

# MAISONS MARQUES & DOMAINES



Delas Frères

## St. Joseph Sainte-Épine

Rhône, France

Vintage: 2020

### Overview

This wine was reputed in the 16th century for its delicacy, and was poured at the table of the kings of France. It was the Jesuits of Tournon who gave the area its current name in the 17th century. Between 1956 and 1969, all the vineyards from this area which used to be named Côtes du Rhône were regrouped and established under the appellation Saint-Joseph.

Almost a micro-appellation, the south-facing Sainte-Épine hill is an exception. It was once the home to the Commanderie de Sainte-Épine-Lès-Tournon which belonged to the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem. The Sainte-Épine plot, covering around 2.5 acres in the commune of Saint-Jean de Muzols in the heart of the appellation, has soils of decomposed granite soil resembling that of the Hermitage hill's Les Bessards with the addition of metamorphic schist. There is only one team allowed to pick the grapes in this vineyard: the Delas team. Sainte-Épine's terroir and exposure are among the most coveted in the appellation.

This cuvée is a vineyard plot selection only made in the very best years and production is deliberately limited to 4,000 bottles per year.

### Winemaking

The Sainte-Épine grapes are harvested by hand, at optimum maturity. Fermentation takes place in traditional, open-topped concrete tanks, after three days of pre-fermentary skin contact at cool temperatures. Maceration continues at controlled temperatures of 82°F to 86°F. Daily cap pressing and pumping takes place for about 10 days, with a total maceration period of up to 20 days. The wine is aged for 14 to 18 months in oak barrels in one half new, one half one-year-old barrels. The barrels are topped up regularly.

### Tasting Notes

The wine has a signature style similar to that of Les Bessards. It contains the vigor of the granite and the "edge" of the schist softened by the suppleness of the deeper, more aerated soils. Its aging in Burgundy barrels polish it to a pebble-like smoothness, giving the wine a caressing mouthfeel. Meaty and mineral, Sainte-Épine is a top-flight Saint-Joseph. Time, once again, will give it its "thickness".

The wine has a deep ruby color with purple tinges. Its nose shows aromas of blackberries and spices, lifted by some mineral and gently wooded notes. Well concentrated, this has pure flavors that come to the palate in successive layers of varying aromas, all of equal intensity.

### Food Pairing

This wine pairs well with game, marinated beef in sauce, grilled food, green peppers and any kind of cheese.

### TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Varietals: 100% Syrah