



François Merlin

St Joseph



François Merlin, a shy, modest man worked for René Rostaing as Chef de Viticulture for over 10 years where he gained his understanding of terroir. In 1987 he planted his first vines and was also able to buy some existing vines. The wines remain a bit of a secret but Merlin is often one of the first cited by other top producers when asked their favourite Condrieu.

He owns four parcels in Condrieu, including the only vineyard adjoining Chateau Grillet, from which he makes the outstanding 'Cuvée Jeanraude', a concentrated, fine, mineral and spicy wine. His regular Cuvée is fresh, fruity and luscious comes from three vineyards 'Chatillon' and 'Chanson' and 'Poncin'. His red Saint Joseph looks rather like a little Cote Rotie and comes from 2 parcels aged 18 and 40 years old located in the north of the appellation. In 2006 he produced a tiny quantity of Cote Rotie from 17 year old vines in the northern lieu-dit of "Lancement". His goal is to make fresh long complex wines rather than unctuous ones without losing the fruit purity of the vineyard.



2007 Condrieu 'Cuvée Terroirs'

A blend of 3 different well regarded vineyard sites. Vinified using natural yeast in 50% stainless steel and 50% casks aged 1 to 3 years old. Excellent freshness and structure in the 2007 vintage.

"Some depth in the nose, honey-oak, has a good 'fabric". There is definite core to the palate, with some subtle extras that add interest. Fin, beau vin. 14.5°"

John Livingstone-Learmonth

2007 Condrieu 'Cuvée Jeanraude'

Made from the 'Jeanraude' vineyard located beside Chateau Grillet. Vinified using natural yeast in 20% stainless steel and 80% casks aged 1 to 3 years old. This is a wine with ample depth though more finesse and minerality than is typically found in Condrieu. Only 1700 bottles produced.

2007 Saint Joseph Rouge

Produced from vineyards in the north of Saint Joseph, this wine has more in common with its near neighbour of Cote Rotie. Old vine intensity (50% vines planted 1968) with perfume and elegance.

2006 Côte Rôtie

"Bright black cherry inspired bouquet with a little sweetness. Ripe fruit on the palate, but it is guided by its northern zone origins – the result is a late display of mineral and clarity in the wine. Ends clean and clear, is a wine of character. Only 900 bottles this year."

www.drinkrhone.com - John Livingstone-Learmonth