



Maison Chapoutier

2006 Crozes-Hermitage Petite Ruche

Bright ruby. Fresh cherry and cassis on the nose, with a dark chocolate quality adding depth. Bitter cherry and licorice flavors are youthfully firm, with dusty tannins accentuating the solid character.

87(+?) Points

2005 Ermitage Le Méal

Bright red. Intensely floral, room-filling bouquet of strawberry, raspberry and smoky minerals. Deep and sweet but incredibly focused and pure, with luscious red berry preserve flavors, silky tannins and terrific mineral lift. Seems to gain depth on the finish, with the sweet red fruit qualities echoing.

94+? Points

2005 Ermitage Le Pavillon

Inky ruby. Deep, brooding and initially inscrutable, with uncannily concentrated blackberry and cassis scents. Rich dark fruit preserve flavors seem almost solid, but there's wonderful vivacity too. Picks up supple tannins on the finish, which leaves a tattoo of black and blue fruits on the palate. Extremely primary right now.

93+? Points

2005 Chateauneuf du Pape La Bernardine

Dark red. Warm red fruit preserves on the nose, along with subtle licorice and dark chocolate qualities. Supple, sweet and inviting, with open-knit raspberry and cherry flavors, gentle tannins and good finishing cut.

89 Points

2005 Chateauneuf du Pape Criox de Bois

Bright red. Sexy bouquet of fresh red berries, Asian spices and smoky herbs. Supple raspberry and cherry liqueur flavors coat the palate, betraying no rough edges or earthiness. Offers pinot noir-like sweetness and silkiness of texture, and finishes with gentle grip and excellent sappy persistence. This is already gorgeous.

92 Points

2005 Saint-Joseph Blanc Les Granits

Deep, healthy red, with little amber showing. Yellow-gold. Smoky pear and white peach aromas are complicated by buttery lees and zesty quinine. Sharply focused orchard fruit flavors pick up a bitter edge with air, which adds energy and cut to the long, sappy finish. This has a wonderfully dry, refreshing personality.

92 Points

2005 Ermitage Blanc De L' Orée

Vivid gold. Smoky pear and nectarine aromas are sharpened by lemon zest and deepened by toasty lees. Vibrant orchard and tropical fruit flavors pick up a citrus edge with air, but also gain a deep, honeyed quality. Becomes more mineral-driven and firm on the finish, which echoes the honey and lemon qualities. Talk about complex!

94+? Points

Domaine Jean-Louis Chave

2005 Hermitage Blanc

Pale gold. Fabulously complex nose evokes honeyed pear, apricot, shiso leaf and botanical herbs. Creamy orchard fruit flavors are firmed by juicy minerality, becoming brighter and more bitter with air. This has the texture of a serious red wine, offering dense, chewy pear, yellow plum and peach skin flavors and picking up licorice and toasted nuts on the long, sappy finish, which ends with a whiplash of smoky minerals.

97 Points

2006 Saint Joseph

From Dardouille: Extremely pungent scents and flavors of blackberry and cassis. More spice and minerals on the palate, but very sweet and broad. From Les Oliviers: Minerals and bitter cherry, with dark chocolate and licorice building with air. From Le Bachasson: Suave, perfumed red berries and spices. Silky raspberry and cherry fruit; fabulous length.

91-94 Points

2005 Hermitage

Inky ruby. Hugely aromatic bouquet of red and dark berries, cherry, Asian spices, fresh flowers, minerals and cured meat; smells like a great grand cru from Vosne-Romanee but with a wilder side. Flat-out gorgeous wine, with remarkably deep but fresh red berry and cherry flavors that stain the palate. Seems to actually expand on the finish, picking up exotic spicecake and rose pastille character and leaving a sweet trail of smoky red fruits behind.

97+? Points

J.L Chave Selection

2006 Cotes du Rhone Mon Coeur

Component #1: Fresh strawberry and raspberry on the nose. Silky red fruits, with no obvious tannins and a long, sweet finish. Component #2: Deeper cherry and blackberry aromas and flavors. Weighty, chewy and powerful. Component #3: Intensely spiced red berry aromas. Zesty raspberry and red cherry flavors are tightly wound but sweet, with good finishing thrust.

88-91 Points

2005 Saint-Joseph Offerus

Deep red. Explosive aromas of vibrant strawberry, raspberry and kirsch, with a subtle licorice undertone. Brisk red fruit flavors are seductively sweet and nicely framed by velvety tannins. Finishes with very persistent red fruits and gentle, sappy grip.

91 Points

Domaine Alain Graillot

2005 Crozes-Hermitage

Ruby-red. Vibrant raspberry and cherry aromas are complemented by rose, violet and subtle minerality. Sweet red berry flavors show impressive depth and clarity, with no hard edges. Gains energy on the finish, which leaves a strong strawberry flavor behind.

89 Points

2005 Crozes-Hermitage La Guiraude

Deep ruby. Fresh raspberry and smoked meat aromas are complicated by anise, pungent herbs and cola. Muscular dark berry flavors are firmed by youthful tannins, which add grip and seriousness. Displays impressive finishing depth and thrust.

90+? Points

Chateau de Beaucastel

2006 Chateauneuf du Pape Blanc

Pale yellow. Ripe peach and yellow plum on the nose, with sexy floral and honey character building with air. Taut citrus and orchard fruit flavors are refreshingly bitter, gaining depth on the close. Leaves a trail of stony white fruit flavors on the long, sappy finish.

91 Points

2006 Chateauneuf du Pape Blanc Roussanne Vieilles Vignes

Yellow-gold. Smoky pear and apricot aromas are deepened by fig, cured meat and anise. Rich and fleshy in texture, offering sweet orchard and pit fruit flavors along with candied flowers and licorice, and picking up subtle baking spices on the finish. There's outstanding energy and cut for such depth and palate-staining concentration.

94 Points

2006 Chateauneuf du Pape

Inky purple. Explosively perfumed nose features succulent red berry, blood orange and minerals scents. Youthfully taut on entry, then fleshes out in the middle, offering deep, impressively focused redcurrant and bitter cherry flavors and mounting tannins. Finishes with great tangy lift and persistence, repeating the cherry quality. Wonderful vivacity.

91-93 Points

2005 Cotes du Rhone Coudoulet de Beaucastel

Deep red. Spicy raspberry and cherry on the nose, with a gentle anise quality adding interest. Surprisingly supple, with deep red berry and kirsch flavors and good finishing cling.

89 Points

2005 Chateauneuf du Pape

Ruby-red. Blackberry and cassis on the nose, with a complex set of earth, herb and floral qualities adding complexity. Deep and sweet, with bitter cherry and candied licorice flavors and youthfully firm tannins but no hardness. Turns more lively on the finish, picking up a spicy red berry character and leaving a long, pungent herbal trail behind.

94 Points

2005 Chateauneuf du Pape Hommage a Jacques Perrin

Opaque purple. An explosive, room-filling bouquet of ripe raspberry, blackcurrant and boysenberry scents, along with sexy floral, herb and cured meat nuances. Incredibly silky, with medium-weight red and dark berry preserve and cured tobacco flavors and superb mineral lift. Velvety tannins melt into the deep, dark fruit, which carries endlessly through the finish. A hypnotic and compelling wine.

97 Points

Tardieu-Laurent

2006 Saint-Joseph Vieilles Vignes

Opaque purple. Intensely mineral nose offers a vibrant bouquet of meaty dark berries, violet pastille and bacon fat. Lush and sweet on entry, then firms up quickly, offering spicy blackcurrant and bitter cherry flavors and finishing with taut minerality and youthful grip.

90-92 Points

2005 Vacqueyras Vieilles Vignes

Dark ruby. Spicy raspberry and cherry on the nose, with cracked pepper and garrigue scents adding complexity. Fresh, focused and brisk, offering clean red fruit flavors, soft tannins and good finishing cling.

89 Points

2005 Gigondas Vieilles Vignes

Ruby-red. Fresh dark berry and kirsch aromas betray a slightly reduced character. Chewy blackcurrant and bitter cherry flavors are firm by youthful tannins, finishing with good mineral snap and length.

88+? Points

2005 Chateauneuf du Pape Vieilles Vignes

Dark ruby. Ripe, youthfully brooding dark fruit flavors are slow to unfold, eventually giving up floral blackberry and blueberry notes and a dollop of licorice. Spicy cherry and blackberry flavors are a touch bitter and tannic but gain sweetness on the finish, reluctantly.

90+?

2005 Crozes-Hermitage Vieilles Vignes

Bright ruby. Spicy red berry and mineral aromas are deepened by smoked meat and anise. Pliant raspberry and bitter cherry flavors are firm by brisk acidity, which adds snap to the finish. Showing a youthfully taut character, with plenty of upside potential.

89+? Points

2005 Saint-Joseph Les Roches Vieilles Vignes

Bright purple. Spicy dark berry aromas are complemented by graphite, cracked pepper, dried violet and smoked meat. In the mouth, this covers all the syrah food groups, with sweet dark fruit flavors, velvety tannins and a long, smoky finish.

90 Points

2005 Cornas Coteaux

Saturated red. Vibrant raspberry and cherry preserve aromas, with a complex array of peppery spice and herbal qualities building in the glass. Deeply flavored but fresh, offering sweet red and dark berry flavors and a strong trail of licorice on the finish.

90 Points

2005 Cornas Vieilles Vignes

Opaque ruby. Deep, mineral-dominated cassis and cherry scents are complicated by smoky herbs, violet and cured meat. Pretty serious wine, with brooding dark fruit liqueur flavors and a bitter cherry skin quality building with air. Finishes with formidable grip and youthfully firm tannins.

91+? Points

2005 Cotie-Rotie

Deep red. Fresh red berry and cherry scents are complicated by fresh violet and graphite. Mineral-laced red fruit flavors offer very good focus and finishing snap, leaving a sweet cherry preserve quality behind.

91 Points

2005 Hermitage

Inky purple. Fresh cherry and cassis on the nose, with a suave mineral underpinning. Spicy dark fruit flavors are focused and youthfully taut, with firm tannic grip and spicy lift on the back. With air, strong minerality came to the fore, adding greater complexity. The firm, dry finish comes off as a touch brooding today, but this offers impressive potential.

91+? Points

2005 Hermitage Blanc

Medium gold. Ripe apricot and pear on the nose, with a deep, smoky honeycomb quality adding complexity. Luscious orchard fruit flavors are firmed by juicy acidity and pick up exotic cured meat and licorice nuances on the finish.

92 Points

Domaine de la Vieille Julienne

2005 Chateauneuf du Pape

Inky ruby. Ripe, powerful boysenberry and blueberry aromas are deepened by musky tobacco and dark chocolate. Weighty dark berry flavors verge on thick; initially brooding but brightens with air, picking up an energetic, stony character. Red fruits build on a long, sappy finish. A serious style, and not for those who demand elegance.

93+? Points

2005 Chateauneuf du Pape Reserve

Inky violet. Extremely fragrant bouquet offers a potent mix of dark berries, kirsch, licorice and pungent herbs, with a strong mineral undercurrent. Deep, impressively concentrated cassis and candied cherry flavors are framed by big, velvety tannins, picking up mocha and black cardamom on the finish. Boasts great sweetness but no overripe character. Pretty stunning stuff.

95 Points

Gabriel Meffre

2006 Gigondas Laurus

Ruby-red. Impressively complex, wild aromas of red fruits, flowers, minerals and underbrush. Fresh, sharply focused redcurrant and strawberry flavors are complicated by floral pastille and tangy mineral qualities, and finish with excellent persistence.

91-93 Points

2005 Gigondas Laurus

Inky purple. Complex, exotic bouquet of ripe dark berries, oak spice and garrigue. Supple blackberry and mulberry flavors bear a strong vanillin oak burden but are enlivened by zesty minerality. Undeniably attractive, especially for those who love oak.

88? Points

Perrin & Fils

2006 Vacqueyras Les Christins

Bright red. Seductive, laid-back strawberry and raspberry aromas are brightened by fresh rose and cracked pepper. Silky in texture, with sweet red fruit preserve flavors, gentle tannins and a long, sweet finish. Surprisingly delicate but not lacking for flavor punch.

88 Points

2005 Gigondas La Gille

Bright red. Zesty red berries on the nose, with suave floral and mineral qualities adding verve. Supple raspberry and cherry flavors are lifted by firm but harmonious acidity, gaining weight and sweetness on the finish.

88+? Points

2005 Chateauneuf du Pape Les Sinards

Deep ruby. Dark cherry and blackberry aromas are enlivened by zesty mineral and floral qualities, picking up sexy baking spices with air. Vibrant red berry flavors show very good depth. This midweight, made from the young vines of Beaucastel, finishes with pronounced sweetness.

90 Points

Sellbach-Oster, Zeltingen

2006 Zeltlinger Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese

Subtle aromas of pineapple, redcurrant and honeysuckle. Delicately rich and creamy, with a distinct flavor of toasted almond. Elegant, nicely balanced auslese, finishing with a burst of slate. Quite satisfying.

90 Points

Josef Leitz, Rudesheim

2006 Rudesheimer Klosterlay Riesling Kabinett

Pale yellow. Lively aromas of honeydew melon, clove and pine nuts. Juicy, elegant fruit is kept vibrant by a salty citrus minerality. Well structured but light wine, with a spicy finish providing lift.

88 Points

2006 Rudesheimer Magdalenenkreuz Riesling Spatlese

Pale golden yellow. Aromas of cling peach, acacia blossom and mint. The rich, sweet pear fruit is dense but hardly marked by botrytis. A succulent spatlese with a lively spiciness that animates the finish.

88 Points

Altos Las Hormigas

2006 Malbec Mendoza

Bright, deep ruby-red. Dark raspberry, mocha and dark chocolate on the nose, plus a heavy layer of oaky vanilla, spice and coconut. Sweet, lush and fine-grained but fresh and not at all confectionery. In fact, this boasts enticing fresh fruit and good texture, density and lift. Finishes firm and persistent.

88 Points

Susana Balbo

2007 Crios de Susana Balbo Torrontes Salta

Pale color. Pungent aromas of citrus peel, ginger, mint and floral oils. Juicy, spicy and firm, with a lively lightness and good subtle persistence. Finishes vibrant and firm-edged, almost austere but not at all bitter.

88 Points

2007 Crios de Susana Balbo Rose of Malbec Mendoza

Pinkish-red. Red berries and a hint of heat on the nose. Supple, spicy and fairly rich, but with good vinosity to the straightforward flavors of cherry and raspberry. Has the round texture of a red wine but finishes firm.

87 Points

2007 Crios de Susana Balbo Malbec Mendoza

Saturated bright ruby. Black raspberry and dark chocolate on the nose. Sappy and primary, with inky cassis, blackberry and licorice flavors complicated by a suggestion of cocoa powder. I like this very juicy wine's restrained sweetness.

88 Points

2006 Crios de Susana Balbo Malbec Mendoza

Bright, full ruby-red. Musky aromas of dark plum and espresso, plus a hint of licorice. Ripe, smooth, fine-grained and quite dry. Could use a bit more snap, but this is broad and satisfying red wine with a fresh finish featuring dusty tannins.

87 Points

2006 Crios de Susana Balbo Cabernet Sauvignon Mendoza

Very good deep red. Plum, dark berries and smoked meat on the nose. Rich, fat and sweet, with modest complexity to its plum and mocha flavors. Finishes with broad, building tannins and good length. This is sweeter and fresher than the 2005 version.

87 Points

2005 Crios de Susana Balbo Syrah/Bonarda Mendoza

Good deep medium red. Musky aromas of blackberry, bacon fat, espresso and nutty oak. Smooth, nutty and dry, with just enough freshness and definition to its red fruit and smoke flavor. Finishes with soft, broad tannins.

87 Points

2006 Susana Balbo Malbec Mendoza

Bright, full ruby-red. Sexy, dark aromas of blackberry, licorice, bitter chocolate, espresso and spicy oak. At once creamy and penetrating, pliant and juicy, boasting impressive concentration of sweet fruit and enticing inner-mouth perfume. Firm acids and sweet tannins give this plenty of structure for a positive evolution in bottle.

91 Points

2005 Susana Balbo Cabernet Sauvignon Mendoza

Dark ruby-red. Aromas of blackberry and licorice. Superripe, rather brooding flavors of dark berries and spices. A rich, powerful style with considerable sweetness and mouthfilling depth, but not yet showing the vibrancy or definition of this producer's best wines. Still, the broad finish is long and gripping.

89+? Points

2005 Brioso Mendoza

Good deep ruby-red. Complex aromas of plum syrup, cherry, mocha, tobacco leaf and mint. Silky, pliant and quite dry, offering a smooth texture allied to firm supporting backbone. The enticing red fruit, mint and dusty mineral flavors convey a strong sense of soil. Finishes fine-grained and classically dry, with lingering aromatic persistence and very suave tannins. An enticing, scented blend.

91 Points

Ben Marco

2005 Malbec Mendoza

Bright red-ruby. Musky black raspberry, cocoa, mocha and minerals on the nose. Supple, pliant and deep, with good freshness to its dark fruit and spice flavors. A seriously mouthfilling wine that's not a bit heavy. The suave finish features insidious persistence.

90 Points

2005 Expresivo Mendoza

Good deep red with ruby highlights. Aromas of currant, smoke, musky tobacco and nutty oak. Sweet, lush and fine-grained; this is quite suave and complex, with its creaminess given shape by ripe acidity. The lovely lingering finish shows real life and lift, and the tannins are sweet.

91 Points

Vina Cobos

2006 El Felino Malbec

Bright medium ruby. Blackberry and spice on the nose, plus hints of meat and leather. Juicy, fruit-driven and on the lean side; not a fleshy wine but fresh, lively and pure. Offers an attractive light touch-and not at all short on the finish.

87 Points

2005 Bramare Malbec Lujan de Cuyo

Bright ruby-red. Superripe plum, spicecake and sweet, chocolatey oak on the nose. Sweet, lush and very ripe; a big, bold malbec in a rather masculine style. Plenty of extraction and alcohol here but harmonious ripe acidity gives shape to this fat wine. Finishes with very smooth, soft tannins and lovely lingering dark fruit flavor. Impressive wine with the structure to last.

91 Points

2005 Bramare Cabernet Sauvignon Lujan de Cuyo

Full, bright medium ruby. Deep nose offers black raspberry, cassis, tar and licorice, plus a subtle floral nuance. Sweet and lush in the mouth, with deep flavors of dark berries and dark chocolate complemented by sexy oak. A fleshy, rather powerful style but harmonious and fine-grained. Quite young but already suave. Finishes lively and long, with solid structure for aging.

91+?

2005 Bramare Cabernet Sauvignon Marchiori Vineyard Mendoza

Full medium ruby. Captivating aromas of cassis, dark chocolate, licorice and mint. Sweet, fat and generous; a bold, rich, crowd-pleasing cabernet with a lush, round texture that's already delicious. Finishes long and chocolatey, with very smooth, ripe tannins.

91 Points

2004 Bramare Cabernet Sauvignon Marchiori Vineyard Mendoza

Full, bright medium ruby. Deep aromas of plum, currant, tar, nutty oak and fresh herbs, with a hint of prune. Suave on entry, then pliant and sweet in the middle, with harmonious acidity framing the flavors of plum, currant, cola, brown spices, loam and oak. A broad cabernet with lovely depth. Finishes with sweet, building tannins and lively acidity.

90 Points

2004 Cobos Malbec Marchiori Vineyard Mendoza

Bright, saturated ruby. Superripe aromas of blackberry liqueur and melted chocolate, with an almost roasted, porty quality. Large-scaled, fat and thick, if not especially complex or delineated. This distinctly outsized wine is nearly too big for the mouth. The porty ripeness carries through on the palate. Impressive for its sheer presence and depth of fruit, but this could get tiring to drink. Finishes with substantial dusty tannins and a whiff of walnut skin.

90?

Dona Paula

2006 Estate Malbec Mendoza

Aromas of dark raspberry, licorice, minerals and spicy oak, lifted by a violet topnote. Sweet but firm on entry, then a supple fruit bomb in the middle palate, offering juicy flavors of dark raspberry, blackberry and violet. Perhaps a bit youthfully bound-up, but this clean, intensely flavored wine finishes with seamless tannins and very good length.

88 Points

Luca

2006 Chardonnay Altos de Mendoza

Pale yellow-gold. Exotic, high-toned fruit bomb of a nose, offering apricot, peach and lively limey lift. Then supple and almost surprisingly subdued in the mouth, with firmly structured flavors of pineapple, apricot and light vanillin oak. Sound acidity and firm underlying minerality give this a level of sophistication rare for chardonnay in Argentina.

90+? Points

2006 Malbec Altos de Mendoza

Good bright, full ruby. Pure aromas of blackberry, licorice and bitter chocolate; an essence of this variety. Juicy, bright and densely packed, with a powerful core of primary crushed black fruit flavor. Super concentrated but quite suave. The very long finish features broad tannins.

92 Points

2004 Nico by Luca Altos de Mendoza

Saturated deep ruby to the rim. Primary but already expressive nose offers black raspberry, blackberry, violet, bitter chocolate and wild herbs. Creamy-sweet, concentrated and improbably deep, with an almost liqueur-like richness leavened by inner-mouth verve and violey perfume. This is wonderfully sophisticated wine with a texture of velvet. Builds impressively on the back end, with the ripe tannins buried under an explosion of fruit.

94 Points

2005 Syrah Altos de Mendoza

Musky, reduced aromas of blackberry and smoked meat. Sweet, lush and pliant, with fruit-driven flavors of red and dark berries and chocolate. Not yet particularly complex-and still a bit reduced-but the wine's sweet tannins and late suggestions of black raspberry, chocolate and leather suggest that a couple years in bottle will bring more pronounced syrah character.

88+? Points

Mapema

2007 Sauvignon Blanc Mendoza

Pale color. Spicy aromas of lemon, lime and flowers. Rich, fat and edge-free, with just enough bite to its rather viognier-like peach and melon flavors. A supple, full style of sauvignon.

88 Points

2005 Tempranillo Mendoza

Medium red. Musky redcurrant, raspberry, tobacco and spices on the nose. Supple but vinous, with good aromatic lift to the red fruit, pepper and floral flavors. Finishes with a suave dusting of tannins and a lingering peppery nuance. An intriguing, lively wine with good varietal character.

87 Points

La Posta del Vinatero

2006 Malbec Pizzella Vineyard Mendoza

Good full ruby-red. Aromas of blackberry, licorice and woodsmoke lifted by a violet topnote. Suave, medium-bodied and soft, but kept fresh by adequate acidity and a continuing floral character that gives this malbec a captivating coolness.

88 Points

2006 Malbec Angel Paulucci Vineyard Mendoza

Good bright ruby-red. Lower-toned aromas of dark raspberry, meat and pepper; I find this distinctly syrah-like and wild. Richer, rounder and sweeter than the Pizzella Vineyard release, with lush black and red fruit flavors perked up by a peppery element. Finishes with serious tannic spine and good length.

88+? Points

Tikal

2005 Patriota Altos de Mendoza

Bright ruby-red. Expressive nose offers boysenberry, fruitcake, licorice and mocha. Supple, broad and sexy, with the sweet fruitcake character following through on the palate. Not hugely complex but lush and enticing. Finishes with fairly soft tannins and very good length.

89 Points

2005 Amorio Malbec Altos de Mendoza

Bright ruby. Tight, primary aromas of crushed dark berries, mocha, fresh herbs, pepper and cocoa powder, with a whiff of exotic dried fruits. Intensely flavored, focused and bright, with firm acidity framing the dark fruit and pepper flavors. Finishes with a liqueur-like sweetness, suave tannins and lovely length and lift.

90 Points