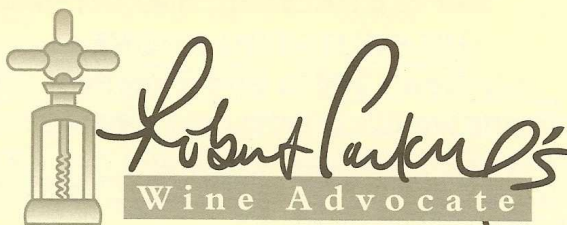


# Domaine de la Charbonnière



The Independent Consumer's Bimonthly Guide to Fine Wine

## Issue #169 February 2007

DOM. DE LA CHARBONNIERE	2005	CHATEAUNEUF DU PAPE	(\$35.00)	RED	(90-93)
DOM. DE LA CHARBONNIERE	2004	CHATEAUNEUF DU PAPE	(\$32.00-35.00)	RED	89
DOM. DE LA CHARBONNIERE	2005	CHATEAUNEUF DU PAPE MOURRE DES PERDRIX	(\$50.00-55.00)	RED	(91-93)
DOM. DE LA CHARBONNIERE	2004	CHATEAUNEUF DU PAPE MOURRE DES PERDRIX	(\$45.00)	RED	90
DOM. DE LA CHARBONNIERE	2005	CHAT. DU PAPE LES HAUTES BRUSQUIERES CUV. SPECIALE	(\$55.00-60.00)	RED	(91-94+?)
DOM. DE LA CHARBONNIERE	2004	CHAT. DU PAPE LES HAUTES BRUSQUIERES CUV. SPECIALE	(\$55.00)	RED	91
DOM. DE LA CHARBONNIERE	2005	CHATEAUNEUF DU PAPE CUVÉE VIEILLES VIGNES	(\$55.00)	RED	(92-94)
DOM. DE LA CHARBONNIERE	2004	CHATEAUNEUF DU PAPE CUVÉE VIEILLES VIGNES	(\$50.00)	RED	90
DOM. DE LA CHARBONNIERE	2005	VACQUEYRAS	(\$28.00)	RED	(88-90)
DOM. DE LA CHARBONNIERE	2004	VACQUEYRAS	(\$28.00)	RED	87

Proprietor Michel Maret makes classic Châteauneuf du Papes that drink well young yet have the ability to age for 10-15 years. His 1998s are just starting to hit their prime. I suspect 2004 will mature more quickly, but his 2005s will be very long-lived wines. The style emphasizes structure, loads of Provençal typicity and impressive purity and overall balance. The **2004 Châteauneuf du Pape** displays classic kirsch liqueur notes along with raspberry and loamy soil in a medium to full-bodied, lush, up-front and relatively evolved style. Drink it over the next 6-7 years. The single-vineyard Châteauneuf du Pape, the **2004 Mourre des Perdrix**, has a slightly darker ruby color than its sibling and more *garigue* notes intermixed with plenty of ground pepper, resinous pine forest, raspberry, and kirsch liqueur notes. It is medium to full-bodied, soft, elegant, pure, and beautifully balanced. Drink it over the next 7-10 years. The dark ruby **2004 Châteauneuf du Pape Vieilles Vignes** is more layered, but dominated by its kirsch liqueur notes intermixed with pepper and earth. The wine is expansive, beautifully textured, and tastes like a sweet cherry cocktail with plenty of structure and decent acidity. This is a beauty that should evolve for up to a decade or more. The last cuvée, which is also from one of the most revered vineyard sectors of Châteauneuf du Pape, is the **2004 Châteauneuf du Pape Les Hautes Brusquières Cuvée Spéciale**. This is the essence of Provence with its notes of licorice, black cherry jam, raspberries, and copious Provençal herbs and spices. The wine is medium to full-bodied, deep, opulent, luscious, and accessible now. It should drink well for at least 10-12 years, as it is by far the biggest and deepest of these cuvées.

It is harder to differentiate among the cuvées in 2005 as they all have a much more saturated ruby/purple-tinged color and firmer structures with more tannin and considerably more muscle and fruit. The **2005 Châteauneuf du Pape** has a dark ruby/purple color and a classic nose of *crème de cassis* intermixed with dusty soil notes as well as licorice, roasted herbs, and meaty notes. Deep and full-bodied, with ripe, but noticeable

tannin and decent acidity, it should drink well for 12+ years. As for the **2005 Châteauneuf du Pape Mourre des Perdrix**, this has the most saturated purple color of the four cuvées, oodles of black raspberry and cherry fruit, with hints of licorice, flowers, and incense. It is deep, rich, broad, and powerful, with moderately high tannins and decent acidity. It will require 1-3 years of bottle age and drink well for 12-15 years. Huge tannins, structure, and considerable amounts of *crème de cassis* and kirsch liqueur dominate the dark ruby/purple-colored **2005 Châteauneuf du Pape Vieilles Vignes**. Pure, deep, rich, and intense, this is a superb example of Châteauneuf du Pape that has both the structure and sweetness of fruit as well as plenty of glycerin and texture. Again, I think this wine is going to need several years of bottle age to hit its stride because of the tannin profile, but it then should evolve for 15 or more years. Cut from the same mold and not as different, at least not yet, the **2005 Châteauneuf du Pape Les Hautes Brusquières Cuvée Spéciale** has a more opaque ruby color than the Vieilles Vignes cuvée, more pine needle and resinous notes, but full body in a deep style with austere tannins and a closed, difficult-to-penetrate character. It is well-endowed, full-bodied, and powerful, but was backward and difficult to fully assess on the day I had it. It will need 3-4 years of cellaring and should drink well for 15+ years.

A sleeper selection from Charbonnière is their excellent Vacqueyras. The dark ruby/plum/purple-hued, medium to full-bodied, long, rich **2005 Vacqueyras** offers classic notes of ground pepper, roasted Provençal herbs, and kirsch liqueur. It is not far off the quality of this estate's beautiful Châteauneuf du Papes. Enjoy it over the next 7-8 years. A more near-term prospect is the **2004 Vacqueyras**, which exhibits loads of up-front strawberry and black cherry fruit along with notions of loamy soil, pepper, and herbs. Soft, round, and medium-bodied, it is best consumed over the next 3-4 years. Importer: Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA; tel. (510) 524-1524