

The soul of the Châteauneuf du Pape terroir encapsulated in its purest form by Edouard Guerin -
Technical Director at Clos de l'Oratoire des Papes

The 2016 vintage of Clos de l'Oratoire des Papes has been likened to the 1989, a breathtaking vintage and undoubtedly the finest of the 21st century



THE HANDS OF TIME FROM 1989 TO 2016

In the life of any appellation, wine domaine or technical director, an outstanding vintage may present striking similarities with previous vintages and this is exactly what Edouard Guerin felt when he tasted the 2016 vintage of Les Chorégies for the very first time.

Let us return to 1989, an iconic vintage for the Châteauneuf du Pape appellation. For many winemakers this vintage is deeply ingrained in their memories, with such remarkable concentration never having been achieved up until then. Characterized by their incredible strength, depth and aging potential, the 1989 and 2016 vintages share a great many similarities.

As such, there was no doubt in Edouard Guerin's mind that he should this year produce 'Les Chorégies', a cuvée that only sees the light of day in the most outstanding vintages.

NEVER BEFORE SEEN CLIMATIC CONDITIONS IN THE 21st CENTURY

After what was a mild and dry winter, spring got off to a slow start owing to the mists which kept the temperatures cool and the soils humid on the surface. The dry winter only enabled a partial replenishment of the soil's water reserves and the summer season therefore took place in a context of water deficiency.

Bud burst and flowering were quick and consistent although the lack of water in the soils resulted in the development of very small grapes.



The last days of August saw scorching temperatures, in excess of 30°C in the daytime, compensated by cool nights well under 20°C and as low as 13°C on the morning of the 25 August. These significant temperature ranges were the key to perfectly ripe tannins and the preservation of aromatic potential. By late August the grapes were small in size with thick, crunchy skins and the pips had begun to ripen quickly.

The old Grenaches planted in rolled pebble soils were harvested on the 21 September and displayed incredible richness. The Grenaches and Mourvèdres in the safrè soils were harvested on the very last day, just before there rain, on the 30 September.

'It was quite simple, we looked at the grapes going by on the sorting table. Those that were still pink tasted wonderful, not a single stalk could be seen on the table and they were just perfect. The previously discarded stalks had this yellowy brown color which is typical of ripe stalks and this is why we decided to keep them and transfer them immediately to the vats.'

Edouard Guerin

GENTLE AND PRECISE PRODUCTION METHODS

The cuvée 'Les Chorégies' is grown in vieilles vignes parcels planted in the 1960's in rolled pebble and safre soils.

Grenache, which is the predominant varietal and counts for 90% of the blend, is grown in three different parcels.

The 'Lagrande' parcel covers 1.6 hectares of vines aged over 80 years and planted in rolled pebbles. The 'Pignan' parcel faces North-West and covers 1.3 hectares of vines planted in safre soils. Lastly, the 'Saintes-Vierge' parcel is co-planted with Mourvèdre and counts for 3% of the blend.

The Syrah vines make up 7% of the blend and take root in rolled pebble soils in the 1.3 hectare 'LaBigote' parcel.

The harvests are carried out by hand and the fruit is carefully sorted, grape by grape. The Syrahs are fully de-stemmed and extracted gently using light pumping overs. The Grenache is kept as whole clusters, gently crushed and also extracted using light pumping overs. A long 7 week vatting period follows.

Les Chorégies is vinified exclusively in 18hl tuns which is something of a rarity in the Châteauneuf-du-pape appellation as Clos de l'Oratoire is the only domaine to own this type of receptacle.

'Our 18hl tuns allow us to maximize the surface area of exchange for the skins and the juices which imparts structure and complexity to the wine.' Edouard Guerin

The wines are aged for 12 months before being blended together and left to rest in the bottle for a further 36 months.

With the skill of a choir master, Edouard Guerin composes with rigor and precision throughout the vinification and aging stages in order to ensure such incredible complexity and finesse in the finished wine.



THE EXPRESSION OF THE 2016 VINTAGE

'Les Chorégies' 2016 reveals an incredibly intense hue for a wine that is composed predominantly of Grenache. This is down to the magic of the vintage and the exceptional concentration of aromas, acidity and color in the grapes.

The nose displays remarkable complexity with notes of cigar box, kirsch, licorice and black olives intertwined with notes of scrubland herbs (thyme, bay leaf) which intensify with age.

The characteristic aromas of the Grenache varietal coat the palate on the smooth attack before gaining in strength on the mid palate and giving way to a delicate tannic backbone. A touch of black pepper and chocolate complements the fruity aromas of the varietal to perfection.

Les Chorégies 2016 will truly come into its own when served alongside a fillet steak 'Rossini' with foie gras, a roast leg of lamb or fresh tagliatelle with black Périgord truffles.

This vintage can be aged for a further 15 years in your cellars at temperatures of 12°C to 15°C and humidity levels of 60% to 80%.

We advise decanting this wine in the bottle 12 to 18 hours prior to serving or otherwise decanting into a carafe 2 to 4 hours before serving.

To taste between 16 and 18°C.

RRP: 90€ VAT-INCL

Available: April 2021

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Les Chorégies - 2016 Vintage