

Rhone wines blend varieties

Americans are accustomed to identifying wines by the name of the wine's principal grape variety.

The grape wines of France are generally given place names rather than grape names and the wines are frequently blends of several grape varieties. California winemakers blend merlot with cabernet sauvignon because that is exactly what has been done for centuries in Bordeaux.

In France's Rhone Valley, which stretches 140 miles south from Lyon to the Mediterranean Sea, the grape varieties used to produce the mighty red Rhone wines are syrah (see-rah), grenache (gre-nahsh), cinsault (san-so), and mourvedre (moor-vedr). The Rhone Valley is divided into two distinct sub-regions — north and south.

The principal red grape variety in the north is syrah. The red wines of the south are always blends and may consist of as many as 13 grape varieties.

PLACE NAMES (appellations) given northern Rhone wines are Hermitage (air-me-tah), Crozes-Hermitage (croz-air-me-tah), St. Joseph (san zho-sef), Cornas (cor-nahs) and Cote Rotie (coat-ro-tee). In the south, principal red wine place names are Cotes du Rhone (coat dew rohn), Cotes du Rhone Villages (vee-lahj), Chateaufort-du-Pape (sho-toe-nuff dew pap), Cotes du Ventoux (coat dew vahn-too), Vacqueyras (va-kay-ras), and Gigondas (jhe-gon-dah).

We are particularly fond of red Rhone wines, especially those of Paul Jaboulet Aine. Gerald Jaboulet is the managing director and the fourth generation of Jaboulets to guide the firm, which annually pro-



focus on wine

Eleanor and Ray Heald

duces 10 percent of the nearly two million cases of wines from the Rhone Valley. He had the opportunity to taste and discuss the 1989 vintage with him on his recent visit to Michigan.

"WHEN I arrange a tasting of Rhone red wines, I always begin with the wines of the south and work my way north," explains Jaboulet. "This is because the southern wines are blends of several grape varieties, grown in a warmer climate. They are softer and more approachable when young."

"Northern wines are made principally of syrah and tend to be more muscular and tannic, with greater longevity."

The following wines are discussed in Jaboulet's preferred order and represent a sampling of some of the region's best wines.

1989 Chateaufort-du-Pape "Les Cedres" (#24). "Our Les Cedres is more popular than the regular Chateaufort-du-Pape because it is more complex and will age better," Jaboulet comments. This wine is produced from grenache, syrah, mourvedre and cinsault from a Jaboulet proprietary vineyard surrounded by cedar trees which give it its name.

GRENACHE lends character to Chateaufort-du-Pape, while syrah gives tannin, elegance, and longevity. Les Cedres usually exhibits hints of plums, black currants, blackberries, and black truffles.

1989 St. Joseph "Le Grand Pompee" (#21). St. Joseph is an expanding appellation on the west side of the Rhone River. Situated on very

steep, eastern slopes, it is difficult to work the vineyards of St. Joseph. The wine is pure syrah, but without the character of Hermitage because of its eastern exposure. After five o'clock in the afternoon, there is no sun on St. Joseph, but there is still sun on Hermitage.

"WE CALL this the Beaujolais of the Rhone River," Jaboulet says. "The wine is pretty, charming, elegant, without much tannin, and harmonizes with any type of food. When chilled, it will complement fish."

1989 Hermitage "La Chapelle" (#32). Is a connoisseur's wine needing a minimum of a decade's cellaring. Densely purple in color when young, its black currant aromas introduce a full-bodied, complex, extracted wine. Produced from 100 percent syrah from 35-year-old vines, it will mature into a handsome rendition.

WINE SELECTION OF THE WEEK

The following Rhone wines are produced by the house of Paul Jaboulet Aine.

1989 Gigondas (#19) is 100 percent Grenache highlighting ripe plummy fruit with gentle spiciness. The wine's full flavors are balanced by a fruitily finish that's generous and structured yet finesseful.

1989 Muscat de Beauges-de-Venise (#25) is a white Rhone dessert wine showcasing the flowery nose of the muscat grape, followed by richly sweet nectar and full fruit flavors of peaches, apricots, kiwi and pineapples. It should be served well-chilled. Jaboulet explains, "This is a wine to drink young because it loses its fruit very quickly. It should be consumed before the end of the year. A year from now, this wine will be completely different because the fruit will disappear and it will just be a very sweet wine."

Rich Italian pie has cheese, artichokes

AP — Italian food lovers, sink your teeth into this deliciously rich cheese pie that's brimming with mozzarella, artichokes, olives, garlic and Parmesan cheese. Round out your meal with fresh fruit and crunchy breadsticks. If you have some leftover pie, serve it chilled for a light supper or appetizer the next day.

ITALIAN ARTICHOKE PIE

3 EGG
One 3-ounce package cream cheese with chives, softened
1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
1 1/2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese (8 ounces)
1 cup ricotta cheese
1/4 cup mayonnaise or salad dressing
One 13 1/2-ounce can artichoke hearts
1 cup cooked garbanzo beans
1/4 cup sliced pitted ripe olives
One 2-ounce jar diced pimiento, drained
2 tablespoons snipped parsley

1 unbaked 9-inch pastry shell
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
4 tomato slices, halved

In a mixing bowl beat eggs. Stir in cream cheese, garlic powder and pepper. Stir in 1 cup mozzarella, the ricotta and mayonnaise or salad dressing.

Drain artichokes. Quarter 2 artichoke hearts and set aside. Chop remaining artichoke hearts; fold into cheese mixture. Fold in garbanzo beans, olives, pimiento and parsley.

Turn mixture into pastry shell. Bake in a 350-degree oven for 30 minutes. Top with remaining 1/4 cup mozzarella and the Parmesan cheese. Bake about 15 minutes more until set. Let stand for 10 minutes. Top with quartered artichokes and tomato. Makes 8 main-dish servings.

Nutrition information per serving: 462 cal. (64 percent calories from fat), 19 g pro., 23 g carbs, 33 g fat, 147 mg chol., 595 mg sodium, 297 mg potassium, 4 g fiber.

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