

Domaine de la Charbonnière

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Tasting Highlights: Châteauneuf-du-Pape Whites

15 excellent recent releases, most from the 2007 vintage

[*James Molesworth*](#)

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I've said it before and I'll say it again: [Châteauneuf-du-Pape whites are probably the best white wines that you're not drinking](#). Châteauneuf-du-Pape is dominated by red wine—it comprises 95 percent of the appellation's production, and unless you've been living in a cave, you know the string of great vintages that the wines have benefited from.

But don't overlook the whites. Made from a mix of grapes—Grenache Blanc, Clairette, Roussanne, Bourboulenc and Picpoul—white Châteauneuf-du-Papes offer a range of fruit, from citrus to melon, along with floral, heather, mineral and more.

Most producers have updated their vinification. Gone are the often waxy, sometimes oxidized wines of the past—though there are a few holdouts. Today, most producers elect to make their wine in a fresh, minerally style (sometimes without malolactic fermentation) or use barrel fermentation and *bâtonnage* (stirring of the lees) to fashion richer, creamier wines instead.

Most of the appellation's whites are best drunk within their first year or two, though a handful have a track record for aging, Clos des Papes' versions in particular. The wines match well with seafood, lightly sauced pasta, Provençal vegetable tarts, chicken or pork.

DOMAINE DE LA CHARBONNIÈRE Châteauneuf-du-Pape White 2007 Score: 89 / \$47

A fresh, tangy style, with lots of lime, green plum and melon notes followed by a stony finish. Grenache Blanc, Roussanne and Clairette, fermented in a mix of barrel and stainless steel. Drink now through 2009. 180 cases made. —*J.M.*

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