



### **2005 Domaine Alain Graillet Crozes-Hermitage**

Deep ruby. Explosively perfumed nose offers vibrant raspberry and strawberry along with a fine dusting of dried flowers. Lush and silky already, with sweet red berry flavors and extremely fine tannins. I could drink this today. The fresh, floral finish features persistent strawberry and raspberry notes.

**88-91 Points**

### **2005 Domaine Alain Graillet Crozes-Hermitage La Guiraude**

Ruby-red. Smokier and wilder than the regular bottling, with dark fruit aromas and a suggestion of cherry skin. This brawny Crozes has deep cherry liqueur and cassis flavors and a solid structure. This rich cherry quality recurs on the firm, focused finish. Graillet finds this wine to be "compact" today.

**89-92 Points**

### **2004 J.L. Chave Selection Cotes du Rhone Mon Coeur**

Dark red. Ripe dark berries and smoke on the nose, with a hint of dark chocolate. Thick and chewy, with dense cassis and smoked meat flavors. Wild, distinctive and complex for the category, ending with building sweetness.

**88 Points**

### **2004 J.L. Chave Selection Saint-Joseph Offerus**

Deep ruby. Musky blackberry, candied plum and smoked meat aromas. Fresh and racy on the palate, showing red and dark berry flavors underpinned by juicy acidity and framed by silky tannins. Finishes on a spicy notes, with excellent length. Chave vinified with a portion of the stems "to help increase the fragrance."

**90 Points**

### **2005 Chateau de Beaucastel Chateauneuf du Pape Blanc**

Light gold. Full-blown tropical and citrus fruits on the nose, with a sexy white flower quality. Impressively fresh and poised, with mineral notes bracing ripe pineapple and orange flavors. A sweet suggestion of honey lingers on the juicy, round, very long finish.

**92 Points**

**2005 Chateau de Beaucastel Chateauneuf du Pape Blanc Roussanne Vieilles Vignes**

Yellow-gold. Intensely floral aromas of jasmine, beeswax and coconut-accented orange and pear. Lush and weighty, with powerful pear, tangerine and nougat flavors accompanied by exotic oak notes. This reminds me of high-end white Bordeaux. Tightens up on the back, where bright mineral and citrus pith notes give shape and grip to the intensely sweet fruit. The finish of this wine is endless.

**95 Points**

**2005 Chateau de Beaucastel Cotes du Rhone Coudoulet de Beaucastel**

Ruby-red. Deep, rich and ripe, with powerful red fruit aromas and exotic spice notes. Sweet raspberry and cherry flavors are complicated by a wild note of apricot pit. Firm tannins and good acid lift on the spicy, long finish.

**88-91 Points**

**2005 Chateau de Beaucastel Chateauneuf du Pape**

Deep ruby. Intense dark berry scents expand and deepen with air, picking up dusky espresso and licorice tones. Lush, powerful and sweet, with impressively concentrated, pure dark berry flavors and supple, finely integrated tannins. There's a great fruit/tannin balance here, and the supple finish boasts impressively concentrated and remarkably persistent cherry and blackberry fruit.

**93-96 Points**

**2004 Chateau de Beaucastel Cotes du Rhone Coudoulet de Beaucastel**

Dark ruby, Bright red cherry and plum aromas are deepened by a hint of roasted coffee. Creamy in texture, with supple tannins supporting sweet cherry and dark berry flavors. Finishes warm and velvety.

**88 Points**

**2004 Chateau de Beaucastel Chateauneuf du Pape**

Ruby-red. Powerful red and dark berry aromas verge on liqueur-like but are enlivened by zesty mineral and anise accents. Lush, supple and sweet, with deep raspberry and cherry flavors, fine-grained tannins and complicating herb and smoked meat tones. Very smooth on the finish, which is sappy, deep in cherry flavor and impressively long.

**93 Points**

**2004 Chateau de Beaucastel Chateauneuf du Pape Hommage a Jacques Perrin**

Saturated ruby. Remarkably deep nose combines cherry, raspberry, licorice, smoked meat and mineral notes, all lifted by intense floral quality. A stunning example of freshness and precision married to power, with deep cassis, bitter cherry and candied licorice flavors enlivened by zesty minerality and framed by firm but endless finish echoes the mineral and floral tones, showing a persistent lavender note. This was not yet bottled when I tasted it.

**96-98 Points**

### **2004 Domaine Lucien Barrot Chateauneuf du Pape**

Light red. Intensely floral aromas of fresh strawberry, redcurrant, lavender and exotic dried apricot. A bright, juicy, persistent midweight, with sweet red berry flavors and complicating fresh herb notes. An excellent example of a traditionally styled Chateauneuf that's drinking very well right now.

**91 Points**

### **2005 Perrin & Fils. Vinsobres Les Cornuds**

Inky ruby. Ripe blackcurrant and blackberry aromas lifted by a hint of cracked pepper. Full and rich but with firm tannins giving a serious edge to the sweet dark fruit and licorice flavors. Finishes solid, chewy and quite long. The Perrins own 50 hectares of vines in Vinsobres.

**88-91 Points**

### **2005 Perrin & Fils. Vinsobres Les Hauts de Julien**

Dark violet. Very rich, ripe aromas of cassis, *kirsch*, and espresso. Round and fleshy, with intense red and dark berry flavors, a licorice accent and firm, chunky tannins. The fruit builds on the long, powerful finish. The vines here are over 80 years old, according to Marc Perrin, and are a blend of 50% Grenache and 50% syrah.

**90-93 Points**

### **2005 Perrin & Fils. Gigondas La Gille**

Bright red. Smoky raspberry and strawberry on the nose, with a wild component of cured meat. Bitter cherry and ripe red berry flavors are complicated by *garrigue* and pepper notes. Finishes with chewy tannins and a cherry pit flavor.

**86-89 Points**

### **2005 Perrin & Fils. Vacqueyras Les Christins**

Dark red. Lavender-accented raspberry and redcurrant on the intensely floral nose. Primary red berry and cherry flavors show good weight and focus. Finishes firm, with rather gentle tannins and good persistence.

**87-90 Points**

### **2005 Perrin & Fils. Rasteau L'Andeol**

Deep ruby. Powerful, chocolate-accented raspberry and redcurrant aromas, with a whiff of *garrigue*. Quite spicy and tightly wound, with vibrant cherry and pomegranate flavors, firm acidity and a bitter finishing note that reminded me of Campari. Backward today, but I like the structure and focus here.

**88-91 Points**

### **2004 Perrin & Fils. Vinsobres Les Hauts de Julien**

Deep red. Red berry and cherry aromas with pungent floral and fresh herb accents. Fleshy and deep in red fruit flavor, with subtle hints of licorice and cured meat. At once sappy and lush on the persistent finish.

**89 Points**

**2004 Perrin & Fils. Rasteau L'Andeol**

Dark red. Cherry, plum and spicecake on the nose, with deeper chocolate and espresso tones. Chewy and muscular, with deep cherry and blackberry flavors firmed by solid tannins. Loosens up with air, finishing on a sweet dark berry note.

**87 Points**

**2004 Perrin & Fils. Giogondas La Gille**

Light red. Complex nose offers red and dark berries, smoked meat and dried lavender. Distinctly gamey today, but the cherry and blackcurrant flavors are lively and the wine gained in sweetness with air. Finishes smoky and long. This should appeal to fans of old-school southern Rhone wines.

**89 Points**

**2004 Perrin & Fils. Chateauneuf du Pape Les Sinards**

Medium red. Smoky raspberry, cherry and anise on the nose, with a light suggestion of grilled meat. Focused and pure, with crisp red berry and cherry preserve flavors lifted by gentle acidity. Finishes on a bright mineral note, showing more elegance than last year. A textbook example of the vintage, this is made from Beaucastel's young vines.

**90 Points**

**2005 Selbach-Oster Zeltinger Schlossberg Riesling Spatlese**

Pale yellow. Pristine bouquet of green apple, passion fruit and lavender. A rich nut oil character with smoky minerality enlivens the creamy apricot fruit. Well delineated, complex and surprisingly long.

**90 Points**

**2005 Selbach-Oster Zeltinger Schlossberg Riesling Auslese**

Pale golden yellow. Subtle bouquet of candied apricot, clove and spicy botrytis. Creamy, slightly honeyed flavors dominate the palate. Rich but crisp and clear on the long, seductive finish, with invigorating spice. This is my favorite auslese of the vintage from this estate.

**92 Points**

**2005 Hermann Donnhoff Norheimer Kirschheck Riesling Spatlese**

Pale golden yellow with a hint of green. Subtle honeysuckle aromas blends with hyacinth and lime. Pure, polished peachy fruit and a very refined minerality drift dreamily across the palate. Delicate, almost ethereal and quite long.

**91 Points**

**2005 Hermann Donnhoff Schlossbockelheimer Felsenberg Riesling Auslese**

Pale golden yellow. Musky peach, a floral nuance and a hint of licorice on the nose. Smoke and honey give way to a spicy acidity on the palate. Well-balanced, vivid auslese, showing an almost salty minerality on the finish.

**92 Points**

### **2005 Kruger-Rumpf Munsterer Dautenpflamzer Riesling Spatlese**

Golden yellow. Orange peel, smoked hazelnut and spearmint on the nose. On the palate, there's an attractive sweet richness to the apricot flavor. Finishes with a smoky mineral character.

**87 Points**

### **2005 Josef Leitz Rudesheimer Klosterlay Riesling Kabinett**

Pale yellow. Bright aromas of peach pit, clove and mint. Juicy, elegant passion fruit flavor framed by vibrant acidity. Dense yet light on its feet, finishing with spicy clarity.

**88 Points**

### **2005 Josef Leitz Rudesheimer Magdalenenkreuz Riesling Spatlese**

Pale yellow. Bright, faintly smoky aromas of peach pit, kiwi and lemon oil. The supple papaya fruit is complemented by a sweet spice character. Finishes delicate and succulent. The most approachable of the spatleses from this estate.

**88 Points**

### **2005 Josef Leitz Rudesheimer Berg Schlossberg Riesling Spatlese**

Pale golden yellow. Sumptuous aromas of papaya, spiced apple and mint oil waft over the raisiny botrytis tones. Impressively rich and creamy, with glazed exotic fruits leavened by invigorating slate minerality. In spite of its honeyed quality, this wine is finely balanced and unbelievably long. As was the case last year, one of the finest spatlese of the vintage.

**93 Points**

### **2005 Josef Sprietzer Hattenheimer Wisselbrunnen Riesling Spatlese Trocken**

Pale yellow with a greenish hue. Acacia blossom mingles with apricot pit and a hint of oyster shell on the nose. Crisp yet creamy in texture, with an almost exotic fruit flavor layered over the salty minerality. Rich in substance and impressively long on the finish

**91 Points**

### **2004 Calera Chardonnay Central Coast**

Pale gold. Aromas of apple, pear and melon along with more exotic notes of passion fruit, mango and lichee. Juicy, intense tropical fruit flavors are lifted by a floral element. Nicely concentrated, persistent chardonnay with a restrained sweetness and a sappy core of fruit. A terrific value in chardonnay.

**89 Points**

### **2005 Calera Pinot Noir Thirtieth Anniversary Vintage Central Coast**

Bright cherry red. Pungent, exotic aromas of *framboise*, Christmas spices and flowers. Juicy, bright, dry and penetrating; round and silky but light on its feet. Red berry flavors complicated by spices and earth. Offers lovely restraint and firm underlying spine. Good value.

**89 Points**

### **2004 DuMol Chardonnay Russian River Valley**

Full yellow color. Musky, truffley aromas of *mirabelle*, peach, caramel and banana skin. Juicy and sweet, with slightly exotic yellow fruit flavors nicely framed by ripe acidity. Finishes firm and attractively sweet.

**89 Points**

### **2004 DuMol Chardonnay Chloe Russian River Valley**

Perfumed aromas of peach, tangerine, honey and flowers. Lush, sweet and seamless; round and voluptuous. Offers lovely depth of stone and soft citrus flavors and mouthfilling sweetness. Finishes very long, with enticing sweetness nicely counterpointed by ripe acidity.

**93 Points**

### **2004 DuMol Pinot Noir Ryan Green Valley**

Good medium red. Subdued but nuanced aromas of dark cherry, blood orange, smoke, meat and a whiff of white pepper. Round and broad but not at all sweet; offers ver good depth and considerable sap and complexity. Finishes with suave tannins and very good structure. Very interesting, youthful pinot.

**91(+?) Points**

### **2004 DuMol Syrah Russian River Valley**

Bright ruby-red. Superripe crushed blackberry and pepper on the nose. On the palate, intense black fruit and tar flavors are accompanied by an element of liquid pepper. This rather muscular, medicinal wine showed an increasing tannic toughness as it opened in the glass.

**88(+?)? Points**

### **2004 DuMol Syrah Eddie's Patch Russian River Valley**

Bright ruby-red. Perfumed, complex nose melds spicy black raspberry, pepper, flowers, minerals and graphite. Suave in texture and quite fine-grained, with enticing berry flavors supported by substantial dusty but sweet tannins that build on the persistent finish.

**91 Points**

### **2005 HdV Chardonnay de la Guerra Carneros**

Pale color. Crisp apple and pear aromas complicated by pepper and white flowers. Bright and crisp, with piquant quince and pepper notes perking up the apple and pear flavors. Dry, juicy and quite restrained chardonnay with firm acidity and a light touch. Finishes minerally and persistent, with a suggestion of beeswax. Not at all a fat or sweet style of chardonnay.

**88 Points**

### **2004 HdV Chardonnay Los Carneros**

Bright, pale yellow. Leesy, deeply pitched aromas of fruit cocktail, earth and minerals, complicated by toffee, clove and tropical fruit nuances. Rich and silky in the mouth, with an exotic high-toned quality and a fatter texture than the de la Guerra bottling. This is sweeter, fuller and more pliant chardonnay, with a deeper pitch to its flavors. Finishes with very good breadth and length, as well as a mineral firmness.

**90 Points**

### **2003 HdV Red Wine Carneros**

Good ruby-red. Slightly herbal aromas of blackberry, brown spices, licorice, pepper, chocolate, leather and spicy oak. Placid and ripe, with enticing flavors of blackberry, cherry, licorice and dried herbs. Finishes lush, round and long, with sweet tannins. This merlot/cab blend initially came across as a bit green, but ultimately showed lovely ripeness and suavity.

**89 Points**

### **2004 HdV Syrah Carneros**

Good ruby-red color. Highly aromatic nose combines blackberry, cassis, smoked meat, truffle, graphite and violet; I might have guessed Cote-Rotie. Juicy, precise and light on its feet, with lively flavors of blackberry and violet. This has the weight and silkiness—not to mention the elegance and energy—of pinot noir. Quite suave on the back end, finishing with fine-grained tannins and lively lift. Long-time subscribers will recall that I was not thrilled with a couple of early vintages of this bottling, but quality has taken a leap in recent years.

**92 Points**

### **2004 JC Cellars Syrah California Cuvee**

Deep ruby. Blueberry, licorice and mint on the slightly porty nose. Densely packed, structured and sweet, with strong flavors of dark berries, bitter chocolate and mint. Finishes with chewy, slightly rough tannins and some alcoholic warmth.

**88 Points**

### **2004 JC Cellars Syrah Ventana Vineyards Monterey**

Deep ruby-red. Wild nose combines dark raspberry, gunflint, smoked meat, minerals and beefsteak tomato. Sweet, lush and smoky, with a saline character adding interest to the smoke and mineral flavors. Very ripe but not over the top. This couldn't be anything but syrah. Still, I'd like to have seen a bit more mid-palate fruit.

**89 Points**

### **2004 JC Cellars Petite Syrah Frediani Vineyard Cuvee Speciale Napa Valley**

Saturated bright ruby. Blackberry, cherry cola and a rooty nuance on the nose. Superripe, sweet and high-toned; large-scaled and pliant but just this side of heavy. Finishes with huge, dusty tannins and a tarry sweetness. This is 16+% alcohol, and it shows it.

**88 Points**

### **2004 Shafer Merlot Napa Valley**

Good bright ruby. Cassis, bitter chocolate and mocha on the musky nose. Rich, ripe, sexy and deep, with considerable sweetness to the flavors of currant, chocolate and cherry cola. As lush as this is, there's also plenty of inner-mouth energy thanks to ripe, harmonious acidity. Finishes long and clinging, with ripe tannins and plenty of sweet oak.

**91 Points**

### **2003 Shafer Relentless Napa Valley**

Saturated ruby. Musky aromas of cassis, black plum, minerals and earth, with pronounced, oakiness. Fat, lush and sweet but firm-edged, with blackberry and licorice flavors complicated by a saline element. Finishes full and smooth, with substantial building tannins, a peppery quality and some tarry oak.

**90 Points**

### **2005 Silverado Sauvignon Blanc Miller Ranch Napa**

Pale silver color. Aromas of grapefruit, anise and mint. Juicy and firm, with good precision to the flavors of grapefruit skin, honeydew melon, minerals and mint. Persistent finish shows a faint dry edge.

**87 Points**

### **2003 Silverado Solo Cabernet Sauvignon Stags Leap District**

Red-ruby color. Brooding aromas of black berry, mint and licorice. Juicy and penetrating, but with modest flesh and a distinctly herbal/minty quality to the dark fruit and spice flavors. Finishes with dusty, drying tannins. A bit pinched in the middle palate.

**86 Points**

### **2005 Tensley Syrah Colson Canyon Vineyard Santa Barbara**

Bright, full ruby-red. Raspberry, smoke, pepper and flowers on the nose. Sweet, liqueur-like raspberry fruit suggests some residual sugar; almost a dessert style of syrah. The peppery finish gives the wine a firm edge, but this is too sweet for me. This could well put out the fire of smoky, spicy, peppery, dry-rubbed ribs, but I find it impossible to put a number to this.

**? Points**

### **2005 Tensely Syrah Three Creek Vineyard Santa Barbara County**

Saturated, bright ruby-red. Captivating, varietally expressive nose melds tapenade, pepper, licorice, brown spices and a whiff of game. Suave, dry and concentrated, with restrained sweetness for a wine with this much power and thrust. Firm acids give the flavors excellent focus. Finishes chewy, suave and very long, with fine, palate-dusting tannins and a dry mineral character. With extended time in the recorked bottle this showed a fascinating bacon fat character without losing its verve.

**92 Points**

### **2005 Voss Viognier Carneros**

Stone fruits, lemon, fresh herbs, acacia flower and nutmeg on the nose. Supple, smooth and fat with fruit; there's a distinctly glycerol texture to the flavors of soft citrus fruits and flowers. Not the last word in complexity but very smooth and lush on the back end.

**88 Points**