



Hermitage Ligne de Crête 2020



VARIETALS:
100% Syrah

OVERVIEW

This wine is made exclusively from the "Les Grandes Vignes" plot situated at the peak of the Hermitage hillside at around 325m altitude. This primarily south-facing plot forms an amphitheatre of semicircular vine terraces. In the very best years, production is limited to 1,800 to 2,000 bottles. This wine is made exclusively from the Syrah varietal.

WINEMAKING

Harvesting by hand using small 12kg crates which are then taken directly to the winery's ultramodern vinification facilities in Tain l'Hermitage. The grapes are stored in a cold chamber for 12 to 24 hours before being vatted. The stems are removed and the fruit is then elevated above the vinification vats and transferred into the truncated stainless steel vats using a gravity system. Temperatures are closely monitored and fermentation and maceration last for around three weeks. It is generally during the first stage of fermentation that a gentle extraction is carried out using a careful amount of pumping over and cap punching.

The wine is de-vatted before being racked and transferred to the barrels. Malolactic fermentation takes place in the barrel and is followed by 20 months of closely monitored aging. To ensure that the wine retains its character, finesse and subtlety, only wood with a fine and extra-fine grain is selected for the barrels. For the same reasons, the percentage of new oak is kept to no more than 30 or 40%.

TASTING NOTES

The nose discloses aromas of spice and leather intertwined with deep berry aromas (blackberry, redcurrant) and heady floral notes, liquorice and incense. Its richness, complexity and elegance are by no means a contradiction. The finest granite soils of the Hermitage hillside are to thank for this wine's incredible minerality and finesse. The wine is rich and dense on entry to the palate, where it shows an elegant, broad and flavorsome character. The ripe, smooth and well-integrated tannins contribute to the wine's powerful yet harmonious structure. The palate reveals the same aromas as those found on the nose with nuances of blueberry, raspberry, violet and bitter chocolate. Ligne de Crête is characterized by its exceptional structure, harmony and balance.

99
POINTS
JEB DUNNUCK

Lastly, the 2020 Hermitage Ligne de Crête comes from the highest point on Hermitage and was destemmed and saw 20 months in a mix of new and once-used barrels. It's clearly the biggest, baddest beauty in the lineup and is another palate-saturating Hermitage with extraordinary richness and depth. Blackberries, currants, black truffle, smoked meats, espresso, and new leather notes all define this incredible wine, which has a deep, full-bodied, multi-dimensional mouthfeel, ripe, velvety tannins, and incredibly minerality that emerges on the finish. This is legit, awesome Hermitage that needs to be forgotten for just 4-6 years and will evolve for 30+ years if well-stored.

95
POINTS
Wine Spectator

This is packed with inviting boysenberry and mulberry pâte de fruit flavors, harnessed for now by taut mesquite and apple wood notes and set against a backdrop of anise, violet and black tea. Remarkably fresh through the finish, belying a well-buried iron note. Hard to resist now, but just you wait. Best from 2023 through 2036.

95
POINTS
Wine Spectator

The bouquet is deep, complex, and shows a bit more new oaky influence out of the blocks from having had its malo done in cask, with the the nose delivering a blend of cassis, pepper, hung game, dark chocolate, cigar ash, dark soil tones, smoke and a fine framing of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and already beautifully harmonious on the attack, with a rock solid core of fruit, ripe, 82 buried tannins excellent focus and balance and a long, nascently complex and chewy finish. This wine is a bit more primary than either the les Bessards or Domaine des Tourettes bottlings, probably due to its different cellar regimen, and it will be fascinating to follow the evolution of all three and see which ones age the best over the coming decades. At this early point, the cellar techniques used for the Ligne de Crête have produced the most elegant example of young Hermitage, but I wonder if a bit of soil complexity may have been sacrificed by doing the malo in barrel. 2037-2085.

97-98
POINTS
vinous

Deep, vivid ruby. Smoky, mineral- and spice-accented red and dark berry preserve scents show excellent clarity and a sexy floral top note. Offers concentrated but wonderfully energetic blackberry, bitter cherry and spicecake flavors that become sweeter and pick up hints of candied flowers, vanilla and olive on the back half. Finishes chewy, sharply focused and extremely long, with solid tannins adding shape and final grip.