. Devaney wondered if the hot weather allowed these high-altitude

## THE SCORES:

107 WINES TASTED		
★★★★★ Decanter Award	6	
Outstanding (18.5–20pts)		
★★★★★ Highly recommended	14	
Very good to excellent (16.5–18.49pts)		
★★★★ Recommended	69	
Good (14.5–16.49pts)		
★★	16	
Fair (12.5–14.49pts)		
★	2	
Poor (10.5–12.49pts)		
Faulty	0	
£		
Good value (under £13)	19	

wines to show better. Livingstone-Learmonth agreed: 'In some years the greenness of Beaumes-de-Venise comes through but in 2007 they benefited from the heat, so the alcohol is more absorbed.' In the other appellations, Andrew Shaw found Gigondas very modern, fleshy and oaky with a tapenade character, while Spurrier described them as 'masculine and stony'. Vacqueyras for Shaw had more definition, with white pepper and spice notes. Spurrier found them 'fleshy and homogeneous' while Wainwright liked the 'ripe fleshy cherry jam fruit'.

## What about drinkability – when should we open these wines?

The panel was divided. Those going for the drink-sooner approach included

Shaw, who said: 'The Grenache-based wines are consumer friendly, with some ready for immediate consumption.' Wainwright added 'a few will be better in the next three to four years but they wouldn't be wines I'd cellar for longer'. Devaney also recommended to drink them young – 'perhaps another two to four years when they're still showing some of that nice ripe fruit and while the acidity is there'. But Spurrier strongly disagreed: 'These wines are made to age. I have some wines from the '80s and '90s in my cellar which are absolutely wonderful. There's ageability in these wines that should not be ignored by trying to make them consumer friendly.'

## So are they good buys or not?

The panel was unanimous. 'They offer great value on restaurant wine lists,' said Devaney. 'They are wines to enjoy with food. Now we're in winter, these wines will perform well with richer dishes such as game.' But Livingstone-Learmonth dealt a warning – 'It's a stock picker's vintage, not an "everything's a good buy" vintage, so take all the independent advice like this you can get.' He said many wines are delivering now and all will be enhanced by food, setting them apart from the Côtes du Rhône-Villages. The judges agreed that part of the charm of these appellations was that most wines were less than £18, representing real value and perfect buys for Christmas.

## So a step up from generic Côtes du Rhône-Villages but are they in the same league as Châteauneuf-du-Pape?

A bad question to ask Rhône experts. 'These wines are very different to Châteauneuf-du-Pape and cannot be compared!' retorted Livingstone-Learmonth. A view echoed by many, while Spurrier was more diplomatic: 'Châteauneuf-du-Pape is becoming very expensive, whereas these appellations really represent the Rhône Valley, and are great value, great terroir wines.'

*We have just completed our 2007 Châteauneuf-du-Pape panel tasting. Look out for a full report in the March issue*

## BEST VALUE

**DOMAINE RASPAIL-AY, GIGONDAS (18.88)**

★★★★★ £  
£12.16–£12.95

'Bouquet forming gradually: some grilled notes, black fruit, leather tang – great potential. Good black fruit present, nice juiciness backed by lively tannins. Fruit persists on aftertaste. From 2010.' (JL-L) L&W, Sav







## DECANTER AWARD WINNERS ★★★★★



### GIGONDAS LA CAVE, L'INTENSE, GIGONDAS

(19.13pts/20)

N/A UK

'Very good black fruits, with a touch of leather and chocolate. Good spice and depth of fruit and firm grip. A serious vineyard wine, full of vigour and personality. From 2010.' (SS)

[www.cave-gigondas.fr](http://www.cave-gigondas.fr)



### DOMAINE DU TERME, GIGONDAS (19)

N/A UK

'Ample bouquet of sweet-toned blackberries. The fruit is modern, ripe and wholesome. Plenty of early palate display; quietens, then gains some grip and tannin later. Fleshy, forward Gigondas that delivers well. From 2010.' (JL-L) +33 4 90 65 80 29



### DOMAINE DE LA TOURADE, FONT DES AIEUS, GIGONDAS (18.92)

£14.95 (2006)

'Pure, bold, sweet spice and dense cherry nose. Complex black olive, lavender and spice palate, tannins a touch coarse, but good power and great complexity. From 2010.' (AS) Stockist: FVD



### DOMAINE RASPAIL-AY, GIGONDAS (18.88)

£12.16–£12.95

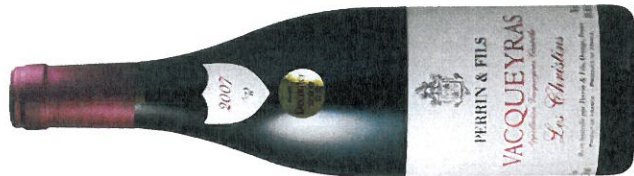
'Bouquet forming gradually: some grilled notes, black fruit, leather tang – great potential. Good black fruit present, nice juiciness backed by lively tannins. Fruit persists on aftertaste. From 2010.' (JL-L) L&W, Sav



### CLOS DU JONCUAS, LA FONT DE PAPIER, VACQUEYRAS (18.75)

N/A UK

'Fresh, promising, elegant cherry nose. Nice palate of tight, black cherry and black olive – not overripe but still fresh with a long finish. Very good potential. From 2010.' (JK) +33 4 90 65 86 86



### PERRIN & FILS, LES CHRISTINS, VACQUEYRAS (18.7)

£16–£18

'Bold, dense, black, leathery fruit. Simple but good. Brooding, dense, chewy, powerful, mouthcoating tannins, great structure. Damson fruit, lavender, garrigue. Long; a keeper. From 2010.' (AS) Ave, BBR, Cmb, Jer, Lay, SWC, WSo



## HIGHLY RECOMMENDED ★★★★★



### CHATEAU REDORTIER, GIGONDAS (17pts/20)

£17.95

'Rounded, ripe Grenache: black cherry with smoky liquorice notes. A fleshy wine with a note of restraint from the tannins. Peppery and broad. Decant in its early years. From 2010.' (JL-L) Stockist: Rbs



### DOMAINE BRUSSET, TRADITION, LE GRAND MONTMIRAIL, GIGONDAS (17)

£13.95

'Black cherry, smoke and game nose. Earthy, slight oak on palate. Black fruit gains energy, tannins and power. Good, local stamp. From 2010.' (JL-L) BRW



### DOMAINE DES AMOURIERS, SIGNATURE, VACQUEYRAS (17)

£15.95 (2006)

'Promising, fresh and elegant. Well-judged oak. Tight, poised structured and intense: black cherry, minerality, dense, complex and long finish. Tight, very well made. Elegant. From 2010.' (IL) Whd



4 STAR WINES

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED (cont'd...) ★★★★★



**DOMAINE DES PASQUIERS, GIGONDAS (17)**

£17.99

'Fabulous nose – rich and concentrated. Rich, sweet maturity, complex red fruit and ripe garrigue on palate. Great length, with great complexity. From 2010.' (JK)

Stockists: CnE, Ess



**DOMAINE DU BOIS DES MEGES, GIGONDAS (17)**

N/A UK

'Intense, black fruits, spice, smoke and minerals. Rich, ripe, full bodied, black cherry, spices, tar, glycerol, garrigue herbs and medium tannin, long finish, complex. From 2010.' (GD) +33 4 90 70 92 95



**DOMAINE LA BOUISSIERE, LA FONT DE TONIN, GIGONDAS (17)**

£26

'Nice, ripe and spicy nose with red and black fruit. Good balance on palate: structured, elegant, rich and clean. Has nice, light touch – all class and structure. From 2010.' (JK) Mnt



**CAVE DE RASTEAU, LA FONT DES GRIERES, GIGONDAS (17)**

£9.99

'Heady, spicy, candied pure cherry fruit and floral nose. Old-fashioned Gigondas: sweet spice, cherry and pepper. Chewy structure, deliciously true – a keeper. From 2010.' (AS) PLB



**MONTIRIUS LE CLOS, VACQUEYRAS (17)**

£14

'Fine, ripe, berry fruit, plus garrigue spice. Rich, fleshy, and the tannins hold the fruit. Smooth and rounded, yet vigorous, with lots of energy and very good length. From 2010.' (SS) BBR



**DOMAINE CECILE CHASSAGNE, GIGONDAS (16.75)**

£14.99

'Bold, tapenade and authentic sweet black cherry fruit. Great complexity. Floral, ripe, sumptuous, savoury notes: wild boar and tapenade. Head and long – great. From 2010.' (AS) Wis



**VIGNERONS DE CARACTERE, ETERNITE, VACQUEYRAS (16.75)**

£16.99

'Aromas of black fruits, sweet spice, meaty and intense with a vanilla touch. Dark, dense and intense cherry fruit – spicy, oaky, smoky and long. From 2012.' (GD) PLB

**'There was lots of variation but the really good wines were fantastic, with an avalanche of ripe fruit'**

David Wainwright



**CHATEAU DE ST-COSME, GIGONDAS (16.67)**

£16.95–£24.99

'Ripe and rich black fruits, with lovely freshness and balance. Ripe and supple concentration with good balance and length. From 2010.' (JK) BRW, Dec, WnW



**DOMAINE DU GRAPILLON D'OR, GIGONDAS (16.67)**

£15.50–£18.99

'Fine, pure, dark plum aroma. Nice meaty plum fruit, warm and roasted notes. Chewy tannins. Good length of flavour. Will need a year or two to settle. From 2011.' (DW) HvN, Mnt



**DOMAINE LA FOURMONE, TRESOR POETE, VACQUEYRAS (16.67)**

£12.11 (2005)

'Fresh, red cherry fruit and a candied nose. Touch leathery, coarse, concentrated, fleshy enjoyment, serious; earthy undertones. Long. From 2010.' (AS) Net





































**PERRIN & FILS, LA GILLE, GIGONDAS (16.67)**

£18–£20
































'Very good crushed black fruits and garrigue herbs. Big and plummy with good tannin back up, smooth, yet vigorous, succulent fruit, all in balance. From 2010.' (SS) Ave, BBR, Cmb, Jer, Lay, SWC, WSO



RECOMMENDED ★★★			Drinkability	Stockist	Mean score
Wine name	Price	Tasting note			
Domaine du Terme, Vacqueyras	N/A UK	'Full, intense, extracted style with oak structure and spiciness. Dark cherry fruit, chunky tannins, long mocha/violet finish. From 2010.' (IL)		+33 4 90 65 80 29	16.4/20
Domaine St-Pierre, Vacqueyras	N/A UK	'Black cherry, spices, lavender, herbs, menthol. Big, rich middle, juicy, dense, spiced black fruits, smooth, long finish, oaky. From 2010.' (GD)		www.domaine-saintpierre.fr	16.4
Domaine Brusset, Les Hauts de Montmirail, Gigondas	£19.85	'Rich, ripe, concentrated black fruit. Good balance, very rich and lots of body. Good acidity and complexity. From 2010.' (JK)		BRW	16.33
Domaine des Espiers, Tradition, Gigondas	£15.75	'Warm, spicy, earthy. Top-notch, spicy plum fruit. Warm, ripe and chewy tannins, yet with plenty of flesh. Tasty stuff. From 2010.' (DW)		SVS	16.33
Gabriel Meffre, Domaine de Longue Toque, Vacqueyras	N/A UK	'Fresh, bright, deep cherry fruit, with black olive. Ripe and concentrated. Nice purity and grip. Balanced and racy. Still tight. From 2010.' (JK)		www.gabriel-meffre.com	16.33
Ogier, Les Truffiers, Vacqueyras	£8.99 	'Grilled, black fruits, olives, liquorice, game and herbs. Good quality and local imprint. Racy, not overdone. Nice punch. From 2010.' (JL-L)		Msn	16.33
Domaine de Chantegut, La Magnaneraie, Vacqueyras	N/A UK	'Warm, ripe, cherry with a hint of meat. Sweet and ripe. Balanced and long. Excellent depth. Very nice indeed. From 2011.' (DW)		www.domainede-chantegut.com	16.2
Domaine de la Charbonnière, Vacqueyras	£14.95–£16.50	'Smoky bacon – wham! Nutty, crisp, black fruit and a liquorice lining. Peppery tannins that leave it rather dry. Fat finish. From 2010.' (JL-L)		GWW, HvN	16.2
Domaine des Bernardins, Beaumes-de-Venise	POA	'Expressive peppery nose, thyme, liquorice, cassia palate. Long, spicy, aniseed finish. Fresh, balanced silky tannins. Elegant. From 2010.' (IL)		ThH	16.2
Domaine St-Amant, Grangeneuve, Beaumes-de-Venise	£10 	'Red cherry nose – forward, open. Sweet red fruit palate, charming juicy middle, soft medium length. From 2012.' (GD)		Sav	16.2
Caves St-Pierre, Preference, Gigondas	£12.99 	'Rich, concentrated nose of black fruits. Lovely palate: good balance, density, richness, depth and good structure. From 2010.' (JK)		Tes	16
Domaine de Cassan, Gigondas	£13.65	'Easy style, nice crunchy fruit and good grip, lovely Gigondas spice and depth. From 2010.' (SS)		Ten	16
Domaine de Font-Sane, Terrasses des Dentelles, Gigondas	£17.99	'Ripe, warm, fleshy plum nose. Spicy, ripe sweet plum fruit. Well balanced. An all-round top glass of wine. From 2010.' (DW)		Bib, Lnd, Wsm	16
Domaine du Gour de Chaulé, Tradition, Gigondas	N/A UK	'Dried fruits and mulberry, leather, olive and sweet spice. Complex, powerful, rich. Tannins a bit coarse, otherwise superb. From 2010.' (AS)		www.gourdechaule.com	16
Gabriel Meffre, Les Grands Cyprès, Vacqueyras	£11.99 	'Floral, sweet, red jam. Grenache nature. Sound depth. Some potential, needs to fuse. Smoky finish. From 2010.' (JL-L)		WSo	16
Gigondas La Cave, Le Vacqueyras, Vacqueyras	N/A UK	'Ripe, fleshy nose. Very good expression of blackberry jam fruit, with good natural acidity, fleshy and tannins to back it up. From 2010.' (SS)		www.cave-gigondas.fr	16
La Ferme du Mont, Le Rif, Vacqueyras	£13.99	'Nutty, raisined, stewed black fruits; rich and robust. Length is sound. Touch extracted in feel, grilled plum finish. From 2010.' (JL-L)		Ewd, MyC, Oen, RSW, WnW	16
Lavau, Vacqueyras	N/A UK	'Floral, expressive, lifted Grenache fruit. Excellent balance. Almost Médoc-like, dry yet very good depth and florality. From 2010.' (SS)		www.lavau.eu	16
Le Mas des Flauzières, Le Pilon, Vacqueyras	N/A UK	'Intense nose of blackcurrants, spices, smoke, tar. Serious, intense, juicy, full-bodied, herbal, long finish, great potential. From 2012.' (GD)		www.lemasdesflauzieres.com	16
Le Mas des Flauzières, La Grande Réserve, Gigondas	N/A UK	'Intense, spicy, ginger, black cherry, lavender. Full bodied, rich, exotic spices, mineral, fat, medium tannins. Long finish. From 2010.' (GD)		www.lemasdesflauzieres.com	16
Ortas, Gigondas	£9.99 	'Red cherry, violets, lifted nose. Bright, red cherry, forward, soft, juicy, medium tannins. From 2010.' (GD)		PLB	16
Pierre Amadiéu, Domaine Grand Romane, Cuvée Prestige, Gigondas	£16.72	'Generous black fruits, shy power, broad. Sleek modern style, has a real push across the palate. Oak needs time. From 2011.' (JL-L)		C&C	16
Tardieu-Laurent, Vieilles Vignes, Gigondas	£25.15	'Dark fruits, lavender, herbs. Rich, full bodied, meaty, plums, black cherry, spices, firm tannins, long finish. From 2012.' (GD)		VVi	16
Vidal-Fleury, Vacqueyras	£14.99–£15.99	'Good, deep, earthy, old-vine Grenache. Fleshy fruit with oak to add complexity. A very pure, very good vineyard wine. From 2010.' (SS)		Bab, BoB, C&H, Evy, Hen, VdS, Zou	16
Château Redortier, Beaumes-de-Venise	£9.55 	'Ample, blackberry fruit, hint of earth and game. Ripe, good, breezy drinking. Modest, late tannins. Enjoy now. From 2010.' (JL-L)		Jer, Lay	15.8
Domaine Beauvainte, Les Trois Amours, Beaumes-de-Venise	N/A UK	'Excellent briar fruits, very good vineyard expression. Rich, firm, serious old-vine wine with structure to match the fruit. From 2010.' (SS)		www.domaine-beauvainte.com	15.8
Domaine de l'Espigouette, Vacqueyras	£15	'Expressive violet, cherry and almond. Ripe, intense, juicy. Round, silky mouthfeel. Elegant, brooding, fresh long herbal finish. From 2010.' (IL)		HvN, ThH	15.8
Signé Vigneron, Signatures of Pierre Rougon, Vacqueyras	N/A UK	'Spicy, black fruits, lavender and smoke perfume. Intense, black cherry palate and spice. Smooth tannins, long. From 2010.' (GD)		www.signevigneron.com	15.8
Château du Trignon, Vacqueyras	£14.95	'Rich fruit, good depth. Elegant and promising. Concentrated, fresh, balanced. Good acidity and balance. Long and lively. From 2010.' (JK)		BWC	15.67
Château du Trignon, Gigondas	£16.95	'Lifted, herbal backbone. Stalky undertones. Chewy, bold, textured, dense, yet sweet texture. A bit simple but good. From 2010.' (AS)		BWC	15.67



# RECOMMENDED (cont'd...) ★★★

Wine name	Price	Tasting note	Drinkability	Stockist	Mean score
Clos du Joncuas, Gigondas	N/A UK	'Bright, lively fruit tones. Fresh palate, some black fruits, good acidity, young and still quite tight. From 2011.' (JK)		+33 4 90 65 86 86	15.67/20
Domaine du Pourra, La Réserve, Gigondas	£16.29 (2006)	'Bright, dark fruits, spicy. Intense, blackcurrant, cherry, lavender, full bodied, rich, firm tannins. From 2012.' (GD)		Ave, Teg	15.67
Domaine les Pallières, Terrasse du Diable, Gigondas	POA	'Sweet spice, black cherry. Syrah-based style. Rich, flashy, commercial and very enjoyable. From 2010.' (AS)		ThH	15.67
Moulin de la Gardette, Ventabren, Gigondas	£23.49	'Impressive pure extraction of ripe grapes. Good, fleshy, vibrant fruit. Nicely balanced. Excellent long-term wine. From 2010.' (SS)		SWC	15.67
Arnoux & Fils, 1717, Vacqueyras	£24	'Tar, barbecue smoke and dark fruits with liberal oak. Broad, rather manufactured. Late burst of herbs. Powerful. From 2011.' (JL-L)		ALW	15.6
Domaine de Cassan, Tradition, Beaumes-de-Venise	£7.99–£10.99	'Intense, ripe pomegranate nose, fresh, juicy pepper and herb palate. Silky, but firm tannins. Sweet and sour quality. Easy. From 2010.' (IL)		BFV, Cmb, ExW, SVS, Ten, WFF, WSo	15.6
Château Fontclos, Vacqueyras	N/A UK	'Ripe, sweet, with hot alcohol, but all in balance – intense fruit reined in by fresh acidity and structured tannins. Long. From 2010.' (IL)		www.fontaine-duclos.com	15.4
Domaine de la Curnière, Vacqueyras	£9.99	'Warm, ripe fruit-driven aroma. Lovely, thick, black cherry fruit flavours. Firm, balanced and long. Top notch. From 2012.' (DW)		M&S	15.4
Domaine de la Soleiade, Vacqueyras	£12.99	'Intense, concentrated, modern and extracted. Dark berry aromas, oak tannin dominant. Closed yet chunky. From 2010.' (IL)		MCW	15.4
Domaine de la Tourade, Vacqueyras	N/A UK	'Black fruits, mineral, oak spice, tarragon. Dense, black fruits, minerality, coal, firm tannins, good structure. Long. From 2012.' (GD)		+33 4 90 70 91 09	15.4
Pierre Amadieu, La Grangelière, Vacqueyras	£13.05	'Fine, clean herbal black fruits. Good clarity, depth and length of earthy, spicy fruit. Still young and a bit green. From 2010.' (SS)		C&C	15.4
Signé Vigneron, Signatures of Pierre Rougon, Beaumes-de-Venise	N/A UK	'Ripe, cherry jam nose. Forward raspberry fruit flavour. Chewy tannins. Balanced, fleshy and ready. Nicely done. From 2010.' (DW)		www.signevigneron.com	15.4
Domaine de la Monardière, Les 2 Monardes, Vacqueyras	£13.99	'Warm, meaty, plum jam nose. Nicely integrated wine. Balanced, ripe, plum fruit. Well structured. Fine length. From 2011.' (DW)		Gns	15.33
Domaine la Bouissière, Gigondas	£21	'Smoky, low-key, liquorice, pepper. Tight black fruit and pepper tannins. Still taking shape. Sound length, local virtues. From 2011.' (JL-L)		BoA	15.33
Gabriel Meffre, Laurus, Gigondas	N/A UK	'Almond black fruit and nice purity. Has richness and weight, spicy black fruit, good richness and concentration. From 2010.' (JK)		www.gabriel-meffre.com	15.33
La Bastide St-Vincent, Gigondas	£13.95	'Elegant, pure, complex black fruit. Savoury, spicy, long, structured. Integrated tannins. Good acidity and complexity. From 2010.' (JK)		BBR	15.33
Ogier, Oratorio, Gigondas	£16	'Fresh nose, light and creamy, delicate and elegant. Oak adding high tannins. Tight, needs time, but good fruit and length. From 2010.' (JK)		Mis	15.33
Palais des Anciens, Vacqueyras	£9.99	'Warm, earthy, herbal nose, with garrigue and Mourvèdre spice. Rich, oak, concentrated with berry fruit and light tannins. From 2010.' (JK)		BGr	15.33
Seigneur de Fontimble, Vacqueyras	£11.25	'Baked red fruits, roast meat, rosemary. Rustic but genuine, hand made, slightly dry on the finish. From 2010.' (JL-L)		ELV	15.33
Château des Hautes Ribes, Vacqueyras	£12.40	'Warm plum and ripe cherry fruit. Firm leathery, velvet-textured tannins. Good length of flavour. From 2011.' (DW)		Arm	15.2
Domaine des Garances, Cuvée La Blache, Beaumes-de-Venise	N/A UK	'Intense, structured wine, rich, textural blackberry. Oak tannins are dominant but will integrate. Fresh acidity, juicy finish. From 2010.' (IL)		+33 4 90 65 07 97	15.2
Domaine le Sang des Cailloux, Cuvée Floureto, Vacqueyras	£14.50 (2005)	'Vibrant, dark summer fruits. Fleshy, tobacco. Vineyard depth over modern new oak. Good tannins and length. From 2010.' (SS)		Pip	15.2
Clos La Grande Boissière, Gigondas	£17.99	'Good, plummy, spicy Grenache fruit. A bit cooked, so it finishes rather hot and dry, but there's enough fruit to keep it going. From 2010.' (SS)		MCW	15
Domaine de la Colline St-Jean, Vacqueyras	N/A UK	'Herbaceous, spicy black fruits. Dark, dense palate of herbs and a meaty character. Medium tannins, medium length. From 2012.' (GD)		+33 4 90 65 85 50	15
Domaine de Montvac, Gigondas	N/A UK	'Sweet, floral redcurrant jam nose. Blackcurrant fruit palate, crisp tannins. Ends well but a touch narrow. From 2011.' (JL-L)		www.domaine-de-montvac.com	15
Domaine les Pallières, Les Racines, Gigondas	POA	'Brooding, ripe, roast plum nose. Spicy, warm palate. Balanced and with good length. Fine effort here. From 2010.' (DW)		ThH	15
Louis Bernard, Gigondas	£11.99	'Depth and savoury herbal complexity. Black jammy fruit still a bit closed. Very easy – forward with good tannins. From 2010.' (JK)		Bib	15
Montirius, Confidentiel, Gigondas	£24	'Fresh, dry ripe plum fruit. Excellent balance. This will need a couple of years to settle, but should be very good. From 2011.' (DW)		BBR	15
Moulin de la Gardette, Tradition, Gigondas	£16.25–£20.42	'Bright, red cherry and herb nose. Youthful, cherry fruit character, juicy, fresh tannins, medium length. From 2010.' (GD)		Bus, Evy, SWC	15
Ogier, Marquis de Valclair, Gigondas	£9.99	'Soft spice, white pepper, lifted, yet a bit simple. Mid-weight, leathery palate – a little crude and coarse but good. From 2010.' (AS)		Msn	15
Pierre Amadieu, Romane Machotte, Gigondas	£17.99	'Brooding, black fruits, smoky. Marked tarry oak. Gutsy but not overdone. Needs time. Firm now, but flesh is there. From 2012.' (JL-L)		B&J, Coe	15



# RECOMMENDED (cont'd...) ★★★

Wine name	Price	Tasting note	Drinkability	Stockist	Mean score
Domaine des Garances, Cuvée La Treille, Beaumes-de-Venise	N/A UK	'Ripe summer fruits. Grippy, even a little green, but has enough flesh to be okay, and shows pretty florality. From 2010.' (SS)		+33 4 90 65 07 97	14.8/20
Tardieu-Laurent, Vieilles Vignes, Vacqueyras	£17.49 (2006)	'Intense, black cherry, smoke and liquorice. Whack of oak in the anise and blackberry fruit. Big, sweet richness. International. From 2010.' (JL-L)		C&B	14.8
Vignerons de Caractère, Collection du Rhône, Vacqueyras	£11.99	'Ripe black cherry, bacon, beef and spice nose. Sweet cherry jam fruit. Hints of plum, spice and earth. Decent all-rounder. From 2010.' (DW)		PLB	14.8
Louis Bernard, Vacqueyras	£9.99	'Ripe, fruity plum jam nose. Sweet, round, ripe and fruit driven. Lovely balance, nice length and structure. Drinking well. From 2010.' (DW)		Bib	14.67
M. Chapoutier, Gigondas	£15	'Pure, floral, open, cherry, some spice. Simple, mid-weight, drying tannins, sweet spice and moderate complexity. Solid. From 2010.' (AS)		Tes	14.67
Maison Rouge, Cor Homins Laetificat, Vacqueyras	N/A UK	'Cherry fruit perfume. Bright red fruits, crunchy tannins, juicy middle palate, medium length. From 2010.' (GD)		www.maisonrougewines.com	14.67
Domaine de Montvac, Vacqueyras	£12 (2005)	'Good, fresh, crunchy fruit. Nicely lifted purity of deep Grenache fruit and racy ripeness, but still a bit green. From 2010.' (SS)		OLv	14.6
La Bastide St-Vincent, Pavane, Vacqueyras	£12.49-£13.45	'Fresh slightly cherried nose. Mid-weight palate of white pepper and spice - restrained. Redcurrant fruit, lifted finish. From 2010.' (AS)		BBR, Evy	14.5

## FAIR ★★

■ Domaine les Goubert, Beaumes-de-Venise (14.4) ■ Maison Bouachon, Pierrelongue, Vacqueyras (14.4) ■ Lavau, Gigondas (14.33) ■ Les Deux Rhônes, Gigondas (14.33) ■ Domaine du Cayron, Gigondas (14.25) ■ Domaine de Cassan, St-Christophe, Beaumes-de-Venise (14.2) ■ Domaine de Montvac, Variation, Vacqueyras (14.2) ■ Arnoux & Fils, Chapelle-St-Arnoux, Vacqueyras (14) ■ Domaine de la

Colline St-Jean, Beaumes-de-Venise (14) ■ Domaine St-François-Xavier, Prestige des Dentelles, Gigondas (14) ■ Gabriel Meffre, Les Grands Cyprès, Gigondas (14) ■ Domaine de Verquière, Vacqueyras (13.8) ■ Domaine Le Clos des Cazaux, Cuvée de St-Roch, Vacqueyras (13.4) ■ Clos du Bois de Minge, Gigondas (13) ■ Les Deux Rhônes, Vacqueyras (12.67) ■ Palais des Anciens, Gigondas (12.67)

## POOR ★

■ La Ferme du Mont, Côtes Jugunda, Gigondas (12.33) ■ Domaine la Fourmone, Cuvée Fauquet, Gigondas (12)

For full UK stockist details, see p106

## DECANTER PROMOTION

# RHONE - RECOMMENDED WINES



Production: Gigondas, Vacqueyras, Sablet Villages, Côtes du Rhône.

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