

ANDRÉ BRUNEL





## OUR FAMILY AND ESTATE

**Our family has been in the Châteauneuf-du-Pape region since the 17th century and has been fully committed to making wine for five generations.**

As of the 17th century, the wine-making activity of our family was testified by the purchase of a vineyard plot from the Bishop of Avignon to the north of the appellation. Numerous generations followed on, all working in the vineyards but it was only in 1954 that Lucien Brunel created the name “Les Cailloux” to develop the business and promote the Domaine’s wine qualities and special characteristics. From that time on, it was referred to as the Domaine Les Cailloux.

In 1971, André Brunel took over the reins of the Domaine. His endless motivation resulted in a rapid growth for the Domaine: repurchasing of Côtes du Rhône and Vins de Pays vines, and launch of the infamous Centenary Cuvée in 1989. He also made some considerable changes in the vine management process by being one of the first people in Châteauneuf-du-Pape to use the ground covering method and to proceed with a non-chemical approach to wine-farming.

In 2012, his son, Fabrice Brunel, joined the team so the family history can continue.

The Estate is divided up into three appellations: Châteauneuf-du-Pape of course, but also Côtes du Rhône and Vaucluse Vins de Pays. Our pursuit for quality, our utmost respect for the land and the drive to always provide our customers with wines they can enjoy throughout their aging, impels us to be immeasurably meticulous during its production, regardless of its appellation.

The differences are mainly the maturing times (longer for the Châteauneuf, and shorter for the Vins de Pays to make them available sooner) and the usage of vats (for Syrahs in Châteauneuf-du-Pape to mellow out the tannins, absent on the Côtes du Rhône and the Vins de Pays to maintain the fruits freshness).

**We want to produce wines reflecting their region and origin while remaining elegant and wonderfully subtle.**





### **Châteauneuf-du-Pape**

The Domaine boasts 51 acres (21 hectares) under the Châteauneuf-du-Pape appellation, including 5 acres with whites, which are divided up into about ten segments. The largest are Farguerol to the north, Revès and Plan du Rhône to the south and Bois de la Ville at the top end of the village. The soils vary with countless round pebbles but also sandy and clayey soils.

Ground topography: analysis of a segment with round pebbles. The “useful” layers for the vineyard are in tiers of about 3 metres:

- From 0 to 20 inches (0 to 50 cm): mainly pebbles (80%) completed by sand. Large amount of roots.
- From 20 to 55 inches (50 to 140 cm): large amount of pebbles (60%), the rest being mostly clay. A lot of fine roots and rootlets.
- From 55 to 118 inches (140 to 300 cm): layer of accumulated clay but still with pebbles (about 20%).

Deep roots make it easier to trap water which is present over 26 feet (2 meters) under the surface and the pebbles reduce the evaporation due to heat or the Mistral. Therefore the plant is well hydrated even during hot summer weather.

### **Grape varieties planted**

The red grape varieties are mainly Grenache Noir, followed by Mourvèdre, Syrah and Cinsault:

- 70% of Grenache, which, if harvested when very ripe, contribute to the strength, roundness and aromas of crushed red fruits,
- 17% of Mourvèdre which, planted in suitable soil (sandy clay) and harvested late, contribute to the structure of lively tannins, emphasizing the qualities of Grenache without making them denatured,
- 10% of Syrah which gives aromas of fresh black fruits and for amplified the color,
- 3% of Cinsault which gives a bit of lightness to the whole.

In white grapes, Roussanne dominates (85%) followed by White Grenache (15%)



## THE CLIMATE

### **An ideal climate for wine-growing.**

**The Mistral:** *A strong, cold northwesterly wind that blows through the Rhône Valley and southern France into the Mediterranean, mainly in the winter.*

The Mistral's strength is highly visible within the landscape: trees bowing-over, Cyprus hedges arranged to protect living areas, houses with no openings to the north ... Despite all of this, the Mistral undeniably has several benefits for wine-growing – it drains the soils, guaranteeing a Mediterranean climate for most of the year, it limits vineyard diseases by reducing humidity, it gives grapes a larger sugar content, it dries grapes after the rain, it protects them from the frost. Many harvests could have been lost if the Mistral had not been blowing after some of the storms which hit during the month of September.

### **Hours of Sunshine:**

2800 hours per year. One of the highest in France (Corsica not included) and much higher than the Bordeaux region (less than 2100 hours) and Burgundy (less than 2000 hours).

### **Rain:**

The Châteauneuf-du-Pape region is the driest part of the Vaucluse (24 inches of rainfall on average against 30 inches in Orange which is only 12 miles away). So the climate is perfect for wine as long as the sometimes violent rain doesn't fall during harvest time in September and October.

### **Soils:**

The purely natural diversity of soils is explanation enough for the wines complexity: limestone from marine or alluvial deposit, sandy soils (on the banks of the Rhône), calcareous soils (hard and dry or soft and marly) or even alluvial clay soils ... just a short list of the varied soil types present in the region.



## Châteauneuf-du-Pape Specificities

### Terroir

Even if round pebbles are present on numerous plots, they certainly don't cover the whole appellation area which boasts a very wide variety of soils. Some sectors are composed of gravelly or sandy earth and some even with calcareous or calcareous-clay soils. The environment is equally varied with successions of plains, plateau, terraces and hillsides.

### The infamous Châteauneuf-du-Pape “round pebbles” and their effects on the wine

During the Ice Age, these pebbles were swept down from the Alps by the Rhône River when it covered the entire valley. These pebbles are very numerous in some plots, giving the impression that the vineyards literally grew within a sea of pebbles. These are mostly composed of large rock crystals mixed with red sandy clay. After storing up the day's heat, they return it to the soil and vines over night, thus contributing to preserving the vine stocks at a constant temperature, allowing for bunches to ripen perfectly.



### **Côtes du Rhône**

The Domaine boasts about 98 acres (40 hectares) in Côtes du Rhône, mostly located to the east of the city of Orange and the rest being in the Gard near Lirac.

#### **Ground topography**

The upper ground layer is mostly made of modern sandy-clay type alluvial deposit. It has the advantage of being able to resist water stress in summer, therefore limiting vineyard irrigation. The lower layers are mainly made of limestone with a strong draining capacity. The roots are therefore less deep than for Châteauneuf-du-Pape. The climate is exceptionally sunny with an average rain-water amount of 25 inches (650 mm).

#### **Grape varieties planted**

The grape varieties are made up of old Grenache vines (nearly 85%) which are over 40 years old.

The Domaine also had 3.7 acres (1.5 hectares) of Côtes du Rhône whites in the commune of Bédarrides which has been replanted with new vines of the Roussanne, Clairette and White Grenache varieties.



## A Bit of History



### Wine-Growing Development in the Rhône Valley

The first vines date back to the settlement of Greek explorers along the Mediterranean around 600 B.C. Starting from this period and up until the relative peace during the Pax Romana, the Rhône had become an ideal, and the only fully-operational, trade route for many centuries. The Roman period witnessed the growth of local farming to meet the needs of European armies and numerous settlers who came to live in Gaul ... and the Gaul population themselves were great consumers of their national production. Our ancestors were therefore rapidly reputed to mastering vineyards (planting, grafting, pruning ...) and also to contributing to various technical innovations such, an example among many others, replacing the amphora by the wood barrel.

After the Fall of the Roman Empire, the church ensured the maintenance, and even the development of a quality production. Benedictines, Charthusians, Templars, Knights of Malta ... well implanted in the valley, each Order successively made wine-making their living. The arrival of Popes in Avignon in 1309 guaranteed the recognition all over the Christian world of Châteauneuf-du-Pape wines. Residents for over a century, they saw to the vineyard's extension and reputation in the world over.

In 1860, the phylloxera epidemic brought a sudden halt to the vineyard area's extension and only got back its initial size after 50 years of hard work. New planting and grafting techniques, the patient search for qualitative improvements for implementing the first production rules, the grouping around a common identity ... all led, in 1935, to the creation of the INAO (National Institute for Appellations of Origin).



**The type of vines depends mainly on the soil-type, suitable for one or several varieties, but also on the character that's wanted for the wine.**

Each Domaine plot has thus been carefully analyzed to determine its individual specificities (type of various geological layers, draining capacity, sun exposure,...) and therefore to chose the most appropriate grape variety.

For Châteauneuf-du-Pape, the grape variety planted has one objective: produce a powerful but elegant wine which keeps well but can also be enjoyed when young.

This led to the strategic planting definition below for our Châteauneuf du Pape red :

- 70% of Grenaches harvested when very ripe, giving wines full of generosity, roundness and aromas of crushed red fruits,
- 17% of Mourvèdres which, planted in suitable soil (clayey-sandy) and harvested late, bring structure and firm tannins, reinforcing, but not impairing the Grenache qualities,
- 10% of Syrah, giving aromas of fresh black fruits and accentuated color,
- 3% of Cinsaults makes gives the whole a bit more light.

For our Châteauneuf du Pape Blanc, we decided to use Roussanne (80%) and Grenache Blanc (20%). In 2020, we will also integrate a part of Clairette to enhance the balance and the freshness of our wines



**We use sustainable farming methods, boasting the utmost respect for our vineyards and are deeply aware to preserve a healthy long-term growing environment.**

We therefore believe in:

We never use any sort of herbicide or pesticide,

We believe in partial companion planting of the vineyards; which means we leave grass growing around the vines.

The main benefits of this are:

Improve the structure and load bearing capacity: machines can enter the vineyards without sinking into the ground, therefore without compacting the superficial layer.

Protect the soil from harsh climatic conditions, notably hydraulic – limiting the natural gullying and infiltration of water by using a larger root system,

Make vines compete for water access, allowing notably for a higher concentration of sugar and aromas in the grapes and a reduction in the yield.

Plowing:

Plowing is an ancestral method for working the soil. It was especially used during the Antiquity period to bury the seeds well into the ground, allowing them to grow and prevent them from being eaten by birds. Nowadays, plowing is a controversial subject. It has many benefits but also some inconveniences.

Benefits:

It restructures and aerates the soil, forcing the roots to grow deep-down in order to find the necessary nutrients,

It mixes the soil with farming residue, solid dung, lime and mineral fertiliser, while introducing oxygen,

It controls several perennial weeds and prevents other weeds from growing in the spring at the same time as the vines,

It breaks the disease cycle.



**Vinification is the transformation process of grapes into wine. There are many successive steps where each choice made by the wine-maker will influence the end-quality of the wine.**

The main steps go fairly quickly:

**Destemming (or destalking):** step which consists of separating the berries from the stalk (taking the grapes off the bunch). Keeping the stalks (referred to as the “whole” harvest) allows the wine impurities to be absorbed but an unripe stalk can give very unpleasant herbaceous aromas.

**Crushing:** step which consists of bursting the grapes to release the juice.

**Pressing:** step which consists of pressing the grapes to recuperate the juice and have it sent to a decanting vat.

**Settling of the must:** settling of the juice by removing floating particles.

**Alcoholic fermentation:** step where the yeasts slowly change the sugar into alcohol. This step produces powerful CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and increases the temperature in the vat. This lasts between 15 and 45 days.

This step coincides with the **maceration**: the must (juice) is in contact with the skin to allow the tannin and color to be extracted.

Several methods exist to optimize this work:

- Pumping over which consists of recuperating the fermenting must accumulated at the bottom of the vat and pouring it onto the cap which floats on the vat surface,
- Rack and return which consists of recuperating the must at the bottom of the vat and pouring it into a second vat and then sending it back onto the cap,
- Punching of the cap which consists of crushing the cap into the fermenting juice by breaking it up to extract the color and aromas.



### Our working methods

The grapes, carefully picked and sorted by grape-pickers in the vineyard, are sent as-is to the vinification cellar in small containers. Upon arrival, they are transferred into a rolling receiving bin for grapes (large conical stainless steel container) which forward them to their final destination. This installation is above the cellar allowing for the grapes to just fall into the vat where they'll be vinified.

### Vinification of White Grapes

Only white grapes picked in the morning pass through **the crusher** (small machine made of two rollers which burst open the grapes as they pass through) and then go down into a **pneumatic pressing machine**.

For the next two hours, this pressing machine, using an inflated compressed air membrane, will slowly press the bunches, extracting the juice referred to as must. The latter is then cooled down to 12° and sent into a concrete vat where it will naturally decant for 24 hours. The cleared must is then pumped into the fermentation vat and yeast is added to ensure a slow, regular, low-temperature fermentation during 4-6 weeks.

### Vinification of Red Grapes

A part of them (20 to 40%) are brought directly and whole, to their fermentation vat where they burst open upon arrival after a drop of around 16 feet (5 meters). Their role in the vat is important as the presence of stalks (what holds the bunches of grapes) gives the must a better draining system through the grape and thus facilitates pumping operations.

The acidity of this stalk also contributes to adding a little freshness to the grapes which are often very ripe and therefore lack acidity.

The other part is sent to the **destemming-crushing machine** where grapes are separated from the stalks and then burst to release part of their juice in the vat where they will ferment. When the vat is full, a pump homogenizes the must and simultaneously adds the yeasts which will start-off the fermentation, taking 2-3 weeks between 25-30°.

During this period, **pumping over operations** will be carried out (pumping of the must at the bottom of the vat and sending it to the top where it will sprinkle the solid part which is floating above the must, called the cap).

**This operation is to gently extract the color and tannins** in the grape skins, an extraction we amplify through rack and return. **The latter** consists of totally emptying the must from the vat to obtain a light pressure of the grapes under their own weight, then sending it to the top where the cap soaks in it for several hours.

Once the alcoholic fermentation phase is over, a **maceration** phase begins during which we'll extract the fatty acids such as glycerol which gives wines roundness in the mouth. For this, during the pumping over, we'll carefully try to mix the lees, making them float in what is now the wine where they'll slowly begin to blend.



**These steps are crucial to identify the wine's final character.**

### **Aging**

This step is between the end of the alcoholic fermentation and the bottling. Its main purpose is to tone down the tannins and purify the wine.

There are two major means of doing this:

- Aging in a vat (concrete, stainless steel, and notably resin). It is highly hygienic and makes it easier to keep the wine fruitiness,
- Aging in a barrel (or a cask): it makes it easier to tone down the tannins (necessary for the Syrah for example) and brings some typically “woody” aromas: vanilla, roasted coffee ... Their intensity mainly varies depending on the barrel heating.

**At the Domaine, we prefer using concrete and stainless steel vats to maintain the cleanliness of the fruit** and avoid our wines blending with the woody aromas (vanilla, coconut).

Only the Syrah (10% of the Châteauneuf-du-Pape blending) is aged in vats with 1 or 2 wines to soften the tannins.

### **Blending**

This consists of blending wine from various plots which were initially vinified separately. This is done about 15 to 18 months after harvest.

**Our drive is to make a powerful but elegant wine, boasting fantastic aromatic finesse and great aging potential which explains why the final blending may vary from one year to the next.**

Les Cailloux cuvée will always have a dominant Grenache base mixed with Mourvèdre and Syrah for the tannins and the structure, but the proportion of each can strongly vary depending on the production year.

Once the wine blending has been chosen, the wine is bottled then stocked away from the light and heat before being sent.



## The Wines



## Quintessential Wines

## Meet The Team –

### André Brunel :

- Master degree in mathematics. He was a mathematic teacher for five years in his 20's before coming back to help my grand dad
- He is a big fan of Quentin Tarantino movies, especially Kill Bill 😊
- He is one of the pioneer in Châteauneuf du Pape for the introduction of grass management to control the vigor of the young vines and supply of water
- He has a true « entrepreneurship » spirit with the increase of the size of the estate in new appellations like Côtes du Rhône and Vin de Pays, the creation of a negoci company, one of the first in Châteauneuf to export to US, Japan, ... during the early 80s
- One of the pillar of the defense of the appellation Châteauneuf du Pape in the 90s while being the president of the syndicate of the producers

### Fabrice Brunel :

- Master degrees in engineering and business management
- Work for ten years as a supply chain and production management consultant in a consultancy in Paris
- Love Excel spreadsheets 😊
- Love riding his Triumph motorcycle, running ... and yoga courses 😊
- Try to develop the legacy of his dad : engage in sustainability : solar panels will equip the new winery to provide 70/80% of the energy needed, 90% of the plastic and cardboard used are recycled, etc ...

### The current winemaker is Romain Pitaud :

- Master degree in Oenology
- Three years of vinification in Burgundy
- Two years of vinification in Bordeaux : one made at Smith Haut Lafitte
- One year as the assistant of Philippe Cambie, the famous winemaker of the South of France
- He joined the estate 5 years ago
- Very precise and very talented. Your wines will be in good hands 😊













Quintessential Wines