

2015 Châteauneuf-du-Pape: Power and Balance



vinous (93-95) pts

Domaine La Barroche 2015 Châteauneuf-du-Pape Pure

Châteauneuf Du Pape, Southern Rhône

Red wine from France

Drinking window:

(most of these vines are now over 115 years old; fermented in large concrete eggs and aged in a large older *foudre*) Lurid ruby. A complex, highly perfumed bouquet evokes fresh dark berries, cola, incense and potpourri, and a hint of smoky minerality emerges with air. Juicy, penetrating black raspberry, bitter cherry and lavender pastille flavors show superb depth and energy and stretch out to become sweeter on the back half. Shows excellent clarity and spicy lift on a long, sappy finish framed by velvety, slow-building tannins. For such a generous wine, there's no lack of vivacity here.

Josh Reynolds. Tasting date: December 2016

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vinous (91-93) pts

Domaine La Barroche 2015 Châteauneuf-du-Pape Signature

Châteauneuf Du Pape, Southern Rhône

Red wine from France

Drinking window:

(fermented in concrete eggs and aged in *foudres* and stainless steel tanks) Vivid ruby. Highly expressive cherry and black raspberry aromas are complicated by energetic floral and Asian spice nuances. Sappy, sweet and broad in the mouth, offering juicy, densely packed red and dark berry flavors that become deeper as the wine open up. Stains the palate and shows impressive vivacity on the persistent, floral-dominated finish, which is framed by silky, harmonious tannins.

Josh Reynolds. Tasting date: December 2016


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Châteauneuf-du-Pape Reds: The Flamboyant 2014s and the Structured 2013s

Wine lovers who gravitate toward structured Châteauneuf-du-Papes are going to be thrilled by the style of the 2013s, while those who are drawn to more flamboyant, fruit-driven, immediately approachable wines are likely to prefer the 2014s.



Domaine La Barroche's new winery, with ultra-modern, tulip-shaped concrete tanks

	Vintage	(Hover for Commentary) Producer	Name	Tasting Notes	Score	Author	Drinking Window	Release Price	Review Date
<input type="checkbox"/> ☆ Find it Online	2014	Domaine La Barroche	Châteauneuf-du-Pape Pure	Bright violet. Highly fragrant raspberry, boysenberry, floral pastille and Asian spice scents show excellent clarity and pick up a smoky mineral quality with air. Deeply concentrated but shockingly lithe red and dark berry flavors reach every corner of the palate and show no rough edges. Candied lavender and spicecake qualities emerge on an impressively long, focused and subtly tannic finish that emphatically echoes the blue fruit note.	(93-95)	Josh Raynolds		\$102.00	Apr 2016
<input type="checkbox"/> ☆ Find it Online	2014	Domaine La Barroche	Châteauneuf-du-Pape Signature	(fermented in concrete and aged in used <i>foudres</i> and <i>demi-muids</i>): Vivid ruby. Deep, smoke-accented dark berry and floral pastille scents are sharpened by a note of peppery spice. Smoky and sweet in the mouth, offering concentrated boysenberry and cherry flavors and a hint of candied violet. Shows very good power and energy and finishes with excellent focus and length; velvety, late-arriving tannins add shape. Quite serious for an entry-level bottling; I'd bet on this making a solid cellar candidate.	(91-93)	Josh Raynolds		\$59.00	Apr 2016
<input type="checkbox"/> ☆ Find it Online	2013	Domaine La Barroche	Châteauneuf-du-Pape Fiancée	Bright violet. Ripe cherry, dark berry liqueur, candied flowers and incense on the deeply perfumed nose. Lush and open-knit, offering palate-staining blueberry and bitter cherry flavors and a hint of spicecake. Shows excellent depth and power but comes off surprisingly lithe. A suave lavender pastille quality emerges slowly on the finish, which features velvety tannins and lingering blue fruit character.	93	Josh Raynolds	2021 - 2028	\$90.00	Apr 2016
<input type="checkbox"/> ☆ Find it Online	2013	Domaine La Barroche	Châteauneuf-du-Pape Signature	Deep ruby. Displays powerful spice- and mineral-accented aromas of black raspberry and boysenberry, along with suggestions of white pepper and lavender pastilles. Stains the palate with intense, spice-tinged red and blue fruit flavors, deftly marrying power and finesse. Finishes sweet, smoky and extremely long, with resonating minerality and a lingering blueberry note. Quite rich for an entry-level Châteauneuf, but then again, this bottling does benefit from a good dose of fruit normally destined for the Pure bottling.	92	Josh Raynolds	2020 - 2027	\$59.00	Apr 2016

Domaine La Barroche

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The Barroche vineyards lost over 65% of their Grenache fruit in 2013, Julien Barrot told me, "but the Mourvèdre, especially, and the Syrah came in fantastic, which provided some compensation." Needless to say, production was off by quite a bit in '13 and there will be no Pure made, as that wine relies entirely on Grenache. Looking at the bright side again, Julien said that he was able to make a Fiancée bottling in '13 given the high quality of his Syrah, but he told me that he will only include this bottling in his yearly lineup "when there's great Syrah." The style here is moving steadily to what Barrot calls "lower alcohol, more spicy and more floral" because he has become less enamored of "massive wines." In fact, alcohol levels have been steadily declining here in recent years (the '13 Fiancée checks in at a svelte 14.3%, for example) and will likely continue to do so, "but not to where the wines' flavors and intensity are at risk."

From Châteauneuf du Pape: The Lively 2013s and Lush 2012s (Apr 2015) by Josh Reynolds

Vintage	Producer	Name	Tasting Notes	Score
2013	Domaine La Barroche	Châteauneuf-du-Pape Signature	Opaque ruby. Deeply pitched dark berry and licorice aromas are lifted by sexy nuances of flowers and peppery spices. Densely packed and sweet, offering intense blackcurrant and black raspberry flavors that stretch out and deepen with air. Rich yet lively wine, with a zesty mineral quality adding focus and bite to the long, penetrating finish. -- Josh Reynolds	(91-93)
2013	Domaine La Barroche	Châteauneuf-du-Pape Fiancée	Inky purple. Heady aromas of blackberry preserves, cherry, licorice and incense, with a mineral nuance adding vivacity. Then sweet and expansive in the mouth, offering intense black and blue fruit flavors complicated by Indian spice and floral pastille notes. Finishes very long and sweet, with fine-grained tannins sneaking up late. The alcohol here is 14.3%, which followers of this estate know is an extremely low number for a Barroche wine. -- Josh Reynolds	(92-94)
2012	Domaine La Barroche	Châteauneuf-du-Pape Pure	Glass-staining ruby. High-pitched red berry and Asian spice aromas open with air and pick up suggestions of candied flowers and smoky minerals. Stains the palate with intense, sharply delineated black raspberry and bitter cherry flavors that are lifted by a mineral element. At once vibrant and seamless, finishing with outstanding thrust, supple tannins and a whiplash of sweet red fruit. -- Josh Reynolds	94
2012	Domaine La Barroche	Châteauneuf-du-Pape Signature	Deep ruby. Heady spice-accented blackberry and cherry aromas are complicated by suave floral and spice qualities, with white pepper and licorice nuances emerging with air. Seamless, broad and sweet in the mouth, offering silky black and blue fruit preserve flavors and a hint of allspice. Closes juicy and long, with slow-building tannins and lingering spiciness. -- Josh Reynolds	92

Julien Barrot has been focused on making only two bottlings for a few years now--Signature, which is a grenache-dominant blend, and Pure, his flagship wine, from the estate's oldest grenache vines in the Grande Pierre *lieu-dit*. The latter vines are now over 115 years old, making them some of the most ancient of the entire region. He admitted that he is naturally inclined to experiment and that it's hard for him to resist the temptation to do multiple *cuvees*, "but it's more important to maintain consistency and stability than to be all over the place, as fun as that might be." Barrot's sister Laetitia is now firmly in charge of administrative work at the family domain, which in France is a particularly onerous endeavor, and thus Julien has more time to devote to vineyard and cellar work. The result has been a subtle shift to more elegance in the Barroche wines, a conscious move that Julien attributes to stricter attention to retaining acidity in the grapes and to gentler extraction. That said, these are still wines that typically carry lofty alcohol levels. "Chateauneuf is considered elegant among wines of the south," Julien observed, "but even the most feminine Chateauneuf is always going to have power and weight, even in years like 2011, so working the wines too much can push them away from elegance."

**2012 Domaine la Barroche
Chateauneuf-Du-Pape Signature**

Rating : 91-93

Bright ruby. Candied red fruits, spicecake and minerals on the highly perfumed nose, with an exotic blood orange nuance in the background. Juicy and precise, displaying very good clarity and lift to its sappy raspberry and cherry flavors. Darker in tone on the finish, clinging with impressive tenacity and appealing sweetness.

**2012 Domaine la Barroche
Chateauneuf-Du-Pape Pure**

Rating : 93-95

Deep ruby. Highly perfumed, vibrant aromas of black raspberry, floral oils, minerals and Asian spices. Juicy, precise and energetic, displaying a suave blend of power and finesse. Packs a serious punch but comes off as lithe. Sharply focused red berry, spicecake and mineral flavors linger on the sappy, persistent finish.

**2011 Domaine la Barroche
Chateauneuf-Du-Pape Signature**

Rating : 91

Vivid ruby. Dark berry and floral scents show very good clarity and spicy lift. Offers gently sweet black and blue fruit flavors that spread out with air, picking up subtle anise and sassafras nuances and a hint of white pepper. Lingers with very good energy and spiciness and gentle tannic grip. This should be very drinkable in a couple of years, or

**2011 Domaine la Barroche
Chateauneuf-Du-Pape Pure**

Rating : 93

Bright purple. Room-filling aromas of black and blue fruit liqueur, sandalwood, licorice and candied lavender. Sweet, deeply concentrated and expansive, offering palate-coating blueberry, cherry compote and spicecake flavors and an intense floral pastille quality. Shows striking power on the sappy, penetrating finish, which is firmed by chewy

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PRESS

Stephen Tanzer's
INTERNATIONAL WINE CELLAR

**Josh Raynods for Stephan Tanzer's International Wine Cellar
January 2012**

Julien Barrot has scaled back the number of wines in his portfolio "to focus on quality over variety," so there is no longer a Fiancee bottling. "But who knows what will happen down the road, if the personality of the vintage and fruit suggests it's a good idea," he added. Barrot described 2010 as "a vintage that the growers loved because everything fell into place and there were no problems with the weather, or anything else, except for the low yields." Two thousand ten, he went on, was "a great, great year for mourvedre because it got completely ripe but stayed fresh, so there's excellent backbone to wines that have a lot of it." Two thousand nine, on the other hand, "was a year where you had to walk a line between too much ripeness and just enough. It wasn't '07 style but compared to 2010 it took a lot more work to make sure that the grapes didn't get too ripe."

**2010 Domaine la Barroche
Chateauneuf-Du-Pape Signature**

Rating : 92—94

(66% grenache, 13% mourvedre, 11% syrah, 6% cinsault and the rest "all of the others"; all of the vines average more than 70 years of age, according to Barrot): Vivid purple. Vibrant black raspberry and cherry aromas, with high-pitched floral and spice notes adding complexity. Intense flavors of fresh cherry, raspberry liqueur and candied lavender show a strong floral quality on the back end. Finishes energetic and light on its feet, with a deeper blackberry note and outstanding persistence.

**2010 Domaine la Barroche
Chateauneuf-Du-Pape Pure**

Rating : 94—96

(97% grenache and the rest "most of the others", from a single plot of vines that were planted over a hundred years ago, according to Barrot): Bright violet color. Heady, complex scents of candied red and dark berries, Indian spices, potpourri and licorice, with slowmounting smokiness. Deep, sappy, palate-staining raspberry and mulberry flavors show superb clarity, intensity and focus, with no rough edges. Closes sappy, sweet and extremely long, leaving floral and spice notes behind. This wine clocks in at a heady 16.7% alcohol and the residual sugar is a very low 0.6 g/l, which is a number that you'd encounter with pinot noir.

**2009 Domaine la Barroche
Chateauneuf-Du-Pape Signature**

Rating : 93

(66% grenache, 15% syrah, 13% mourvedre and 6% cinsault): Bright ruby-red. Ripe cherry and dark berries on the nose, complicated by smoke, licorice and lavender nuances. Fleshy and deeply pitched but surprisingly lithe, offering juicy black raspberry and cassis flavors and a hint of exotic spices. Closes with excellent clarity and grip, the dark berry and licorice notes echoing.

**2009 Domaine la Barroche
Chateauneuf-Du-Pape Pure**

Rating : 95

(100% grenache this vintage, all from century old vines): Glass-staining ruby. An intensely perfumed bouquet shows intense raspberry and boysenberry qualities, along with notes of lavender, anise and Asian spices. Coats the palate with sweet red and dark berry flavors, which show liqueur-like depth and power. Finishes sweet, spicy and long, with a serious whiplash of candied flowers and dark fruit. I underestimated this wine when I tasted it from cask last year.

**2009 Domaine la Barroche
Chateauneuf-Du-Pape Terroir**

Rating : 92

(based on 95% grenache, from young vines; matured in a combination of concrete, steel and older casks): Vivid ruby. Bright, floral-accented aromas and flavors of red and dark berries, with a hint of white pepper in the background. A juicy, silky wine that finishes with impressive vibrancy and lingering floral qualities. Nothing should prevent drinking this wine now but it has the depth and balance to age.

Stephen Tanzer's
INTERNATIONAL WINE CELLAR

**Josh Raynods for Stephan Tanzer's International Wine Cellar
January 2013**

Julien Barrot is now focusing on making two wines, Signature and Pure, with the option to make a Terroir bottling in weaker vintages, like 2008.

Barrot is pleased with what he was able to accomplish in 2011, which he describes as a vintage "that is definitely about the grower and how much work they did in the vineyard."

**2010 Domaine la Barroche
Chateauneuf-Du-Pape Signature**

Rating : 93

Opaque ruby. Ripe boysenberry, cherry and plum on the intensely fragrant nose and in the mouth. Big and expansive but surprisingly lithe, with a sexy floral pastille quality gaining strength with air. Shows intense spiciness and power on the gently tannic finish, which clings with superb tenacity.

**2010 Domaine la Barroche
Chateauneuf-Du-Pape Pure**

Rating : 95

Opaque purple. An intensely perfumed nose offers a bouquet of dark fruit preserves, cherry-cola and cassis, with exotic floral and spice notes. Pliant raspberry and cherry flavors possess superb depth and alluring sweetness, with juicy acidity adding lift. Becomes spicier with air and finishes with outstanding power, breadth and smooth, harmonious tannins. Wonderfully rich and energetic.

**2011 Domaine la Barroche
Chateauneuf-Du-Pape Signature**

Rating : 91-93

Deep ruby. Sexy aromas of blueberry, cola and lavender, with smoke and allspice topnotes. Pliant and expansive, offering juicy dark fruit flavors that gain energy with air. Closes smooth and long, with resonating spiciness and excellent clarity. Tannins eventually came up with air but work in harmony with this wine's more

**2011 Domaine la Barroche
Chateauneuf-Du-Pape Pure**

Rating : 91-93

Vivid ruby-red. Heady, intensely perfumed aromas of dark fruit preserves, incense and potpourri. Stains the palate with deeply concentrated boysenberry and cherrycola flavors, with a spicy nuance adding vibrancy. Refuses to let up on the finish, which emphatically repeats the cola and spice notes. Very rich and velvety, with a hint of warmth on the back end. Barrot told me that this wine will likely be bottled at 17.3% alcohol. That is not a typo.

DOMAINE LA BARROCHE



PRESS

Stephen Tanzer's
INTERNATIONAL WINE CELLAR

Josh Raynods for Stephan Tanzer's International Wine Cellar March 2011

There will only be two bottlings from 2008 because Julien Barrot decided to blend all of the juice that would normally make the Pure and Fiancee bottlings into his two entry-level wines. "I could have made a very nice Pure," he told me, "but I thought that it was more important to preserve the integrity of the Signature, which is our classic bottling." He also decided not to make a Fiancee from 2009 "because the yield, especially for the syrah, was very low and it made more sense to add it to the Signature and build that wine's structure." Julien Barrot told me that he is feeling more and more comfortable with including stems in his fermentations and that the 2009 Pure was made with 80% whole clusters. He said that he loves the spice and perfume contributed by stems but doesn't want to get into a routine "because the vintage variations make that impossible. Stems were fine in 2009 and 2007 because we got lignification (drying and hardening of the stems), but if you aren't able to destem in a year like 2008, when there are lots of green, unligified stems, you're going to have problems."

2009 Domaine la Barroche Chateauneuf-Du-Pape Terroir

Rating : 90-92

Bright ruby. Aromas of cherry, musky raspberry and wilted rose, with an overlay of minerals. Quite elegant, with a silky texture to the flavors of redcurrant, raspberry, smoke and spices. Not particularly weighty but the sweet fruit is succulent and packs a punch. Tannins arrive late on the sweet, focused, spicy finish. This will be awfully tasty soon after release. There's about 3% mourvedre in this year's blend, Julien Barrot told me .

2009 Domaine la Barroche Chateauneuf-Du-Pape Pure

Rating : 92-94

Vivid ruby. Spicy, highly perfumed aromas of raspberry preserves, candied cherry, licorice, potpourri and cinnamon. Supple, fine-grained and concentrated, with harmonious acidity supporting the sweet flavors of red fruit compote, spice cake and rose pastille. Expands on the back end, finishing with silky tannins and superb energy. There was very little of this wine made – a total of 25 hectoliters, actually

2009 Domaine la Barroche Chateauneuf-Du-Pape Signature

Rating : 91-93

Dark ruby. Ripe cherry, blackcurrant, garrigue and anise on the slightly medicinal nose. Supple and smooth on entry, then chewy and firm in the middle, with smoky minerality keeping the dark berry flavors tight. A serious, deeply pitched wine that seems destined for slow evolution; the finish is long, spicy and offers notes of bitter cherry and licorice. Julien told me that this was made from 66% grenache, 17% syrah, 12% mourvedre and 5% cinsault; this syrah would usually go into the high-end Fiancee bottling.

2008 Domaine la Barroche Chateauneuf-Du-Pape Signature

Rating : 90

Deep ruby. Darker, more pungent fruits on the nose than the Terroir, displaying notes of licorice and black cardamom. Chewy and tightly wound, offering bitter cherry and blackberry flavors and a sexy note of candied lavender. Brighter red fruits emerge with air and carry through a persistent, spicy finish. All of the old vines grenache that is usually destined to be bottled as Pure was included in this bottling.

