

PREMIUM

St-Joseph: Revisiting 2022 in bottle

Matt Walls takes another look at the hot and dry 2022 vintage in St-Joseph now that the wines are in bottle, and selects 35 of his favourites.



Matt Walls

April 22, 2025



St-Joseph Le Paradis vineyard, looking downstream over the village of Mauves.
Credit: Matt Walls

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scores for 2022 St-Joseph
in bottle

Record-breaking extremes

To describe the weather as extreme in 2022 is no exaggeration. A weather station in Orange recorded the hottest May on record. It counted 37 days when temperatures reached over 35°C – only 2003 saw more.

And it wasn't just the days that were sweltering; average nighttime temperatures were the hottest ever recorded.

It was also exceptionally dry. Between 15 October 2021 and 1 September 2022, only 300mm of rain was recorded – compared to 600mm in a normal year.

In summary, between budbreak and harvest, 2022 was the hottest, driest year in the Rhône since records began in 1950.

Easy for growers



Graeme and Julie Bott of Domaine Bott. Credit: BOTT GRAEME & JULIE

Conditions like this were felt throughout the Rhône Valley, and St-Joseph was no different. For winemakers, it made for a relaxed year.

'It was easy to manage in the vineyard,' says Ludovic Izerable of Domaine Lionnet, who has vineyards in the southern part of the appellation near Cornas.

Graeme Bott of Domaine Bott, located at the northern end of St-Joseph, agreed.

‘There was no water for downy mildew to be an issue and it was too hot for powdery mildew to be an issue either,’ he says, ‘Work overall in the vineyards was quite straightforward and it was one of the years which required a lower amount of manpower due to the slower development of the vines.’

Tough on vines

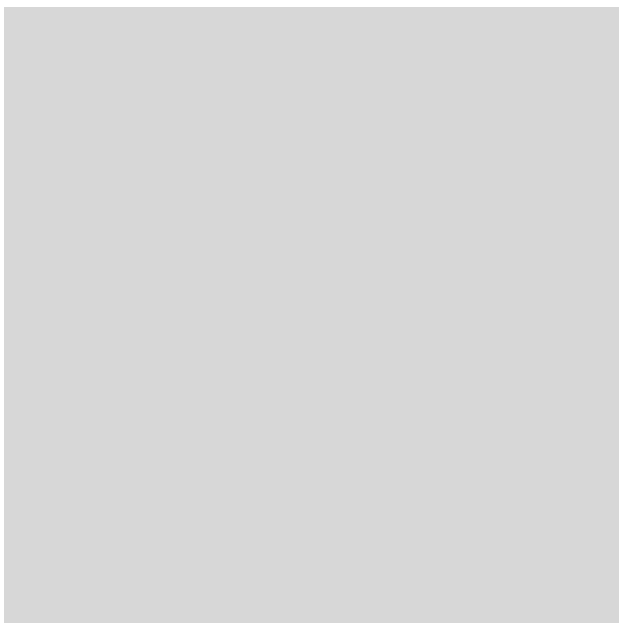
The harsh conditions were tough on the vines, however. Growth was stunted due to the heat and drought, and young vines struggled.

Damien Brisset, head winemaker at Ferraton, says, ‘we had to adapt by practicing minimalist viticulture – no leaf plucking, no trimming the canopy – and also by regulating the crop load in some plots through green harvesting, to limit blockages in ripening during August and September.’

Winemakers also had to modify the way they worked in the cellar.

‘We chose to use a higher than normal percentage of whole bunches in the reds and worked the wines with just one short pump over per day,’ says Bott.

Brisset also opted for, ‘the gentlest possible extractions’.



Fabrice Gripa in Le Paradis vineyard in St-Joseph. Credit: Matt Walls

Powerful reds

When I tasted the 2022 red St-Josephs from barrel, there was significant stylistic variation – most had the power you would expect from such a year, but some were surprisingly lean due to blockages in ripening due to heat and drought.

After some time in bottle, this is still the case; some are light, aromatic and best drunk young. But most are in the other camp – powerful, densely tannic, darkly fruited.

So it's a vintage with something for everyone.

Inevitably, some of the wines were less exciting. This was usually down to uneven or blocked ripening resulting in a green, bitter streak or a lack of depth. Some were very reductive; others were over-oaked.

But largely, 2022 is a very good vintage for St-Joseph reds – one with energy, intensity and serious tannic structure.

Intense whites

The whites broadly share this drive and concentration, with plenty of extract and salinity. Oak can help accentuate this, but it wasn't always needed in 2022 thanks to the natural intensity of the fruit.

In hot vintages, whites can be prone to flabbiness – such as in 2018. But sometimes the effect is to accentuate their intensity and salinity, such as 2010 and 2017 – and 2022.

Bott was happy with both colours. 'It is a very good vintage for both whites and reds which is not always the case,' he says.

'I think the reason being is that with the heat and lack of rain during the last ripening period the grapes reduced in size and concentrated both sugar and acidity, similar to 2019 in Burgundy, so we actually kept reasonable acidity levels considering the vintage.'

Wines for ageing

After a year or so in bottle, usually I would expect most St-Josephs to be ready to start drinking, but most 2022s need another couple of years in bottle to soften.

They will have unusual longevity too – typically around 10 years, but some will go on to mature and develop for 20. Be aware that the more structured wines are likely to feel quite hard and serious in youth. It's a vintage that will really blossom in time.

So if you enjoy the smoky complexity of aged northern Rhône Syrah, 2022 St-Joseph will prove a particularly cost effective way of stocking your cellar. Some of the whites will prove deliciously long-lasting too.

'If we compare statistics, 2022 would be similar to 2003, however it was not at all the same style of wine produced,' says Bott, 'much lower alcohol levels and more balanced ripeness.'

In 2003, no one had experienced such heat and drought before, so it caught winemakers by surprise, many of them were still on holiday when they needed to start picking.

In 2022, they were prepared – and the results are so much better.

St-Joseph 2022: The wines to try



Domaine Benoît
Roseau, Sur le
Quartz, St-Joseph,
Rhône, France 2022

A powerful, grand style of
white St-Joseph, large in its
proportions, expansive,...

Points 94

Domaine Lionnet, Pierre Blanche,
St-Joseph, Rhône, France 2022

A floral, fresh style with ripe nectarine flavours.
There's no distracting oak, just plentiful powerful
fruit. This has volume and salinity, presence and...

Points 94



M Chapoutier, Les Granits, St-Joseph, Rhône, France 2022

This wine has power and intensity teamed with freshness and sufficient...

Points 94



Domaine Bernard Grippa, Le Berceau, St-Joseph, Rhône, France 2022

A wine that's fresh but mellow in aroma, then yields to a full-bodied, with vanilla and brioche notes from the oak, which also gives a satin texture. It's...



Points 93

Domaine Bott, St-Joseph, Rhône, France 2022

Rich buttery mango and pear aromas lead onto a very full-bodied, rich and...



Points 93

Domaine Coursodon, Le Paradis Saint-Pierre, St-Joseph, Rhône, France 2022

Open, rich and ripe, this is certainly ready to drink. It has good depth of fruit, notably pear with a note of buttered popcorn, and it's full-bodied, satin...



Points 93



Domaine Gonon,
Les Oliviers, St-
Joseph, Rhône,
France 2022

Daffodil freshness on the
nose with musky quince
notes. It's very full and...

Points 93

M Chapoutier, Les Granilites, St-
Joseph, Rhône, France 2022

Really spicy on the nose, with smart oak work
framing the pineapple fruit. It's fairly full-bodied,
certainly full-flavoured, but not heavy as it keeps ...



Points 93



Domaine
Coursodon, Silice,
St-Joseph, Rhône,
France 2022

Not quite as structured as
some, this is very ripe and
fruity, with plenty of pupp...

Points 92

Ferraton Père & Fils, Les Oliviers,
St-Joseph, Rhône, France 2022

The only wine of 11 white St-Josephs tasted
alongside each other that has notable struck-match
reduction. It works, adding some smoky...



Points 92



M Chapoutier, Les Granits, St-Joseph, Rhône, France 2022

This is an intense wine with smoky cassis aromas. On the palate the acidity is...

Points 94

Pierre Gaillard, Clos de Cuminaille, St-Joseph, Rhône, France 2022

Dark and brooding, with peppery spice, vanilla and smoky bacon notes. This has lovely tannic finesse, great energy, bright acidity and tension. It really...



Points 94



Domaine Benoît
Roseau, Patagone,
St-Joseph, Rhône,
France 2022

The nose is immediately
fresh and appealing, with
notes of juniper, hibiscus...

Points 93

Domaine Bott, St-Joseph, Rhône,
France 2022

Rather faint on the nose, and quite reductive for
now, although new leather and ripe blackberry
aromas come with air. Then it's very punchy on th...



Points 93



Domaine Laurent
Habrard, St-Joseph,
Rhône, France 2022

Peppery oregano notes on
the nose, followed by some
weight and fruit richness o...

Points 93

Ferraton Père & Fils, Paradis, St-
Joseph, Rhône, France 2022

Dark and quite insular for now, but this has lovely
tannic finesse and freshness, with good acidity. It's
concentrated, and has seen quite a bit of oak, so it...



Points 93



M Chapoutier, Le Clos, St-Joseph, Rhône, France 2022

More oak work than most, but on the palate it works well, and it won't dominat...

Points 93

Pierre Gaillard, Les Pierres, St-Joseph, Rhône, France 2022

This is good: a complete, full-bodied wine that's quite extracted, with plentiful bullish tannins. The oak is forthright, but the wine meets it. It will be...

Points 93



Delas, Sainte-Epine,
St-Joseph, Rhône,
France 2022

Highly spiced, nutmeg and
cinnamon nose. Fairly full-
bodied, this is a sweetly ri...

Points 92



Domaine Benoît Roseau, La Ribaude,
St-Joseph, Rhône, France 2022

Strong juniper and hibiscus notes on the nose, with
underlying smoke. It's tight for now, but has real
energy and vibrancy. There's a slight bitter twang...



Points 92



Domaine
Coursodon, Olivaie,
St-Joseph, Rhône,
France 2022

A structured style of St-
Joseph with present tannins,
firm acidity and enjoyable...

Points 92

Domaine Farge, Terroir de Granit,
St-Joseph, Rhône, France 2022

Quietly fragrant, with bright, zesty berry fruits.
This is powerful, with denim-like tannins and firm
acidity. There's a good sense of purity, even thoug...

Points 92



Domaine Niero, Bois
Prieur, St-Joseph,
Rhône, France 2022

A lighter style among the
structured 2022s, this is
perfumed, fragrant and...

Points 92



E Guigal, Vignes de l'Hospice, St-
Joseph, Rhône, France 2022

Aromas of earthy blackcurrant, with generous oak
spice, cola and clove. It has good acidity and
brightness, and no overextraction. An interesting...



Points 92



Emmanuel
Darnaud, Lieu-dit
La Dardouille, St-
Joseph, Rhône,
France 2022

With its rich blackberry
aromas, this is an enjoyably
ripe, full-bodied, powerful...

Points 92

Ferraton Père & Fils, Bonneveau, St-
Joseph, Rhône, France 2022

Dark and brooding currently, this is a little
introverted now, but it's promising. It's full-bodied,
concentrated and powerful, with dense, fairly soli...



Points 92



M Chapoutier, Les
Granilites, St-
Joseph, Rhône,
France 2022

Seductive fruity aromas with
a cheeky lick of oak, which
adds some complexity. A...

Points 92

Delas, François de Tournon, St-
Joseph, Rhône, France 2022

Violets, blueberries, black cherry and a touch of
rubber all on the nose. This is full-bodied for a
2022, the oak is quite prominent on the palate, but...



Points 91



Domaine Courbis,
St-Joseph, Rhône,
France 2022

Currently quite closed, but
you can tell there's an
interesting wine hiding aw...

Points 91

Domaine Courbis, Les Royes, St-
Joseph, Rhône, France 2022

Fresh and spicy aromatics, there's some graphite
notes on the mid-palate, as well as smoke and flint.
The acidity is quite cutting. It's only medium-...



Points 91



Domaine
Coursodon, Silice,
St-Joseph, Rhône,
France 2022

Decidedly introverted at the
time of tasting, but there's
plenty here it's just all...

Points 91

Jeanne Gaillard, La Relève, St-
Joseph, Rhône, France 2022

Softer and more gentle than many 2022s, this has
enjoyably ripe fruit and tannin; the flipside is that
the alcohol is a touch warming, accentuating the...



Points 91



M Chapoutier,
Deschamps, St-
Joseph, Rhône,
France 2022

Fresh blackberry and
blackberry jam aromas lead
onto a powerful palate that...

Points 91

Domaine Belle, Les Rivoires, St-
Joseph, Rhône, France 2022

The oak work is quite forthright, with strong clove
flavours. This power, drive and concentration with
freshness underneath, so should repay cellaring. I...

Points 90



Famille Ravoire,
Olivier Ravoire
Oriflamme, St-
Joseph, Rhône,
France 2022

Surprisingly pale in colour.
This is really quite open and
giving already, feeling quit...

Points 90

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