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2009 and 2008 Chateauneuf du Pape

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It's no understatement to say that Chateauneuf du Pape has been on a tear of high-quality vintages in modern times. With the exception of 2002 and 2008, every vintage from 1998 through 2009—and, from the looks of things, 2010 as well—has been almost uniformly very good to truly outstanding. The success of these wines in the marketplace created a huge influx of capital that the producers have invested in their infrastructures and it's the rare cellar here that isn't as efficient and clean as those in any other European region outside Bordeaux and Champagne. A generation ago, the majority of Chateauneufs betrayed rustic winemaking but obviously flawed wines are much rarer today, which makes shopping for Chateauneuf less risky than ever before.

The down side, traditional Chateauneuf enthusiasts often argue, is that the wines have been cleaned up and polished to the detriment of their character. But in my experience many self-professed traditionalists often confuse dirty wines with wines of terroir. I'd be the last person to shill for sterile wines, but I'm also loath to defend wines that have bacterial issues, excessive levels of volatile acidity or hard and dry tannins—or those that lack sweetness of fruit. It has recently become cool in some quarters to advocate for rustic, often flat-out flawed wines, usually in the name of "authenticity," while denigrating wines that can be perceived as too cleaned up, or, heaven forbid, "modern."

As prices for many top Chateauneufs have soared to levels commanded by classified-growth Bordeaux and even high-end Burgundy, winemakers have admitted to me that they feel pressured to produce wines that "make a statement," as one of them put it. "People say that they value finesse but the fact is that when people pay a lot for a wine they usually expect it to be dramatic, massive and a show-stealer," another Chateauneuf producer told me in November. "It's great for business that we've had so many vintages that allow us to make that type of wine but it also means that elegant Chateauneuf is now almost an oxymoron. Two thousand eight, by the way, is a perfect example of a more elegant style," she added.

While few producers I visited on my annual late autumn trip made the claim that their 2008s match up to the '06s or '04s, which often share similar qualities with the best '08s, they all told me that through a lot of hard work in the vines, late harvesting and draconian selection in the winery, they often achieved surprisingly good results. It was a damp, rainy growing season that brought mildew and slowed down ripening, which necessitated waiting until grape sugars could catch up with acidity. The weather turned dry, warm and windy at the beginning of September and conditions stayed favorable enough for harvesting to carry on until the second week of October for those without itchy secateurs. Growers who harvested on the later side were rewarded with what Marc Perrin of Beaucastel called "properly but not super-ripe fruit with good acidity and fairly low tannins. The wines can have good balance, with an emphasis on freshness. They are definitely wines to drink in the medium term, with rare exception." Those low tannins make many of the wines accessible right now, but acidity levels in '08s can also be shrill. For many wines it will be a race to see if the fruit can hold on until the acidity softens. Chateauneuf lovers who have been disturbed by the extroverted, sometimes freakish ripeness of many 2007s are likely to enjoy a number of '08s, I should add, because in many ways the two vintages are mirror images.

Speaking of 2007, 2009 is proving to be a very interesting vintage for Chateauneuf. While the wines tend to share a number of traits of their 2007 siblings, those qualities are usually played at a lower volume: concentration without thickness or viscosity, ripeness without a sensation of confiture character, weight and heft without corpulence, and so forth. "It was a very warm year, not quite as bad as 2007 and definitely unlike the oven of 2003," said Sophie Estévenin of Domaine du Marcoux. "There was almost no rain—it was a drought, really—and it was quite hot throughout August, which ripened the insides of the grapes quickly." Bruno Gaspard, the winemaker at Clos du Caillou, said essentially the same thing, noting that "the seeds ripened before the skins, in mid-August, so you had to wait until the skins caught up before you could harvest, otherwise you'd get dry tannins. People who brought in their fruit too early got hard and astringent tannins."

While that was not a danger with the '07s, which are mostly velvety and seamless, many producers said that they prefer the firmer tannins and acid spine of their '09s to the relative softness (some say shapelessness) of a number of '07s. Most producers told me that their fermentations went slowly, which in a best-case scenario means steady extraction and subsequent complexity—assuming that the wines were able to ferment to complete dryness, which is often an issue in regions like this, where sugars run high. Yields were far below average because of the drought and Estévenin told me that for Marcoux, which always produces a low yield because of their percentage of old, shy-bearing vines, the yield was only 15 hectoliters per hectare. "For us it was also very small, around 25 hectoliters per hectare," said Nicolas Boiron of Bosquet des Papes, who compares the wines to the 1989s, by the way.

Domaine de la Barroche

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." 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." (Sussex Wine Merchants, Moorestown, NJ)

2009 Chateauneuf-Du-Pape Terroir 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, Barrot told me. **90-92**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Signature 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. **91-93**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Pure 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. **92-94**

2008 Chateauneuf-Du-Pape Terroir Bright ruby. Dried red fruits on the nose, with subtle floral and herb notes adding interest. A spicy, modestly concentrated midweight that offers lively raspberry and bitter cherry flavors that tail off on the back end. Pleasant and easy to drink if lacking some heft. **88**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Signature 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. **90**

Chateau de Beaucastel

"The hallmark of 2009 in Chateauneuf is silky tannins," Marc Perrin told me as we started our annual tasting. "It's a vintage that favors the late-ripening grapes because we got some good rain in the middle of September that helped the mourvedre and syrah a lot." He was especially pleased with how the estate's mourvedre turned out in '09, calling it "perfectly mature and without hardness. The 2009 classique [which is 30% mourvedre, by the way] has an elegance that will make it seductive young because the tannins are hidden and absorbed by the fruit."

Perrin told me that he would be surprised if the '09s ever really shut down hard—"and if they do close up it will probably be for a short time, unlike the 2007 and 2005." Perrin emphasized that when Beaucastel makes an Hommage a Jacques Perrin bottling, as is currently planned for 2009, "it is because we think that it will be a wine of finesse, foremost. The greatest wines are the finest, the most elegant, not the most massive or brutal." (Vineyard Brands, Birmingham, AL)

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Deep ruby. Musky aromas of blackberry and spice cake are complemented by suggestions of fennel, pipe tobacco and star anise. Dense, sappy and energetic, with the powerful dark fruit joined by spice and floral qualities in the mouth. A rich but animated wine that finishes with lingering sweetness, smokiness and a hint of licorice. **91-93**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Hommage A Jacques Perrin Opaque purple. Enthralling aromas of blackberry liqueur, Moroccan spices, flowers and smoky minerality. Creamy, silky and generous, with superb definition to the dark berry and floral pastille flavors. Offers outstanding depth with no excess weight. The gently tannic finish eventually leaves sexy floral and spice notes behind. **93-96**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vivid ruby. Enticing aromas of raspberry, dried flowers and spice cake. Sweet and penetrating, offering sappy flavors of red and dark berries, candied flowers and chewing tobacco. Combines depth and juiciness smoothly, finishing with gentle grip and persistent florality. **91**

Domaine Henri Bonneau

Henri Bonneau joked that he was "an original natural winemaker but I didn't know it until it became a fashion." He was referring to the cultish wave of non-interventionist wines that has swept across France and much of the wine world. "I protect the forests because I don't use any new oak, and my cleaning regimen is water and a brush, with a little sulfur burnt in the casks for safety. That's it." Bonneau noted that 2006 is a very underrated vintage because the wines aren't powerful. "The main point is that they have superb balance," he told me, "which is essential if you want wine to age well." Bonneau works roughly six hectares of vines spread across ten parcels, and his fruit, which is almost all grenache and harvested at ridiculously low yields (around 10 hectoliters per hectare) is not destemmed. As in past years, the names that I have given to each wine noted below are the ones that Bonneau told me they're likely to receive down the road. But there are never any guarantees. For instance, last year he told me he was pretty sure that he wouldn't make a Reserve des Celestins from 2008, but this fall he said that he was still holding out that possibility, hence my two notes for his 2008s this year. I was shocked, in a very good way, by the finesse and clarity of Bonneau's 2008s and 2009s, which showed little to none of the wild, volatile character that can mark these wines in cask. (Wines of France, Mountainside, NJ)

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Marie Beurrier Vivid ruby. Sexy, primary aromas of raspberry and cherry, with a strong spicy quality. Lively and precise, showing an elegant personality for a young Bonneau wine. Very pure, with impressive finishing clarity and lingering florality. **92-95**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Reserve Des Celestins Opaque ruby. Blackberry, blueberry and bitter chocolate on the explosively perfumed nose. Quite supple on entry, then densely packed and chewy in the mid-palate, lending noteworthy energy to the black and blue fruit flavors. Plenty of lively acidity here as well. Broadens out impressively on the back end, finishing with velvety tannins and superb persistence. **94-97**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Marie Beurrier Bright red. A kaleidoscopic bouquet evokes wild red berries, Asian spices, dried flowers and minerals, with notes of smoke and anise adding complexity. Juicy, penetrating raspberry and cherry flavors pack a serious punch but show unlikely elegance at the same time. Bright and expansive on the finish, which strongly echoes the floral note. I underestimated these '08s last year by quite a bit. **91-94**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Reserve Des Celestins Ruby-red. Vibrant aromas of blueberry, black raspberry and minerals, with licorice and black tea notes in the background. Sweet, fat and chewy, with firm acidity framing the flavors of blackcurrant, minerals and candied violet. Finishes with dusty tannins and a note of smoky herbs. **91-94**

2007 Chateauneuf Du Pape Marie Beurrier Bright ruby. Seductively perfumed, offering fresh red and dark berry scents and flavors, along with notes of garrigue and licorice. Very lively for the vintage, with a suave blend of depth and vivacity. Finishes with outstanding thrust and persistent spiciness. **93-95**

2007 Chateauneuf Du Pape Reserve Des Celestins Dense ruby. Sexy mulberry, black cherry,

bitter chocolate and licorice on the intensely perfumed nose. This is extremely expressive today. Supple and vinous, augmented by intense dark fruit compote, kirsch, licorice and violet pastille flavors. Lively acidity adds to the impression of intensity. A massive but firmly structured wine that finishes with fine-grained tannins and excellent persistence. **95-97**

2006 Chateauneuf Du Pape Marie Beurrier Bright ruby. High-pitched red fruit and floral aromas are complicated by spice cake and mineral nuances. Dried redcurrant and bitter cherry flavors show very good concentration and pick up a smoky quality with air. Tannins arrive late and add grip and shape to a long, spicy finish. **91-92**

2006 Chateauneuf Du Pape Reserve Des Celestins Deep ruby. Darker fruit and earthier character on the nose than the Marie Beurrier. Densely packed and chewy, highlighted by powerful dark fruit and herb flavors and a note of bitter cherry skin. Gains intensity with air and finishes with excellent thrust and persistent sweetness. **93-94**

2005 Chateauneuf Du Pape Marie Beurrier Vivid ruby. Sexy aromas of raspberry and cherry, with serious floral intensity and a slightly high-toned quality. Sappy, penetrating red fruit and candied floral flavors show impressive depth but come off as graceful. Rich but precise, with intriguing spice and herb notes on the finish. **93-94**

2005 Chateauneuf Du Pape Reserve Des Celestins Saturated ruby. Very ripe, slightly high-toned aromas of dark berries, singed plum, pipe tobacco and minerals. Densely packed, sweet and voluptuous, with very ripe blackcurrant, mulberry and violet pastille flavors enlivened by intense minerality. Impressively seamless, powerful wine that also displays terrific balance. Finishes very long and sweet, repeating the mulberry and floral notes. This looks to be a wine for the ages. **96-97**

2004 Chateauneuf Du Pape Reserve Des Celestins Vivid ruby. A highly aromatic bouquet evokes black raspberry, dried lavender, Indian spices and intense minerality. Pure, expansive red and dark berry flavors stain the palate and pick up lively spiciness on the back half. Rich but energetic, with excellent finishing clarity and length. **94**

2003 Chateauneuf Du Pape Marie Beurrier Full ruby. Complex aromas of dried red fruits and herbs, heightened by a licorice note and a hint of cracked pepper. A sweet, palate-caressing wine for Bonneau, offering sweet raspberry and cherry flavors and a supple texture. Open-knit and easy to drink now, this wine shows none of the warm, liqueur-like qualities that mark so many wines from the vintage. Finishes with very good clarity and spicy persistence. I have been overestimating this wine, it seems. **91**

Bosquet des Papes

Nicolas Boiroit compared 2009 to 1989 "with the distinction that we're doing far better work now than we were 20 years ago, which can be said for almost everybody in Chateauneuf, actually. A mediocre vintage now should strictly be because of really horrible weather, which we can't control," he went on. "There's really no longer any excuse for not making the most of a vintage, and a year like 2008, for example, could be saved by work in the vineyards and selection in the cellar. Most people couldn't afford to make as many sacrifices back in the '80s and before that as we do now." Speaking of 2008, there is a single bottling of Chateauneuf from this vintage, and it includes the estate's old-vines fruit (as much as 90 years old), which usually goes into their high-end bottlings. (Wines of France, Mountainside, NJ)

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Cuvee Tradition Bright ruby. Ripe aromas of smoky dark fruits and garrigue Open-knit and a bit jammy, with broad flavors of plum and blackberry. Shows good depth for the vintage and has no rough edges. This spicy, fruit-driven wine finishes with good clarity and lingering sweetness, repeating the herbal note. **88**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Blanc Cuvee Tradition Deep ruby. Dark berries, cherry, woodsmoke and a suggestion of garrigue on the nose. Fairly stern for the vintage, but with bright acidity lending juiciness and lift to the bitter cherry and licorice flavors. Packs a punch and finishes with firm tannins and lingering smokiness. **89**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape A La Gloire De Mon Grand-Pere Bright ruby. Musky, expansive aromas of raspberry, strawberry compote and fresh flowers. Sweet, juicy and rich, accented by a penetrating quality and impressive grip to the black raspberry and bitter cherry flavors. Finishes with alluring perfume and mounting tannins. This is 100% grenache, from vines that are about 60 years old; it looks like it will age well. **91-93**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Cuvee Chante Le Merle Inky-ruby. Slightly decadent scents of raspberry preserves, mocha, licorice and potpourri. Rich, broad and spicy, offering suave red fruit

flavors and notes of floral pastille and spice cake, but without excess weight. This very supple and seamless wine offers subtle sweetness and lingering spiciness on a persistent, smoothly tannic finish. These vines are between 80 and 90 years old. **92-94**

Le Clos du Caillou

There is only one bottling of Chateauneuf du Pape here in 2008, and it's a pretty seductive, open-knit wine already. Winemaker Bruno Gaspard called the vintage "a rare style nowadays because of the regularity of hot vintages. It's in the style of years like 1986, 1991, 1993, 1996 and 1997, meaning northern in character, not Provencal." Gaspard told me that "in 2009 quality was entirely dependent on the ripeness of the grape skins. The seeds ripened before the skins did, in mid-August actually, and you had to wait for the skins to catch up. If you harvested before that, your wines would be hard and the tannins dry." He emphasized that because of the estate's situation, on sandy soils, "late rain isn't a bad thing because it drains off before any serious damage can be done. So it's less of a concern for us than for people who have a lot of clay. On the other hand, if there isn't enough rain during the season, like in 2003, we've got more problems than vineyards whose clay allows for water retention." (North Berkeley Imports, Berkeley, CA)

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Les Safres Bright ruby. Redcurrant, wild strawberry, smoke and minerals on the assertive nose. Silky and suave, with a seductive sweetness to its red fruit flavors and building spiciness. Broad but energetic wine that's sharpened by lively acidity and finishes with sweet tannins and very good length. This expressive wine is for all intents 100% grenache "but there are probably some other things mixed into the vines. Call it 99.99%" said Gaspard. **90-92**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Les Quartz Saturated ruby. Sexy nose offers blackberry, spices, licorice, tobacco and potpourri. Then suave, complex and energetic, offering sappy dark fruit and floral pastille flavors. Aeration brings out more spiciness and intensifies the florality. Fine-grained tannins and gentle grip highlight the long, vibrant finish. **91-93**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Reserve Vivid ruby. Red berry liqueur, cherry-cola, incense and a note of exotic spices on the nose. Suave, vinous and very sweet but youthfully taut, with a nervy spine of acidity giving the lush red and dark berry flavors energy and cut. Firm but integrated tannins add shape to an impressively long, sweet, smoky finish. **92-94**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Dark red. Pungent, high-pitched aromas and flavors of redcurrant, cherry, rose petal, minerals and Asian spices; rather pinot in style, actually. Silky, dry and precise, featuring good flavor impact without obvious weight. This forward wine stains the palate with perfumed flavors of red berries and herbs and finishes with very good clarity and spicy persistence. **90**

Clos du Mont-Olivet

I asked Thierry Sabon if there was a fairly recent vintage to which he could compare 2008 and he quickly named 1993, "although in '93 the key was to get your grapes in before the rain. In 2008 you had to be patient and wait for Indian summer. People who did wait got some good ripeness, a lot better than most people imagine. But the stereotype has been set by so many wines that were made from underripe grapes." Sabon reiterated that what saved 2008 was the Mistral, which dried out the vineyards and saved the grapes from rot. "If you held out, you got that advantage, if you didn't, well, you can imagine the result." Although Sabon believes that he could have made an honorable Cuvee du Papet from 2008 he finally decided against it because "the production would have been very small and it's more important to make sure that your classique is at as high a level as possible before you start worrying about your prestige wine." Incidentally, Sabon is now making a Chateauneuf du Pape from the estate's younger vines, aged completely in older casks. He believes this will help to steadily improve the quality of his classique. The new wine, called Petit Mont, is 95% grenache and was initially meant to be sold mostly to restaurants. But Sabon told me he has had a huge and unexpected response to the wine from his importers "because everybody is looking for value and wines that they don't have to age." (Various importers, including Michael Skurnik Wines, Syosset, NY and North Berkeley Imports, Berkeley, CA)

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Le Petit Mont Bright ruby. Pungent, expressive aromas of raspberry, cherry, herbs and tobacco. Silky and pliant, with juicy acidity enlivening the bright red and dark berry and spice flavors. Very fresh and energetic wine that finishes with good clarity and length. **88-90**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Ruby-red. Musky black raspberry and Indian spices on the nose, with complicating notes of lavender, violet and licorice. Compellingly sweet and velvety on entry, then

vibrant and delineated in the mid-palate, with an appealing floral quality complementing the flavors of crushed red berries and cherry. Pungent minerality adds energy to a long, spicy finish. **90-92**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Cuvee Du Papet Glass-staining ruby. A highly perfumed, exotic bouquet displays red and dark berry preserves, licorice, cracked pepper and smoky Indian spices; quite dense and masculine for this normally graceful cuvee. Then dense, sappy and pure in the mouth, with impressive lift to its black raspberry, floral and mineral flavors. Expands on the back half and stains the palate with floral and candied berry qualities. The tannins are fine-grained and buried by the wine's sweet fruit. **93-95**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Le Petit Mont Medium red. Fresh aromas of cherry, red licorice and minerals. Spicy and penetrating, marked by a faint bitterness to its red berry and floral flavors. Finishes with silky tannins and decent length and repeats the floral note. **88**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Bright red. Lively red berry aromas are complemented by notes of garrigue and white pepper. Spicy and precise, offering sweet raspberry and redcurrant flavors that show surprising depth and sneaky power. Closes on a sweet note, with lingering florality and very fine tannins. This wine will be drinkable soon. **90**

Clos des Papes

Production at the Avrils' estate has been off pretty severely the last three vintages, Vincent Avril told me in November. "In 2010, 2009 and 2008, yields were below 20 hectoliters per hectare," he said, "which is low even for us, with old vines and our regimen of crop-thinning." He was pleased with the extended growing season that '09 provided "because with 35 hectares spread across 24 parcels it isn't good if we have to rush things." Avril is satisfied with his '08 and believes that people are shortchanging the vintage. "Because of its balance, our '08 will be able to age for at least 15 years, probably longer. It will probably be at its peak at about age 10." He added that 2007 is not a year for impatient collectors, who he says should be focused on 2004, 2006 and 2008. As for 2009, Vincent thinks it "is a very good but not great year that will be showing complexity early. Our wine had a very long and slow fermentation so the aromatics are quite pronounced. And because of the low yield [just under 19 hectoliters per hectare] there's good power as well." For a bit of perspective, I asked him what he considered the most recent classic vintage for Chateauneuf du Pape and he named 2000 "because everything is in place and in harmony: rich but not too ripe, fresh but not too acidic, structured but not too tannic. Just balanced." Since 1991 all of the grapes here have been destemmed; the Avrils stopped filtering their wines after 1987. (Wines of France, Mountainside, NJ)

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Deep ruby. Intensely perfumed cherry, garrigue and flowers on the nose, plus notes of licorice and smoky Moroccan spices. At once fleshy and sappy, with incisive, spicy red fruit flavors complicated by herbs and floral pastilles. Finishes spicy and with superb intensity, echoing the spice and floral notes emphatically. This sample was a blend from five of Avril's giant, mostly old foudres. Avril averred that "14.5% alcohol is the jumping off point for high-quality grenache, any less and the flavors aren't complete. This should be just above that so it will be fresh and balanced." **93-95**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Bright ruby. A heady bouquet displays fresh red berries, sandalwood, dried flowers and a hint of baking spices. Creamy in texture, with lively acidity lifting sweet red and dark berry and candied rose flavors. Becomes sappier with air and finishes with very good clarity and lingering spiciness. Avril thinks this wine will surprise people with its ability to age. **91**

Clos Saint-Jean

"Two thousand eight is definitely in the style of 2006 and 2004," according to the Maurel brothers, who have extensive holdings of old vines in some of the primo sites of Chateauneuf, notably in La Crau. They told me that they harvested late in 2008 and that their well-drained vineyards allowed the vines to escape the dangers caused by early September rains, which enabled the Maurels to make their full range of wines, except for the ultra-luxury Sanctus Sanctorum. Production is very low for the 2008s because of severely diminished yields "but the wines are distinct enough and typical enough that we wanted to keep them apart rather than make a single wine." (Eric Solomon Selections, Charlotte, NC)

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Ruby-red. Wild, highly perfumed aromas of black and blue fruits, anise and spices. Dense and creamy but fresh, bolstered by very good energy to the blackberry, mulberry and cracked pepper flavors. Finishes with fine-grained tannins and excellent spicy persistence **90-92**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vieilles Vignes Vivid ruby. Cherry and licorice on the nose, with a mineral note adding lift. Dense but lively, offering taut dark berry and bitter cherry flavors that display good intensity. Nervier than the basic bottling, with firm finishing cut and lingering spiciness. **90-92**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape La Combe Des Fous Deep ruby. High-pitched, floral-accented aromas of redcurrant, cherry skin, licorice and garrigue. Enters sweet and sappy, but tangy acidity and a peppery elements give precision to its deep red and dark berry flavors. Really stains the palate, finishing with repeating notes of spices and candied flowers. **92-94**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Deus Ex Machina Inky-purple. Sexy aromas of dark berry compote, Indian spices, cocoa powder and flowers. Then creamy and dense in the mouth, with powerful red and dark berry liqueur flavors accented by notes of spice cake and tangy minerals. Boasts lovely sweetness and clarity, finishing with outstanding clarity and length. **92-94**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Sanctus Sanctorum Glass-staining ruby. A kaleidoscopic bouquet displays scents of candied red berries, incense and Asian spices, accented by an overlay of smoky minerals. Sharply focused and pure, offering sweet raspberry and cherry compote flavors and a sexy floral pastille nuance. Finishes sweet, sappy and very long, echoing the floral note. Looks to be a star of the vintage, but I'm sure it won't come cheap. **93-95**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Deep red. Red and dark berries on the nose and in the mouth, with notes of smoke and herbs adding complexity. Sappy and spicy, augmented by good finishing clarity and excellent persistence, leaving floral and spice notes behind. This is already drinking well. **89**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vieilles Vignes Full red. Musky and more perfumed than the previous wine, displaying potent red and dark berry scents and a hint of anise. Spicy and broad, with sweet black raspberry and cherry flavors and a firm mineral spine. Finishes with very good clarity and persistent spice and floral nuances. **90**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape La Combe Des Fous Bright red. A complex bouquet offers black raspberry, cherry and a strong note of licorice. Coats the palate with dark berry and bitter cherry flavors and picks up an exotic floral quality with air. A spicy quality adds vivacity to a long, penetrating finish. This looks like it will age. **91**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Deus Ex Machina Vivid ruby. Seductively perfumed nose evokes raspberry preserves, potpourri and incense, with an intense spicy quality picking up power with aeration. Sappy red and dark berry flavors are silky in texture and complicated by rose pastille, clove and star anise nuances. Already very complex, highlighted by excellent finishing lift and a hint of medicinal cherry. This doesn't taste like it came from a difficult vintage. **92**

Domaine Isabel Ferrando

"I've made a very conscious move away from heaviness and from harvesting with overripeness," Isabel Ferrando told me. "Colombis continues to be my experimental wine and the way it turns out informs what I do with Saint-Prefert, which is also becoming a wine of freshness more than power." Ferrando is a serious gourmand and cook, as well as an avid, well-traveled mushroom and truffle hunter. Her husband is a fanatical chasseur of birds and small game, "which makes the table complete," she said. She told me that she always considers food when making her wines: "It's impossible for me to separate them, and since I like to enjoy long meals, heavy wines have little interest or use to me." Ferrando did not make a 2008 Colombis. (A Daniel Johannes Selection, imported by Michael Skurnik Wines, Syosset, NY)

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Colombis A highly perfumed bouquet evokes black raspberry, garrigue and spice cake, with an intense floral quality and a touch of white pepper. Racy and precise on entry, then fleshier and more serious in the mid-palate, offering energetic red fruit and cherry flavors. The floral and spice notes come back on a long, sappy and well-defined finish. **92-94**

Les Halos de Jupiter

. This is the personal project of omnipresent Chateauneuf du Pape-based enologist Philippe Cambie, who says that "grenache is the Jupiter variety of the southern Rhone. My intent is to make wines from different appellations, with the contribution of different varieties to surround and enhance the grenache, thus the halos. In order to preserve the integrity and purity of the grenache, Cambie avoids using much new oak, raising most of his wines in large concrete tanks or stainless steel.

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vivid ruby. High-pitched, spicy aromas of redcurrant, cherry, garrigue

and minerals. Fine-grained and precise, offering plenty of fruit without jamminess. This energetic wine finishes with perfumed flavors of redcurrant, bitter cherry and a sneaky herbal nuance. These grapes (90% grenache) come from vines that are reportedly more than 100 years old, from a vineyard in the north-west sector of the appellation. **90-92**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Adastree Saturated ruby. Restrained but pure aromas of blackberry and mulberry are complicated by notes of dried flowers, licorice and cracked pepper. Juicy, spicy and fresh but youthfully linear, featuring pure red and dark berry flavors accented by tangy minerality. Not a dense wine but plenty intense, with strong finishing cut and very good clarity. This wine is 100% grenache, reportedly from vines that are more than a century old, in La Crau, and raised in one-year-old barriques **91-93**

Domaine de la Janasse

. Christophe Sabon said that "2009 could turn out a lot like 2006, but with more volume. The wines are more balanced than the 2007s and far more elegant than the 2005s, which are shut down hard right now." He thinks that in many regards '09 is "a super year" because it offers both accessibility and the potential to age, "so all types of clients can be happy." Sabon noted that in difficult years such as 2008, when there is a lot of selection in the vineyard, "you are left with a higher proportion of stem material on the vines. Because you have removed grapes it is imperative that you destem in the winery, or the balance is thrown off and you get green wines." There was no Chaupin bottled from 2008 but Sabon did make some of the Vieilles Vignes cuvee, which he said finished at a robust 15% alcohol. (Eric Solomon Selections, Charlotte, NC)

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Deep ruby. Perfumed aromas of cherry, dark berries, lavender and minerals. Fairly weighty on the palate but spicy acidity and firm minerality add verve to its sweet black and blue fruit flavors. Stains the palate and finishes with very good clarity and floral persistence. This wine is a blend of 80% grenache, 10% mourvedre, 7% syrah and 3% cinsault. **90-92**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Cuvee Chaupin Deep ruby. Sexy aromas of tangy red berries, Asian spices, cocoa powder and incense. Then silky and sweet in the mouth, offering pure raspberry and strawberry flavors and a sexy note of candied flowers. Gains weight with air and finishes with excellent clarity, cut and spiciness. This should be lovely soon after release. **92-94**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vieilles Vignes Glass-staining ruby. An explosive, exotically perfumed bouquet evokes candied dark berries, potpourri, licorice and smoky minerals. Lush, palate-coating black and blue fruit flavors are enlivened by juicy acidity and pick up notes of candied lavender and spice cake on the back half. Manages to be both rich and lithe, finishing with superb persistence and lingering sweetness. **93-95**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Deep ruby. Smoky red and dark berries and black cherry on the nose and palate. Sweet and lush, with dark fruit flavors lifted by mineral and cracked pepper nuances. Densely packed, rich and firmly tannic for the year, with very good finishing thrust and lingering smokiness. **90**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vieilles Vignes Wild, intensely perfumed nose combines black raspberry, mulberry, mocha, star anise and dried flowers. Enters the mouth silky and fine, then expands to stain the palate with vibrant, mineral-driven flavors of candied red fruits and spices. The long, sweet finish clings with impressive tenacity, echoing the floral note. **92**

Domaine de Marcoux

. Sophie Estevenin lamented that the last three vintages have been a disaster for production because of the low yields. Marcoux typically produces about 30,000 bottles of wine per vintage but in 2008 they only made 10,000 (there is just a single bottling of Chateauneuf du Pape). Yields were a mere 15 hectoliters per hectare in 2009 and in 2010 were roughly the same. "Thank goodness for our Lirac!" she said. The basic 2009 Chateauneuf was showing extremely well when I visited in late November and could be a real value. I also had the chance to retaste the superb 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape Vieilles Vignes, which is offering deep, very sweet black and blue fruit character right now. For all its flavor impact there's an almost weightless quality to the wine and a total absence of rough edges. I'm sure that it will shut down soon but I drank it without guilt in November. (Eric Solomon Selections, Charlotte, NC)

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Bright ruby. A complex, highly perfumed bouquet displays raspberry, blackberry preserves, lavender and star anise, accented by a strong mineral overtone. Pliant and

alluringly sweet, offering precise red fruit flavors that gain weight and intensity with air. The finish strongly echoes the floral note and clings with excellent tenacity and focus. **92-94**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vieilles Vignes Glass-staining ruby. High-pitched, precise aromas of crushed raspberry, smoky minerals, potpourri and licorice. Then juicy and penetrating, with great energy to its palate-staining red fruit preserve flavors. Very firmly structured but betrays no hard edges. Finishes sweet and spicy, displaying outstanding clarity. **93-95**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Ruby-red. Lively aromas and flavors of raspberry, five-spice powder, herbs and lavender. Lush on entry then tighter in the middle, showing sweet red fruit flavors and a sexy note of candied flowers. Already harmonious and complex, with very good finishing cut and lingering florality. (Eric Solomon Selections, Charlotte, NC) **91**

Domaine du Pegau

. Laurence Feraud referred to her Cuvee Laurence as "the house Burgundy" and said that she worried that customers didn't understand that the family's objective was for the wine to be ready to drink on release, not to be stored away for further aging. "Sure, it will age, but I hope that people don't put them away for many years and then drink them with disappointment. It's a great wine to be able to sell to restaurants, which was the original intent of my father." She told me that she believes that "2009 will turn out like 2005, but without the tannins. There's structure and the flavors are well-focused but not too opulent, which will allow them to be drunk after just a bit of aging. They might turn out a lot like 1999, in fact, which is a vintage that was short-changed by a lot of people at first, especially after the craze for the 1998s." Laurence also emphasized that the 2007s are wines that aren't showing very much right now and was insistent that her 2005s should be avoided for the near future "or maybe even longer. They are completely closed and impossible to read now." There appears to be a Da Capo bottling from 2010 on the horizon, by the way, as Laurence believes that the material is there to justify it. (Hand Picked Selections, Warrenton, VA; Martine's Wines, Novato, CA; J et R Selections, Bloomfield Hills, MI)

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Cuvee Reservee Opaque ruby. Powerful yet refined aromas of dark berries and minerals, complicated by smoke and floral nuances. Then supple, suave and focused, with sexy inner-mouth perfume, sweet dark fruit flavors and a pliant texture. Repeats the floral note strongly on the smooth, expansive and very long finish. **91-93**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Cuvee Reservee Saturated ruby. A wild, highly expressive bouquet displays red and dark berries, Asian spice and musky garrigue, accented by smoke and game notes in the background. Juicy and precise, with sweet raspberry and cherry flavors that take a bitter turn with air. Tannins come on late and add grip to a long, sappy finish. **91**

2006 Chateauneuf Du Pape Cuvee Laurence Bright ruby. Slightly medicinal aromas of redcurrant, raspberry and garrigue are lifted by a spicy element. Supple, sweet red berry, cherry and floral flavors show very good concentration, and firm acidity gives the wine energy. Lively, mineral-driven floral notes linger on a strikingly long, sappy precise finish. **94**

Chateau Rayas

. Emmanuel Reynaud describes 2008 as a vintage of real freshness, with strong floral and mineral character and good balance. "It's not a year that will demand cellaring but it will probably surprise people because there's good harmony to the wines." He lamented the meager production, though, telling me that it was off by almost 70%. As for 2009, Reynaud believes that "it will have a lot of broad appeal because there's both fat and good tannins. The tannins aren't hard, so long aging isn't essential, if people are impatient." (Martine's Wines, Novato, CA)

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Pignan Bright red. Highly complex aromas of red berries, Asian spices, minerals and incense; this is quite Burgundian. Silky on entry, then sharply delineated and vibrant in the mid-palate, with sappy strawberry and raspberry flavors and impressive energy. This very young, energetic wine finishes with excellent clarity and lingering florality. **92-94**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Component #1: High-pitched, spicy red fruit and blood orange on the nose and in the mouth. Tangy, precise and showing plenty of spice. Lots of red fruit here. Component #2: Deep cherry and black raspberry character, marked by an exotic floral nuance and good tannic structure. The floral quality hangs on with impressive tenacity. Component #3: Blackberry and bitter cherry on the nose and palate. Creamy but lively, with strong thrust and spiciness. A note of licorice comes up with air and adds a serious quality. The final wine should be a well-structured, ample Rayas

that will reward aging. [93-95](#)

2008 Chateaufeuf Du Pape Pignan Bright red. High-pitched aromas of redcurrant, raspberry, rose petal, and Asian spices, lifted by a mineral quality. Suave, silky and alluringly sweet, offering penetrating red fruit flavors and slow-mounting florality. This refined, focused wine stains the palate with perfumed flavors of raspberry and garrigue. This has the juicy acidity and spine to reward cellaring but I find it awfully delicious now. [91](#)

2008 Chateaufeuf Du Pape Vivid red. Pure, expressive aromas of red and dark berries, potpourri, licorice and rose. Juicy, spicy and fresh, with sexy raspberry and cherry flavors accentuated by smoky minerality. Intense and light on its feet, finishing very long and aromatic, augmented by firm mineral cut and very impressive clarity. [93](#)

Domaine Jean Royer

Jean-Marie Royer's elegant, even understated wines show a traditional character that's scarce these days but that I find highly appealing. While they are approachable young they are also balanced to age. "Two thousand eight was a very tough year," he told me. "Because of all the vineyard work and selection I spent more money making each bottle than I ever have before." (Bertin Henri Selections, Doral, FL)

2009 Chateaufeuf Du Pape Cuvee Tradition Bright red. Pungent aromas of dried red berries, aromatic herbs, spices and rose. Intensely flavored and firmly built, offering a silky texture and flavors of raspberry, cherry, candied flowers and spices. Complex, old-school Chateaufeuf that finishes with resonating herb and floral qualities. I really like this style. [90-92](#)

2009 Chateaufeuf Du Pape Cuvee Prestige Ruby-red. Musky, floral-accented aromas of cherry and redcurrant, with a subtle smoky quality coming up with air. A juicy, supple and expansive midweight that offers sweet red fruit flavors and no excess fat. This strikingly elegant and precise wine shows a light touch that's highly reminiscent of pinot noir. The sweet finishing flavor of raspberry preserves lingers with impressive tenacity. I find this understated, complex style of Chateaufeuf extremely interesting. [92-94](#)

2008 Chateaufeuf Du Pape Cuvee Tradition Full red. An expressive bouquet combines dried red fruits, flowers, anise, tobacco and a whiff of garrigue, lifted by a high-pitched note of singed orange. Penetrating and energetic on the palate, with smoky red fruit flavors perked up by a vibrant mineral note. Spiciness and grip enhance the long, sappy finish. Old school in the best way and approachable now. [90](#)

2008 Chateaufeuf Du Pape Cuvee Prestige Bright red. High-pitched aromas of strawberry, raspberry and Asian spices, with a sexy floral nuance and a touch of garrigue Light on its feet but packs a punch, offering sweet red fruit preserve and gingerbread flavors and an enlivening minerality. Shows the best side of the vintage, with impressive clarity and finishing precision. [91](#)

Domaine Saint-Prefert

Isabel Ferrando told me that for her own taste and for her own wines, "2009 is a more interesting vintage than 2007. They're fresher and better balanced but they also have the necessary concentration to age. The 2007s require patience: not as much as with 2005 but they aren't wines to drink now." Ferrando's preference for 2009 over the richer, riper 2007s is in line with her ongoing search for finesse, which now includes the use of more cinsault, which she says "gives an exotic floral quality and spiciness and accentuates the perfume of the wine." She also re-emphasized that she is extremely happy with the used demi-muids she buys from Yann Chave in the northern Rhone, "because you can get a longer and slower uptake of air and can have smoother temperature changes than with small casks. The oak influence is also less strong, which is especially crucial to maintaining the freshness and vibrancy of grenache." (A Daniel Johnnes Selection, imported by Michael Skurnik Wines, Syosset, NY)

2009 Chateaufeuf Du Pape Dark red. High-pitched red berries and blood orange on the nose; picks up floral and spice character with aeration. Lively and precise, displaying sweet strawberry and raspberry flavors lifted by tangy acidity. Graceful and focused, with very good finishing cut and clarity. [90-92](#)

2009 Chateaufeuf Du Pape Reserve Auguste Favier Vivid ruby. Intensely perfumed scents of red berry preserves, potpourri, Asian spices and white pepper. Potent raspberry and cherry flavors are given cut by tangy acidity and pick up a deeper cherry pit quality with aeration. Impressively pure, accented by intense finishing spiciness and persistent floral character. This is already very alluring. [92-](#)

94

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Collection Charles Giraud Glass-staining ruby A kaleidoscopic bouquet combines dark berries, kirsch, rose oil, smoke and Moroccan spices. Lush and sweet, offering an intriguing mix of power and finesse, with lively acidity lifting the ripe blackberry and cherry flavors that become spicier with air. Finishes extremely long and sweet, accented by sexy floral and spice cake nuances. **93-95**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Reserve Auguste Favier Vivid ruby. A highly aromatic bouquet evokes crushed red berries, Asian spices and potpourri, with a hint of dusty herbs. Very fresh and sweet in the mouth, offering intense raspberry and cherry flavors and a touch of exotic apricot pit. Impressive clarity and lingering spiciness add to the silky, sweet finish. **91**

Tardieu-Laurent

As Michel Tardieu is no longer involved in any way with Dominique Laurent, as of the 2010 vintage this operation will be called "Familie Tardieu." Tardieu's son Bastien is now fully involved in the firm's day-to-day operations, and since he trained under Tardieu's long-time collaborator, Philippe Cambie, don't expect any sea changes here. That said, I have sensed a lighter hand with the oak here in recent years, which I believe is for the better, especially given the fact that so many of these wines (and not just these!) are being drunk before their third or fourth birthday, especially at restaurants. I'm always amused when I hear about people having a wonderful, unexpected experience with a ten-year old or older Tardieu wine and inevitably exclaiming "it wasn't even oaky!" (Wilson Daniels, St. Helena, CA)

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Inky-purple. An exotically perfumed bouquet evokes dark berry preserves, licorice and fruitcake. Round, fleshy blackberry and mulberry flavors are quite primary and pick up a peppery quality with air. Shows no rough edges and finishes with good clarity and sweet, sappy persistence. Tardieu opined that this is an atypically masculine wine for him. **89-91**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Cuvee Speciale Glass-staining ruby. Explosive aromas of cherry compote, black raspberry, sassafras and white pepper are lifted by an intense floral element. Then sappy, deep and rich in the mouth, with a chewy texture and weighty dark fruit flavors. Currently showing a serious side and looks to be a good cellar candidate; the finish is firm, smoky and quite persistent. **90-92**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vieilles Vignes Dark violet. Black raspberry and cherry aromas show a sexy, floral quality, along with notes of lavender and smoky minerals. Bright and silky but rich, offering very good clarity and seductive spiciness to its red and dark fruit and floral flavors. Quite a bit more graceful than the masculine regular bottling. Fine-grained tannins give shape and grip to a long, spicy, floral-accented finish. **91-93**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Cuvee Speciale Dense ruby. Exotic red and dark berry preserves, flowers and incense on the nose. Spicy, impressively pure raspberry and cherry flavors stain the palate and becomes sweeter with air. Shows a lot of depth for the vintage. Finishes with very good clarity and nervy cut, repeating the floral note. **91**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vieilles Vignes Opaque ruby. Sexy aromas of black raspberry, spice cake, garrigue and rose, with a touch of smoky minerals adding lift. Deeper and more serious on the palate, which offers bitter cherry and blackberry flavors that are given spine by juicy acidity. Fine-grained and silky on the persistent finish, which repeats the spice and floral notes. This has lost the firm edge that I found last year and should drink well young. **90**

2009 Crozes Hermitage Vieilles Vignes Inky-purple. Aromas of blackberry, violet, licorice and smoky minerals. Fat, sweet and lush, with a slightly medicinal quality to its weighty dark berry and fruitcake flavors. Finishes with a very fine dusting of tannins and a major blast of minerals. Distinctly rich but there's ample energy to maintain shape and focus. **90-92**

2009 Saint Joseph Vieilles Vignes Opaque violet. Sexy aromas of boysenberry, kirsch, olive, violet and smoke. Broad, sweet and seamless on the palate, showing deeply concentrated dark berry liqueur flavors and mounting smokiness. The sappy finish echoes the floral note and leaves a sweet blue fruit quality behind. **91-93**

2009 Cornas Coteaux Inky-purple. A wild, kaleidoscopic bouquet displays red and dark berries, apricot, potpourri and smoky Indian spices. Sappy and precise in the mouth, displaying lively raspberry and boysenberry flavors and strong mineral spine. The spicy quality lingers on a long, focused finish. This wine clocks in a relatively low 12.5% alcohol, which Tardieu thinks explains the freshness. **91-93**

2009 Cornas Vieilles Vignes Glass-staining purple. Aromas of medicinal cherry, blackcurrant, and olive, with a sexy floral quality. Juicy if a bit youthfully rigid, marked by deep flavors of blueberry, cherry-cola and fresh herbs. Opens up with air and finishes with persistent sweetness and a floral nuance. **89-91**

2009 Cote Rotie Opaque violet. Very sexy, perfumed aromas of ripe black raspberry, olive and flowers; there's a wild, almost gamey quality to this wine's perfume that's pretty interesting. Fresh and juicy in the mouth, with distinct sweetness to the dark berry, cherry-cola, smoky herb and bitter chocolate flavors. The finish is juicy, focused and shows a suave floral quality. Tardieu says that he thinks this wine might turn out like the 1999 version. **91-93**

2009 Hermitage Inky purple. Intense aromas of blackcurrant, olive and smoky Indian spices. Then broad but chewy and youthfully restrained in the mouth; there's good deep fruit here but it doesn't want to come out to play. In a distinctly uncompromising style and a tad solid on the smoky finish. This is tough read right now. **89-92**

2008 Crozes Hermitage Vieilles Vignes Bright purple. A complex, mineral-accented bouquet displays black raspberry, cherry-cola and dried flowers, with slow-building smokiness and a hint of cracked pepper. Juicy dark berry flavors become firmer with air and pick up a slight dryness. The peppery note carries through a nicely persistent, gripping finish, which leaves a note of vanillin oak behind. This got 100% new barriques and I wonder if the fruit was up to the lumber. **88(?)**

2008 Saint Joseph Les Roches Vieilles Vignes Bright purple. Dark berries, olive and cracked pepper on the nose. Sappy, slightly wound-up blackberry and bitter cherry flavors gain sweetness with air and pick up a smoky quality. The peppery note resonates on the modestly persistent, smoky finish. **88**

2008 Cornas Coteaux Opaque ruby. Sexy aromas of black and blue fruit preserves and dried flowers, with a spicy nuance and a mounting vanilla quality. Lush and creamy on entry, then tighter in the mid-palate, offering sweet dark fruit flavors and a good dose of vanillin oak. Very attractive, in a modern way, with good finishing sweetness and length. **89**

2008 Cote Rotie Vivid purple. Smoky black raspberry and cherry aromas, with classic syrah notes of cracked pepper and violet. Sappy, penetrating dark fruit flavors show a slight bitterness but gain sweetness with air and pick up a peppery quality. Lively and sharply focused on the finish, which repeats the smoke and floral notes. This drinks well now, with a little air. **90**

2008 Hermitage Deep ruby. Pungent, spice-accented aromas of red and dark berries, with subtle floral and mineral nuances adding complexity. Sappy, incisive raspberry and cassis flavors show decent concentration and gain smokiness and floral character with air. An elegant, restrained, mineral-driven wine that finishes brisk and with very good, spicy length. This wine has filled in since last year but is still a relatively lithe take on Hermitage that will strike those who prize power as light; I really like its balance and precision. **91**

2009 Saint-Peray Vieilles Vignes Greenish-gold. A stony, energetic bouquet evokes pear, candied lemon and jasmine, accompanied by a strong chalky overlay. Fine-grained, spicy lemon and orchard fruit flavors are given spine by tangy acidity and pick up a deeper honeyed quality with air. Finishes with good bite and lingering notes of bitter pear skin and lemon. **90**

2009 Condrieu Light, bright yellow. Shows textbook Condrieu character on the nose and in the mouth, offering lively pit and orchard fruit scents and flavors, along with suave floral and spice nuances. Spicy and incisive on the finish, which strongly echoes the floral note. **91**

2008 Hermitage Blanc Light gold. Mineral-driven aromas of dried pear, peach and white flowers, with a subtle note of honey in the background. Sappy, palate-staining orchard and pit fruit flavors are braced by a lemony quality and given spine by firm minerality. An exotic spicy quality builds with air and carries through a long, smoky, chewy finish. Quite concentrated but this doesn't come off as heavy. **91**

Domaine Pierre Usseglio & Fils

This is another producer who opted to make a single wine from 2008. "It was clearly going to be difficult to sell high-end cuvees from 2008," Thierry Usseglio told me, "and it's important not to risk your reputation by releasing wines that are supposed to be special if you aren't 100% proud of them. Very good isn't good enough and besides, it's also good to make a serious basic wine from a hard vintage like 2008, to show what you can achieve under pressure." Usseglio describes 2009 as "a vintage that will appeal to all types of people except maybe the ones who demand wines of enormite. They are absolutely not light and in the past they would probably

have been considered pretty huge but the standard has been changed, especially since 2003." I found the 2009s here to be pretty serious wines, in fact, with real depth and chewiness, not to mention more dark fruit character than I expected. (Wines of France, Mountainside, NJ)

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Ruby-red. Subdued aromas of blackberry, cherry and licorice accented by white pepper. Sweet and round on entry, displaying dark fruit flavors given definition by firm acidity and complicated by slowly emerging suggestions of bitter cherry and candied anise. The firmly tannic finish features enticing floral lift and echoes the licorice note. Showing a serious side right now. **89-91**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Cuvee De Mon Aieul Dark ruby. Musky aromas of blackberry and spice cake, with complicating fennel, smoke and truffle notes. Dense, spicy and focused, with deep dark fruit flavors joined by a sexy floral element on the palate. Not a fat or fleshy style but in no way hard. Finishes long, with lingering sweetness and smokiness. **91-93**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Reserve Des Deux Freres Vivid purple. Black raspberry, cherry-vanilla, floral oils and a note of exotic spices on the perfumed nose. Suave, vinous and very sweet, marked by a solid core of minerality that gives the wine's densely packed raspberry and mulberry flavors impressive energy and clarity. Firm tannins add grip to a very long, smoky finish. **92-94**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Bright ruby. Spicy aromas of cherry, blackcurrant, licorice, dried rose and smoke. Juicy and fine-grained, with nervy acidity supporting the flavors of red plum, cassis, spice cake and dried rose. Expands on the back end, finishing with silky tannins and a lingering floral note. **89**

Other Recommended Chateauneuf du Papes

Domaine Albin Jacumin/La Begude des Papes

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Bright ruby-red. Ripe cherry and black raspberry aromas are perked up by exotic Moroccan spice and garrigue accents. Juicy, focused and fresh, showing a crisp red fruit personality, fine tannins and a mineral-dominated finish. Blends richness and energy smoothly; this should be approachable soon after release. (Wines of France, Mountainside, NJ) **90-92**

Ancien Domaine des Pontifs

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Glass-staining ruby. Pungent, somewhat exotic aromas of black cherry, saffrafras, licorice and incense. Densely packed but a bit clenched, with tangy acidity framing the ripe flavors of cherry-cola, saffrafras and licorice. Possesses good stuffing and ripeness, finishing with good thrust and building heat. **88-90**

Domaine du L'Arnesque

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Capelane Bright purple. A complex bouquet evokes dark berries, cherry-cola and spice cake, along with subtle minerality. Juicy, palate-staining blackberry and bitter cherry flavors marry density and vivacity, firmed by strong mineral spine. Fresh and focused on the persistent finish, which repeats the spicy notes. (USA Wine West, Portland, ME) **90-92**

Domaine Paul Autard

Also recommended: 2008 Chateauneuf du Pape (85), 2008 Chateauneuf du Pape Cote Ronde (86). (Russell Herman/World Wine Source, Berkeley Heights, NJ)

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Cuvee Juline (\$95; 100% new 225-litre barriques Bright purple. Intense, oak-spiced aromas of raspberry, cherry-vanilla and rose, with complicating notes of pipe tobacco and licorice. This very exotic wine offers sweet red and dark berry compote flavors mingled with vanilla and candied flowers. Shows no rough edges and finishes with serious cling. The oak is less strident now than it was before bottling but it's still very much present. I caught the 2009 Autards in a very awkward, reduced phase this November and will wait until they're in bottle to review them. **89**

La Bastide Saint Dominique

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Ruby-red. High-pitched aromas of redcurrant and cherry are complicated by spice and herbal nuances. Lively and precise, offering energetic red fruit flavors and a

touch of musky sassafras. Dusty tannins add grip to a spicy, refreshingly brisk finish. There's a pinot-like quality here that reminds me of a good 2008. **89-91**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Les Hesperides Bright, glass-staining ruby. A heady, exotically perfumed bouquet evokes red fruit preserves, apricot, potpourri and Moroccan spices. Deep, palate-staining raspberry and bitter cherry flavors become spicier with air and are given spine by tangy acidity. Balances richness and vivacity smoothly and finishes with admirable clarity and sweet persistence. **91-93**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Secrets De Pignan Vieilles Vignes Bright purple. Extremely pure and seductive aromas and flavors of blackberry, Moroccan spices, white pepper and incense. Lush on entry but shows impressive energy and sappiness to its black and blue fruit preserve flavors. The palate-staining finish doesn't let up and leaves notes of boysenberry and spice cake behind. This looks to be one of the sexiest wines of the vintage. (Simon N Cellars, Charlottesville, VA; Bertin Henri Selections, Doral, FL) **93-95**

Chateau Beauchene

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vignobles De La Serriere Bright ruby. Pungent aromas of dark berries and cherry, plus notes of smoked meat and dried flowers. Fleshy black raspberry and bitter cherry flavors provide good palate coverage and repeat the smoky note. Richer than it showed last year; this wine delivers a lot of flavor, finishing with lingering smokiness. **89**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vignobles De La Serriere Ruby-red. Pungent, vaguely medicinal aromas of redcurrant, sassafras, olive and black cardamom, with a spicy note in the background. Rich and expansive, highlighted by incisive red fruit flavors and notes of black pepper and candied rose. The smoky, persistent finish displays bitter cherry and pepper qualities and lingers with good persistence. **89-91**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Grande Reserve Dark red. Cherry-cola, licorice, dried flowers and herbs on the nose. Sappy and focused on the palate, offering slightly bitter cherry and herb flavors along with a subtle smokiness. The finish is firm and slightly pinched but shows good clarity. I wonder if this will have put on flesh between now and bottling. **88-90**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vignobles De La Serriere Hommage A Odette Bernard Bright ruby. A seductively aromatic bouquet displays boysenberry and cherry liqueur, singed plum, fruitcake and licorice. Like a dark fruit pie in the mouth, with palate-coating sweetness and a refreshing jolt of peppery spice adding life. Extremely rich and ripe but there's good energy as well. Finishes with impressive length and a note of candied licorice. (Regal Wines, Marlton, NJ; Serendipity Wine Imports, Dallas, TX) **91-93**

Domaine de Beurenard

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Ruby-red. Ripe black raspberry and cherry aromas are complemented by subtle game and cola qualities. Lush and creamy in texture initially but becomes firmer and chewier with air, offering slightly bitter dark fruit flavors and a late note of licorice. Finishes with good cut and slightly gritty tannins, echoing the cherry note. **88-90**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Cuvee Boisrenard Vivid purple. A heady, assertively scented bouquet displays cherry-vanilla and boysenberry, complicated by notes of rose and violet. Sweet and expansive, offering lush red and dark berry compote flavors and sexy vanilla and mocha nuances. Becomes spicier with air and finishes with impressive cling and lingering sweetness. This wine will be drinkable on the young side. **91-93**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Bright red. Vibrant aromas and flavors of strawberry and raspberry, spice cake and white pepper. Very fresh, enhanced by an incisive, floral-accented character and slow-building smokiness. Brisk, focused red berry qualities linger on the finish, which repeats the floral note. I'd drink this young for its vivacious fruit. (Ruby Wines, Avon, MA; Galaxy Wine Company, Portland, OR; Fine Vines, Melrose Park, IL; Vintage Imports, Denver, CO) **89**

Domaine Berthet-Rayne

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Deep red. Pungent aromas of red berry compote, peppery spices and herbs. Ripe cherry and raspberry flavors stain the palate and tangy minerals provide lift. Smoothly blends depth and vivacity, finishing with attractive clinging sweetness. (Elite Wine Imports, Lorton, VA; Eagle Eye Imports, Bloomfield Hills, MI) **89-91**

Domaine Bois de Boursan

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vivid red. Complex aromas of dried cherry, redcurrant, smoked meat and garrigue. Deeply pitched, smoky red berry and herb flavors display good concentration and betray no fat or hard edges. Distinctly wild, with good finishing sweetness and clarity. **89-91**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Cuvee Des Felix Glass-staining ruby. A pungent, highly complex bouquet displays scents of dried cherry, spice cake, incense and cured meat. Chewy dark fruit flavors are enriched by notes of licorice and succulent herbs, picking up a smoky note with air. The licorice nuance clings on a long, spicy, focused finish. **90-92**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Bright ruby. High-pitched aromas of cherry, Asian spices and dried rose, with complementary notes of anise and blood orange. Smells like a pinot noir. Juicy and light on its feet, with good lift to the flavors of cherry, raspberry and spice cake. Seamless and open-knit and showing a subtle, perfumed aftertaste. (J et R Selections, Bloomfield Hills, MI) **89**

Domaine La Boutiniere

Other wines tasted: 2008 Chateauneuf du Pape.

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Ruby-red. Sexy aromas of red and dark berries and cherry on the perfumed nose. Chewy and a touch dry but fresh, offering black raspberry, spice flavors and mounting spiciness. Finishes with lingering vivacity and firm tannic grip. **86-88**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Grande Reserve Vivid ruby. Ripe cherry and plum aromas are complicated by licorice and mocha. Offers smooth, ripe dark berry and candied cherry flavors but without obvious tannins. Warm and expansive, with good finishing cling and a bit of heat. **87-89**

Brotte

Other wines tasted: 2009 Domaine Barville Chateauneuf du Pape Optimum (?). (Opici Wine Group, Glen Rock, NJ; Margaux and Associates, Dallas, TX)

2009 Domaine Barville Chateauneuf Du Pape Deep ruby. Sexy aromas of raspberry and cherry compote, with complicating notes of floral oil, olive and vanilla. Creamy, palate-coating red fruit compote flavors are braced by gentle acidity and pick up sweetness with air. Comes across as tannin-free, open-knit and shows good finishing cling. This will drink well young. **87-89**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Cuvee Prestige Vivid ruby. Fragrant aromas of red and dark berry preserves, accompanied by slow-building smokiness. Juicy raspberry and blackberry flavors are supported by zesty acidity, with a touch of herbs emerging on the back. Finishes with seductive sweetness and good, tangy bite. **88-90**

2009 Domaine Barville Chateauneuf Du Pape Vieilles Vignes Bright ruby. Fresh dark berry and cherry aromas are complicated by garrigue and spice qualities. A juicy, deeply pitched midweight, offering zesty blackberry and bitter cherry flavors and a touch of olive. This surprisingly refreshing wine finishes with good cut and clarity. The 2009 Domaine Barville Chateauneuf du Pape Optimum was too dominated by confectionary vanillin oak for me to judge it. I hope the lumber has had a chance to recede by the time I re-taste it this November. **89-91**

Clos de Brusquieres

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vivid ruby. Aromas of raspberry compote, smoke and potpourri, enlivened by a strong suggestion of cannabis. Densely packed but penetrating, with a firm spine of acidity adding lift and clarity to its sweet red fruit and floral pastille flavors. Seamless and pliant, accented by lovely lingering spiciness and sneaky tannins. I really like this style. (Wines of France, Mountainside, NJ) **91-93**

Chateau Cabrieres

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Deep ruby. An expressive bouquet evokes dark berries, cherry compote and spice cake, with subtle minerality. Juicy, somewhat jammy blackberry and cherry flavors blend density and energy, with good mineral spine. Fresh and sweet on the finish, which repeats the spicy notes. This looks like it will drink well young. (Margate Wine & Spirits, Northfield, NJ) **88-90**

Domaine Les Cailloux

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Opaque ruby. Dark berries, violet and a whiff of fresh peppercorn on the nose, complicated by mineral and licorice notes. Sweet, creamy dark fruit is given definition and lift by firm acidity. Suave, fine-grained, and round, showing the ripe side of the vintage but in no way blowsy. Finishes with powerful spice notes and admirable persistence. **91-92**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vivid red. Cherry and dark berries on the nose and in the mouth, with licorice and spice nuances adding complexity. Sappy, palate-coating and seamless, displaying very good back end lift and persistent spiciness. This wine has become much more elegant since I tasted it last year. (Robert Kacher Selections, Washington, D.C.) **90**

La Celestiere

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Tradition Ruby-red. High-pitched aromas of red berries and cherry, with complicating notes of dried rose and white pepper. A lively, precise style, especially in the context of the vintage, offering sweet raspberry and candied floral flavors and a touch of heat. Finishes smooth, marked by a late touch of licorice and good length. This is the inaugural vintage for this estate, which own vines in the western sector of the appellation. **88-90**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Les Deux Domaines Deep ruby. Cherry and herbs on the smoky, expansive nose. Chewy, deeply pitched bitter cherry and blackcurrant flavors are complemented by notes of celery seed and anise, with zesty acidity adding lift. A bit out of sorts today and hard to read but there's good structure and power to this wine's fruit. I look forward to trying it in November, after it has been bottled. **88-90**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape La Croze Vivid ruby. Fresh dark fruit and floral aromas are given depth by suggestions of licorice and black cardamom. Spicy, sweet and broad, offering good clarity to its blackberry and cherry flavors and a late snap of minerality. Open-knit and seamless, with good finishing cling and a lingering note of black raspberry. **90-92**

Le Cellier des Princes

Also recommended: 2008 Chateauneuf du Pape Domaine de la Pierre (84-85), 2009 Chateauneuf du Pape Les Hauts de Coteaux (85-87). (USA Wine Imports, New York, NY)

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vivid red. Lively red berry and floral aromas convey good straightforward appeal. Juicy raspberry and cherry flavors are complemented by notes of dried flowers, musky herbs and a note of white pepper adding bite. Finishes gently sweet and silky, with good persistence and an exotic note of apricot. **87-89**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Domaine De La Pierre Bright purple. A perfumed bouquet evokes blackberry, cherry-cola, rose and white pepper. Sweet dark fruit and candied floral flavors show good intensity and a supple texture. Nicely persistent on the finish, which echoes the sweet dark fruit and cola notes and leaves a subtle smoky quality behind. The 2009 Chateauneuf du Pape Les Hauts de Coteaux showed plenty of richness but the oak was pretty overwhelming; we'll see what a year or more of age does for it. **89-91**

Domaine des Chansaud

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Deep ruby. High-toned red berry and cherry aromas are complemented by anise, flowers and herbs. Juicy cherry and raspberry flavors are quite primary, having no obvious tannins and with a seductively sweet quality. Finishes on a candied cherry note, with good persistence and grapiness. (P.S. Wines, Portland, OR) **88-90**

Domaine Chante Cigale

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Saturated ruby. High-pitched aromas of redcurrant and cherry, with a touch of smokiness in the background. Taut and linear on entry, then deeper in the middle, offering bitter cherry and red berry compote flavors, along with a licorice nuance. Fine-grained tannins add grip to a nicely persistent finish. **89-91**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vieilles Vignes Bright ruby. Intense black and blue fruit aromas are complemented by potpourri and smoky garrigue. Broad, palate-staining dark fruit flavors become brighter with air and show an energetic spiciness. Finishes with very good clarity and chewy persistence, repeating the floral and spice notes. This should be very attractive soon after release. (David Bowler Wines, New York, NY; Planet Wine, Oakland, CA) **91-93**

Domaine de la Charbonniere

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Opaque ruby. Blackberry and cherry aromas are accented by whiffs of olive and smoky minerals. Wound up tight, offering dense dark berry and bitter cherry flavors and a mounting violet pastille quality. Benefits substantially from air and shows serious power on the tannic finish. Pretty serious for both the vintage and an entry-level bottling. **87-89**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Cuvee Speciale Les Hautes Brusquieres Bright purple. An expressive, smoky bouquet evokes candied blackberry and cherry, with notes of rose oil and allspice coming up with air. Sappy, sweet dark fruit compote flavors show a refreshingly bitter quality that buffers the sweetness and adds a serious note. The persistent finish features soft tannins and lingering spiciness. **90-92**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape L'Envol Glass-staining ruby. Powerful aromas of blackberry and cherry-cola, supported by a strong smoky overlay. Lush, sweet, palate-staining dark fruit preserve flavors are complemented by notes of black olive and succulent herbs. Finishes with good thrust and persistent sweetness, echoing the cola note. For a rich wine this shows surprising vivacity. This is a new bottling and is composed of 70% grenache and 30% mourvedre, aged in barriques **90-92**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Cuvee Mourre Des Perdrix Vivid ruby. Assertive red and dark berries and cherry pit on the nose, accompanied by hints of anise and black cardamom coming up with air. Deep, chewy and weighty but surprisingly fresh, offering black raspberry and licorice pastille flavors and mounting spiciness. Shows a lot of sweet dark fruit and finishes with lingering spiciness and excellent clarity and grip. **91-93**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Bright red. High-pitched aromas of red berries, cinnamon and mace, enhanced by a suave floral quality and a hint of orange zest. Distinctly energetic and pure, accented by lively red fruit flavors and strong mineral spine. Refreshingly brisk on the finish, which features tangy red berry and spice notes. This wine shows the best aspects of the vintage. **90**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Cuvee Vieilles Vignes Bright violet. A highly complex bouquet combines blackberry preserves, cherry and licorice, with an exotic apricot nuance. Silky and sweet on entry, then firmer in the middle, where dark berry and bitter cherry flavors show a vaguely medicinal reserve. Clings with admirable tenacity on a long, sappy and gently tannic finish. **91**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Cuvee Mourre Des Perdrix Vivid ruby. Sexy aromas of black raspberry, cherry-cola and incense, accompanied by a building floral nuance. Juicy, palate-staining red and dark berry flavors show an alluring sweetness and betray no rough edges. Intensely fruity and open-knit, showing very good closing thrust and lingering florality. (Wines of France, Mountainside, NJ) **91**

Domaine Charvin

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Bright ruby. Seductively perfumed, suggesting floral-inflected aromas of cherry, red berries and Asian spices, along with a strong mineral quality. Velvety and bright on entry, then ripe and sweet in the mid-palate, with impressive energy to its raspberry and cherry compote flavors. Lively on the bright, extremely long finish, which features lingering floral and mineral nuances. **93-95**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vivid red. An exotically perfumed bouquet displays cinnamon-accented red berries and cherry, with a sexy floral overtone. Spicy and incisive on the palate, offering sweet raspberry and cherry flavors and a hint of baking spices. The spicy notes linger on a long, silky finish. Showing lots of complexity right now but this is also balanced to age. (Weygandt-Metzler Importing, Unionville, PA) **92**

Domaine de Chateaumar

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Secret De Nos Vignes Bright ruby-red. Spicy raspberry and cherry aromas are complicated by notes of spice cake and rose. Juicy and precise in the mouth, offering silky red berry flavors and a hint of bitter cherry pit. Gains sweetness with air and finishes with very good clarity and floral-dominated persistence. I suspect this wine will drink well young. (Bourgeois Family Selections, Asheville, NC) **89-91**

Clos de l'Oratoire des Papes

Also recommended: 2008 Chateauneuf du Pape (85).

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Bright purple. Musky aromas of blackcurrant, plum, cola and smoke. Sweet, tactile and a bit rigid, with a chewy texture to its dark berry and spice flavors. Firm tannic grip and lingering spiciness highlight the broad, warm finish. **86-88**

Clos Saint-Michel

Also recommended: 2008 Chateauneuf du Pape (85). (W.J. Deutsch & Sons, White Plains, NY)

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Bright ruby. High-pitched aromas of wild red berries and flowers, with a spicy overlay adding to its energetic character. Lively and precise, like a good 2008, offering sweet raspberry and cherry flavors and good, peppery bite. There's a pinot-like quality here. Finishes brisk and with sneaky warmth, repeating the peppery note. **87-89**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Cuvee Reservee Opaque ruby. Red and dark berry preserves and violet on the expressive nose. Very fresh, open-knit raspberry and blackberry flavors gain depth with aeration and pick up spiciness. Slightly jammy but offers very attractive, sweet fruit, finishing smooth, with good length. **88-90**

Domaine La Consonniere

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Bright ruby. High-pitched aromas of red berry liqueur and incense, enhanced by sexy rose oil and spice cake qualities that add complexity; becomes smokier with air and picks up a touch of musky garrigue. Focused, sappy and gently warm red and dark berry flavors provide very good palate coverage. Finishes with a touch of white pepper, lingering florality and sweet red fruits. This wine was made from vines that are reputedly more than a century old and planted on heavily sandy soil. (Wines of France, Mountainside, NJ) **91-93**

Domaine de la Cote de l'Ange

Also recommended: 2008 Chateauneuf du Pape (86). (Wines of France, Mountainside, NJ)

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vivid ruby. Cherry and dark berries on the nose, with a hint of violet coming up with air. Deep, chewy and weighty but animated, offering blackberry and bitter cherry flavors and mounting tannins. Offers a lot of sweet dark fruit and finishes with solid tannic grip. This acts a bit like a young 2005. **89-91**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vieilles Vignes Bright purple. Assertively perfumed aromas of blackberry, blueberry, licorice and lavender. Deep and spicy, offering mineral-driven dark berry flavors that show excellent clarity, surprising vivacity and a suave floral quality. Tangy acidity adds lift and cut to a long, sappy finish. This wine's blend of richness and energy is intriguing. The finish is spicy, precise and very long. **91-93**

Domaine de Cristia

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Bright ruby. Fresh cherry and red berry aromas complemented by Moroccan spices and anise. Juicy and brisk, accented by complex flavors of red fruits, licorice and spice cake. Finishes with silky tannins and lingering floral and cured tobacco notes. Already showing complexity, but this wine is balanced to age. **89-91**

2009 Chateauneuf-Du-Pape Vieilles Vignes Deep ruby. Cherry-vanilla and blackberry on the oak-dominated nose. Broad, palate-coating dark fruit flavors are impressively concentrated but the oak is pretty intense right now. Finishes creamy and long, repeating the cherry and oak spice notes. **89-91**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Renaissance Opaque ruby. Cherry compote, blackberry preserves and sexy, spicy oak on the highly aromatic nose. Sweet, supple, and high-toned, with explosive dark fruit and spice flavors that show impressive nuance, surprising firmness and superb intensity. Displays real power but retains a light touch. Finishes with lingering sweetness and a suave floral quality. **91-93**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Bright ruby. Attractively perfumed, with spice-accented aromas of raspberry, candied cherry, smoke and dried flowers. Lively and precise, lending good energy and a seamless character to the red berry and singed plum flavors. The finish features lasting floral and mineral attributes and clings with good intensity. This wine is drinking very well right now. (Wine Warehouse, City of Commerce, CA) **89**

Domaine Cros de la Mure

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vivid ruby. Blackcurrant and cherry on the nose, complicated by notes of black pepper and fruitcake. Spicy and expansive, offering pliant dark fruit flavors and a touch of peppery spice. Nicely brisk on the finish, which repeats the spicy note. This drinks well now. The 2009 Chateauneuf du Pape was too reduced for me to get a handle on it. (Bonhomie Wine Imports, South Orange, NJ) **88**

Domaine Croze-Granier

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Bright ruby. Exotic, expansive bouquet of dark cherry, smoky minerals, licorice and potpourri. Rich but energetic, supported by refreshingly bitter blackcurrant and cherry-cola flavors that show good precision and building chewiness. Finishes with solid grip, lingering smokiness and an echo of bitter cherry. This wine has the structure and texture of an '05. (Jack Siler Selections, Bethlehem, CT) **89-91**

Cuvee de l'Hospice

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Dark red. Musky red berries and garrigue on the nose, with hints of singed orange and olive adding complexity. A lively midweight that displays tangy redcurrant and bitter cherry flavors and shows a refreshing bitter edge. Delivers a good punch of red fruit flavor on the silky, faintly smoky finish. I like this wine's understated, almost pinot-like character. **88-90**

Domaine Lou Devet

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Deep ruby. An intensely perfumed bouquet displays black raspberry, vanilla and incense, along with a slow-building smoky quality. Deeply pitched dark fruit compote flavors show distinct ripeness and an exotic floral nuance. Finishes sweet and very persistent. Reminds me a lot of an '07 in its opulence. **90-92**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Bright ruby. Spicy red fruit on the nose, accompanied by a hint of rose and a smoky overtone. A peppery nuance complements lively redcurrant and raspberry flavors, which repeat the smoky note. Finishes soft and a bit loose, with lingering sweetness. (Fruit of the Vines, New York, NY) **87**

Domaine Jean Deydier et Fils/Les Clefs d'Or

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Bright ruby. An energetic, high-pitched nose offers red berry and spice cake scents, along with a sexy floral quality. Brisk, sharply focused strawberry and raspberry flavors display an almost pinot-like finesse and gain weight with air. Finishes with impressive clarity and enduring spiciness, repeating the floral note. **90-92**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Selection Bright ruby. Seductively perfumed, with spice-accented aromas of cherry pit, dark berries, smoke and garrigue. Velvety and sweet on entry, then firm and chewy in the mid-palate, with impressive energy to its almost medicinal cherry and cassis flavors. Lively on the bright, gently tannic back end, which features lingering floral and smoke nuances. I'll bet this will age. **91-93**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Les Craus Centenaires Saturated red. Fragrant, ethereal nose offers perfumed black raspberry, potpourri and singed orange, accented by a strong spicy overtone. Dense, sappy and sweet but strikingly energetic; the intense dark berry liqueur and rose pastille flavors are both taut and rich, with strong back-end cut. Finishes very suave and long, leaving notes of anise, black cardamom and flowers. (Verity Wine Partners, New York, NY) **92-94**

Domaine Duclaux

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Deep red. Spicy red berries and rose on the nose, with suggestions of anise and underbrush adding complexity. Light-bodied, precise redcurrant and wild strawberry flavors show a touch of sweetness and are lifted by a peppery note. There's something pinot-like going on here. The finish repeats the strawberry note and shows a bitter pomegranate quality. All 13 of the permitted varieties are used here. (David Milligan Selections, New York, NY) **87-89**

Domaine Les Escondudes

Other wines tasted: 2008 Chateauneuf du Pape*. (USA Wine Imports, New York, NY)

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Bright ruby. Ripe cherry and red berry aromas are complemented by garrigue and pipe tobacco. Sweet and supple on the palate, offering weighty raspberry and bitter cherry flavors and a jolt of peppery herbs on the back. On the elegant side, finishing with gentle grip and spicy persistence. **88-90**

Eddie Feraud

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Bright violet color. A complex bouquet evokes red and dark berries, medicinal cherry and wilted rose, with a touch of garrigue getting stronger with aeration. Juicy and ripe, offering red fruit flavors and hints of smoky herbs and licorice. Silky tannins build through the spicy, persistent finish. I suspect this wine will be approachable young but there's also the balance to age. **90-92**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Full red. Textbook, smoke-accented Chateauneuf aromas of red berries, garrigue, and peppery spice. Open-knit and silky in texture, featuring modestly concentrated raspberry and cherry flavors and subtle smokiness. Very pretty floral and red fruit preserve notes linger on the lively finish. I like this wine's balance. Approachable now. (J et R Selections, Bloomfield Hills, MI) **89**

Domaine de Ferrand

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Bright ruby. A floral-accented, complex bouquet displays candied raspberry, cherry compote and spice cake, with a hint of anise in the background. Fleishy and sweet, offering deep red fruit flavors that gain power with air. A smoky note comes up on the spicy, gently sweet very long finish. **91-93**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vivid ruby. Lively aromas of raspberry and redcurrant, with sexy floral and Asian spice qualities and a touch of potpourri. Very fresh and precise, accentuated by sweet red fruit flavors that gain weight in the mid-palate. Finishes on a smooth, appealingly sweet note and with good, spicy persistence. This will drink well young. (Weygandt Metzler Importing, Unionville, PA) **90**

Ferraton Pere et Fils

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Le Parvis Ruby-red. A hugely aromatic bouquet exudes scents of candied red berries, cola, incense and rose oil. Broad and alluringly sweet, with densely packed red berry preserve flavors that pick up spiciness with air. Open-knit and smooth, finishing with excellent sweetness and length. (The Country Vintner, Oilville, VA) **90-92**

Chateau de la Font du Loup

Also recommended: 2008 Chateauneuf du Pape (86). (Dee Vine Wines, San Francisco, CA; A.H.D. Vintners, Detroit, MI)

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Bright ruby. Expressive, slightly high-toned aromas of redcurrant, raspberry and dried rose; displays good energy. Offers spicy red fruit flavors and shows good, straightforward appeal. Tannins build and add frame, but this is really all about fruit. **88-90**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Le Puy Rolland Vivid ruby. Highly complex nose and palate feature red berries, spice cake, flowers and minerals. Smells like a ripe pinot noir. Shows the sweetness of the vintage and exhibits very good depth and a seamless texture. Fine-grained tannins add shape to a long, spicy finish. **90-92**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Le Puy Rolland Bright red. Fresh raspberry, flowers and spice cake on the nose. Alluring, sweet and well-balanced, with lively minerality driving its red fruit and adding lift. Expands on the clean, energetic finish. There's a pinot-like elegance to this wine that shows the best side of the vintage. **90**

Domaine de Fontavin

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Bright ruby-red. Bitter cherry, dried flowers and herbs on the nose. Juicy red berry and spice flavors offer good cut and precision but take a dry turn on the back half. Nicely focused if not exactly fleshy. Finishes with firm tannins and lingering spiciness. **86-88**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Cuvee David & Goliath Dark ruby. An expressive, highly perfumed bouquet offers raspberry, candied cherry, flowers and spice cake. Juicy, incisive red berry flavors are lifted by tangy acidity but show no rough edges. This acts a lot like a pinot! A borderline fruit bomb that finishes smooth, sweet and with excellent persistence. Here's a wine that proves that Chateauneuf isn't

all about mass and ripeness. (Milton Road Trading Company, Napa, CA; Les Vins du Midi, Eugene, OR)
91-93

Chateau Fortia

Other wines tasted: 2009 Chateauneuf du Pape Tradition (?). (Wines of France, Mountainside, NJ)

Also recommended: 2008 Chateauneuf du Pape Cuvee du Baron (86).

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Cuvee Du Baron Deep, vivid ruby. High-pitched aromas of red berries and cherry, with notes of garrigue and white pepper adding complexity. Spicy and precise, with aeration bringing up bitter cherry and lavender qualities. The finish is spicy, precise and long and a sexy floral note lingers behind. **89-91**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Reserve Glass-staining ruby. Raspberry and cherry on the nose, with a hint of lavender in the background. Lively and precise, offering sweet red fruit preserve flavors, an alluring floral quality and good tangy lift. Energetic and balanced, with strong finishing cut and a touch of candied rose. **90-92**

Domaine Lou Frejau

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Bright ruby. Spicy redcurrant and cherry aromas are complemented by anise, tobacco and botanical herbs. Juicy, faintly medicinal red fruit flavors are pure and nicely focused, with no obvious tannins and a refreshingly bitter quality. Finishes on a faintly tart note, displaying good persistence and insistent spiciness. **88**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Bright purple. Highly perfumed, complex nose offers dark berry fruits, rose pastille, smoky minerals and garrigue. Intensely flavored and deep, featuring penetrating blackberry and cherry flavors and a suave note of candied flowers. Finishes sweet and long, accented by notes of smoke and dried rose. **90-92**

Domaine Galevan

Other wines tasted: 2009 Chateauneuf du Pape (?). (Vintage Imports, Bristol, PA; Johns Island Imports, Edwardsville, IL; Imported Heritage, Corona, CA)

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape St Georges Opaque ruby. Bright, assertively perfumed aromas of black raspberry, cherry-cola, potpourri and rose oil. Bright and spicy, offering mineral-driven dark berry flavors that show very good clarity and a sexy floral quality. Tangy acidity gives lift and cut to a long, sappy finish. The blend of density and energy in this all-grenache wine is intriguing. The regular 2009 showed too much reduction for me to judge it this year. **91-93**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vivid ruby. Smoky aromas of blackcurrant and blackberry are lifted by flowers and minerals. Dark berry flavors are enlivened by tangy acidity and show a slightly bitter quality with air. Finishes clean, with lasting tanginess and good grip. **88**

Chateau de la Gardine

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vivid ruby. Musky aromas of raspberry, cherry and herbs. Zesty and firmly built, with concentrated red berry and bitter cherry flavors and mounting spiciness. Gains richness with air and finishes long, with an echo of red licorice. **88-90**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Cuvee Des Generations Gaston Philippe Opaque purple. Oak-accented cherry and dark berry aromas show a strong vanilla quality, along with notes of rose and lavender. Lush and creamy, showing cherry-vanilla and dark fruit compote flavors and a seamless texture. Shows impressive depth but the oak is in full cry right now; this will need some age for the lumber to calm down. **90-92**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape L'Immortelle Dark purple. A complex bouquet offers red and dark berries, cherry, lavender and Asian spices. Juicy and open-knit, enhanced by sweet black raspberry and dark cherry flavors, impressive purity and good mineral spine. The finish has silky tannins, clarity and repeats the spicy note. **91-93**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Peur Bleu Bright purple. Energetic, pure aromas of cherry, black raspberry, licorice and minerals. Sweet but juicy, with a spicy, faintly medicinal character to its red fruit flavors. Finishes very long, offering a late note of bitter chocolate and a hint of dusty minerals. This

small-production bottling is made with no added sulfur. **90-92**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vivid ruby. Wildly pungent aromas of blackberry and cherry, with complicating herb, game and smoke nuances. Chewy, deeply pitched dark berry flavors show serious structure and pick up a note of violet with air. A licorice note comes up on a finish that hangs on with serious grip and tenacity. By all means give this some air if you plan to open one any time soon. (Shaw-Ross International, Miramar, FL) **88**

Chateau Gigognan

Also recommended: 2008 Chateauneuf du Pape Clos du Roi (85). (Vinotas Selections, New York, NY; Ideal Wine & Spirits, Medford, MA)

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Clos Du Roi Deep ruby. Dark berries, cherry and cured meat on the pungent nose. Fleshy and gently sweet, with deep blackberry and candied cherry flavors and slow-building spiciness. The chewy, slightly tannic finish offers good length. **87-89**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Cardinalice Bright ruby. High-pitched aromas of red berries and flowers and a strong note of Asian spices. Sappy, penetrating red fruit flavors show a darker quality in the mid-palate and display very good depth. Finishes on a sweet raspberry note and with intense spiciness. This should be delicious soon after release. **91-93**

Domaine Gilles

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Bright ruby. An expressive, perfumed bouquet evokes raspberry, spice cake, garrigue and minerals. Nervy on entry, then fleshier in the mid-palate, offering open-knit red fruit flavors and a gentle floral quality. The finish is broad, spicy and a tad warm, leaving behind notes of candied red fruit and smoke. **88-90**

Domaine Giraud

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Tradition Bright ruby. Singed plum and blackberry aromas are enlivened by pungent minerality and complicated by cracked pepper and smoked meat nuances. Broad and plush but dry, with impressive volume to its dark berry and bitter cherry flavors. Finishes with dusty tannins and good persistence, repeating the peppery note. **88-90**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Les Gallimardes Glass-staining ruby. Spicy, highly fragrant nose features perfumed black raspberry, lavender and candied orange peel and showing hints of smoke and black olive. Dense, sappy and chewy but surprisingly light on its feet; the intense red and dark berry and floral pastille flavors are both taut and rich. Finishes very suave and long, with fully integrated tannins and lingering florality. **91-93**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Tradition Deep ruby. Dark fruit and floral scents on the nose, with licorice and spice notes emerging with air. Weighty, palate-staining black raspberry and cherry flavors are complicated by nuances of candied rose and cracked pepper, augmented by a hint of smoky minerality that adds lift. The finish shows a suggestion of licorice and betrays no tannins. This could be drunk now. **88**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Les Grenaches De Pierre Bright ruby. Complex, highly aromatic nose combines vibrant red and dark berries, potpourri, Asian spices and a note of white pepper. Juicy and very intense but surprisingly lithe; spreads out to stain the palate with intense berry and spice flavors. Quite distinctive and already showing very good complexity. (Eric Solomon Selections, Charlotte, NC) **91**

Domaine Jerome Gradassi

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Bright ruby. Black raspberry, cherry and licorice on the nose, plus a strong note of garrigue. Densely packed and sweet on entry, then juicy and focused in the mid-palate, with lush dark fruit liqueur and herb flavors firmed by a mineral spine. This solid wine gains flesh and volume with air and finishes with silky tannins and good cling. Reminds me a bit of a 2005 in its structure. (Fine Vines, Melrose Park, IL; Bourgeois Family Selections, Asheville, NC) **90-92**

Domaine du Grand Tinel

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vivid ruby. Aromas of dark berry preserves, incense and dried rose, accompanied by a hint of licorice. Sappy, palate-caressing raspberry and blackberry flavors possess

good depth and show a spicy quality on the back half. Finishes smooth and persistent. This wine will be tasty soon after release. **88-90**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Alexis Establet Bright purple. An exotically perfumed bouquet displays black raspberry, incense and apricot pit, along with an intense floral quality that picks up steam with air. Rich but lively, offering sweet red and dark berry flavors that show a seamless, velvety texture. Finishes with sweet, liqueur-like dark fruit character and a late blast of warmth. This is 100% grenache, from vines that are reportedly more than a century old. **90-92**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Bright red. Redcurrant, cherry, musky herbs and smoke on the nose. Then firm and linear on the palate, with a dominant flavor of bitter cherry. Tannins come across a bit dry on the chewy finish. (M.R.R. Traders, Somerville, MA; J et R Selections, Bloomfield Hills, MI; Paul M. Young Fine Wines, Los Angeles, CA; Michael Corso Selections, Oak Park, IL; Serge Dore Selections, Chappaqua, NY) **87**

Domaine Grand Veneur

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Dark purple. Sexy red and dark berries and cherry on the nose, made more complex by an exotic hint of apricot coming up with air. Deep, chewy and weighty but surprisingly fresh, offering black raspberry and bitter cherry flavors and mounting floral character. Delivers a load of sweet dark fruit and finishes with lingering florality and good persistence. **89-91**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vieilles Vignes Bright purple. A heady bouquet displays scents of dark berries, cherry-cola and smoky herbs. Deep and distinctly ripe, displaying powerful blackberry and cassis flavors and a late note of candied licorice. In a warm, lush style but there's surprising energy here as well. The finish clings with good tenacity, echoing the smoky note. **89-91**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Les Origines Opaque ruby. Sexy aromas of red and dark berry preserves and apricot pit and a spicy quality that gains strength with air. Very fresh, juicy raspberry and blackberry flavors gather depth and spiciness with aeration. Shows serious depth but there's excellent energy here as well. Finishes with very good lift and excellent clarity. **91-93**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Opaque ruby. Oak-spiced aromas of blackberry and cherry complicated by floral and cracked pepper nuances. Sappy, penetrating dark fruit flavors show an attractive sweetness and good depth for the vintage. Oaky and modern, with seamless texture and good finishing cling. This is drinking well now. (Kysela Pere et Fils, Winchester, VA) **88**

Domaine Olivier Hillaire

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Bright ruby. Spicy strawberry and raspberry aromas are lifted by a floral element and a hint of black tea. Fresh and precise, accented by silky texture and good breadth. Finishes firm and persistent, with attractive fruit and a slight dryness. My samples of the 2009 Chateauneuf du Pape Les Petits Pieds d'Armand hinted at outstanding depth of dark fruit but were too reduced for me to judge fairly. I look forward to re-tasting the finished wine this November. (Wines of France, Mountainside, NJ) **87-89**

Paul Jaboulet Aine

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Domaine De Terre Ferme Ruby-red. Spicy redcurrant and cherry aromas are complicated by notes of dried flowers and herbs. Firm and precise in the mouth, offering lively red berry flavors and a hint of white pepper. Gains sweetness with air and finishes with very good clarity and smoky persistence. (Frederick Wildman & Sons, New York, NY) **90-92**

Domaine Le Jas des Papes

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Le Secret Du Jas Vivid ruby. An exotic, highly perfumed bouquet displays dark berries, cherry-vanilla, lavender and distinct smokiness. Chewy blueberry and bitter cherry flavors show very good depth and intensity, with vanillin oak on the back end. A floral note echoes on the juicy, persistent finish. This wine is a fairly unique blend of 70% syrah and 30% grenache. (Epic Wines, Aptos, CA) **89-91**

Alain Jaume & Fils

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vieux Terron Dark purple. Spice-accented dark berries and cherry on the nose, complicated by floral and vanilla nuances and a hint of white pepper. Broad and gripping in the mouth, enriched by deep dark fruit preserve flavors and good spicy lift. This is a powerful, densely packed wine. (Kysela Pere et Fils, Winchester, VA) **89-91**

Domaine Lafond Roc-Epine

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Glass-staining ruby. Fresh red berries and spices on the nose. Ripe but high-pitched and refreshing, with a silky sweetness adding to the flavors of cherry and raspberry. Shows a seamless texture and finishes with good clarity and spicy persistence. **88-90**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Bright ruby. Lively aromas of raspberry, herbs and licorice. Juicy, focused and pure, marked by good verve to the flavors of red berries, cherry, licorice and minerals. Finishes with good cut and fine-grained tannins. This drinks very well now with a bit of aeration. (Wines of France, Mountainside, NJ) **88**

Domaine l'Or de Line/Gerard Jacumin

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Deep red. Vibrant aromas of strawberry and raspberry are complemented by notes of celery seed and anise. Racy red fruit flavors deliver vibrant appeal backed up by good mineral spine. This lively midweight offers a lot of sweet fruit and finishes with good clarity and cut. **88-90**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Cuvee Paul Courtil Bright ruby. Assertive aromas of red berry preserves and incense on the nose, with complicating notes of olive and dried rose. Smoky raspberry and bitter cherry flavors show good clarity and pick up a hint of white pepper with air. Very fresh, gently chewy wine that finishes with good cut and spicy persistence. Shows the elegant side of the year. **91-93**

Mas de Boislauzon

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Cuvee Du Quet Deep ruby. A powerfully scented, pungent bouquet displays cherry compote, licorice and fruitcake, supported by a subtle note of wilted rose in the background. Dense and chewy on the palate, offering bitter cherry and blackcurrant flavors and tangy acidity. Rich but energetic, with impressive finishing thrust and cling. **90-92**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Le Tintot Bright purple. Highly scented aromas of mulberry, potpourri and cola, underscored by a subtle, smoky undertone. Deep, fleshy dark berry preserve flavors are firmed by fine-grained tannins and enlivened by tangy minerals. Open-knit, juicy and alluringly sweet, with very good finishing clarity and sappy persistence. I like this wine's blend of heft, energy and finesse. The regular bottling of Chateauneuf du Pape showed too much reduction for me to make a call on it; I'll re-taste it next year, in bottle. **91-93**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Ruby-red. Assertive aromas of black raspberry, mocha, anise and cracked pepper. Energetic, bright and sweet, offering lovely spicy lift to flavors of dark berries, herbs and dark chocolate. Offers impressive depth and power for the vintage, with no rough edges. Finishes on a sweet note, accented by gentle tannins and good persistence. (Wines of France, Mountainside, NJ) **89**

Mas Grange Blanche

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape La Font Des Bessoues Opaque ruby. Wild aromas of dark berries, cherry compote, spices and smoky herbs. Concentrated and chewy in the mouth, displaying densely packed blackberry and cassis flavors and showing very good intensity and thrust. Powerful tannins are nicely buffered by the wine's sweet fruit; this came off as a hypothetical blend of the 2007 and 2005 vintages, which is a very good thing. **91-93**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape La Font Des Bessoues Deep ruby. Raspberry, flowers and licorice on the nose. Dense for the year but surprisingly lively; offering silky and easygoing red fruit flavors and good intensity. A sweet and seamless Chateauneuf, with integrated tannins and good length; it drinks very nicely now. **89**

Domaine Mathieu

Also recommended: 2008 Chateauneuf du Pape (86). (Savio Soares Selections, Chappaqua, NY)

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vivid red. High-pitched red berry preserves and spice cake on the nose, complicated by notes of garrigue and rose. Smells like an '08. Lively raspberry and bitter cherry flavors show good clarity and pick up a white pepper nuance with air. Very lively wine, offering good finishing cut and spicy persistence. **88-90**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Marquis Anselme Mathieu Bright ruby. Intense red and dark berry aromas are complemented by potpourri and smoky herb nuances. Broad, palate-staining black raspberry and cherry flavors become brighter with air and show a lively, spicy character. Finishes with very good clarity and juicy persistence, repeating the berry and smoke notes. **90-92**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vin Di Felibre Glass-staining purple. Powerful, oak-spiced dark fruit preserves on the nose, with sexy incense and spice cake qualities adding complexity. Lush and creamy on entry, then more structured in the mid-palate, offering intense blackberry and bitter cherry flavors and mounting spiciness. Tannins creep in on the finish, which echoes the spice and cherry notes. **90-92**

Chateau Maucoil

Also recommended: 2009 Chateauneuf du Pape (85-87), 2009 Chateauneuf du Pape Privilege de Maucoil (86-88). (Baron Francois, Ltd., New York, NY)

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape L'Esprit De Maicoil Vivid purple. Red and dark berry preserves on the nose are given complexity by notes of licorice and vanilla. Powerful cherry-vanilla and blackberry flavors stain the palate and show very good precision, enhanced by an exotic floral quality that gains volume with air. This suave, modern-style wine finishes with good clarity and sweet persistence. **90-92**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Medium red. Bright aromas of red berries, white pepper and garrigue. Mineral-tinged strawberry and raspberry flavors gain depth with air, turning to bitter cherry and picking up a spicy quality. The peppery note adds bite to a nervy, taut finish. **88**

Vignobles Mayard

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Domaine Du Pere Pape Bright ruby. Spicy raspberry and cherry aromas are complemented by musky herbs and dried flowers. Fleshy and impressively deep in flavor, offering sweet red fruits and suggestions of candied rose and backed by bracing minerality. Tightens up with air and finishes with good precision and a slightly tart edge. **88-90**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Clos Du Calvaire Deep ruby. Raspberry, dried cherry, licorice and peppery spices on the nose. Dense and nicely concentrated, with nervy acidity giving spine and focus to the musky red fruit, licorice and rose flavors. On the powerful side, finishing with very good clarity and medicinal cherry and herb nuances. **89-91**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape La Crau De Ma Mere Glass-staining ruby. An intense, exotically perfumed bouquet displays black raspberry, boysenberry, potpourri and cola scents. Lush, expansive and surprisingly energetic on the palate, offering sweet red and dark berry flavors and a firming note of bitter cherry. Finishes with very good clarity and verve, repeating the floral notes. (Polaner Selections, Mt. Kisco, NY) **90-92**

Domaine La Mereuille

Also recommended: 2008 Chateauneuf du Pape (85), 2008 Chateauneuf du Pape Les Baptaurets (86). (David Vincent Selections, Union, NJ)

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Bright ruby-red. Dried cherry, anise and potpourri on the nose, with herbal and mineral notes adding complexity. Deeply pitched redcurrant and bitter cherry flavors are enlivened by tangy acidity and pick up an herbal quality in the mid-palate. A bitter cherry note lingers on a spicy, somewhat edgy finish. **86-88**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape La Baptaurelle Bright purple. Exotic aromas of blackberry, spice cake, cola and mocha. Lush and creamy on entry, then more solid in the middle, exuding deep dark fruit flavors and showing good structure. Gentle tannins add shape to a long, sweet finish. **88-90**

Domaine La Milliere

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vieilles Vignes Deep ruby. Powerful aromas of black raspberry, licorice, garrigue and smoked meat. Dense and ripe, with good depth adding to the dark berry and licorice pastille flavors. Broad, chewy and ripe in style, reminding me a bit of a wine from 2007, showing good finishing cling and length. **90-92**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vieilles Vignes Bright ruby. A highly fragrant bouquet displays scents of red berries, dried rose and blood orange sustained by a subtle note of incense in the background. Spicy and taut on the palate, offering nervy redcurrant and bitter cherry flavors and a touch of singed orange. Shows the taut side of the vintage, finishing with good energy and lingering florality. (North Berkeley Imports, Berkeley, CA; Village Wine Imports, New York, NY) **89**

Domaine Monpertuis

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Bright ruby-red. A complex bouquet offers raspberry, cherry compote, potpourri and spice cake. Deeper, darker fruits on the palate, along with suave notes of rose pastille and herbs. Becomes livelier with air, picking up fine-grained tannins that add shape and grip to a long, nervy finish. I like this wine's energy. **91-93**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Secret De Gabriel Deep ruby. Heady aromas of raspberry liqueur, rose oil and garrigue, enhanced by exotic notes of Asian spices that gain strength with air. Deeply pitched red fruit flavors show impressive concentration but this wine also possesses an elegant quality. Packs a serious punch and finishes smooth, and sweet, with lingering spiciness. This is mostly grenache, from vines that range in age from 60 to 130 years old according to owner/winemaker Paul Jeune. **92-94**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vivid red. High-pitched aromas of red berries, spice cake and blood orange, rounded out by an intense floral quality. Racy and fine-grained strawberry and raspberry flavors show very good clarity and repeat the tangy blood orange note. Sweeter on the finish, which leaves notes of rose pastille and spices behind. I really like this wine's refined character. All the juice that usually makes up the estate's old-vine Secret de Gabriel is in this wine. (Rosenthal Wine Merchant, Pine Plains, NY) **91**

Chateau Mont-Redon

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Deep ruby. Pungent red berries, cherry and smoky minerals on the nose, made more complex by a hint of fresh flowers. Then brighter in the mouth, offering sappy black raspberry and bitter chocolate flavors and a late note of smoky minerality. Rich but animated, with very good finishing lift and persistent sweetness. **90-92**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vivid ruby. Sexy red berries and cherry on the nose, accented by a hint of vanilla that comes up with air. Silky in texture and fresh, offering black raspberry flavors and mounting spiciness. Shows no rough edges and finishes with lingering spiciness and good clarity. This drinks well now. (Kobrand, Inc., New York, NY) **89**

Chateau Mont-Thabor

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Bright purple. Smoky cherry and dark berries on the nose, complicated by notes of singed plum and lavender. Brighter red fruits appear on the palate, which displays good depth and velvety texture. The floral note repeats on the smooth, nicely persistent finish. Here's another 2009 that should be drinkable soon after release. **89-91**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vivid ruby. Pungent aromas of dried cherry and redcurrant, with a hint of smoky herbs. A gently sweet midweight that offers lively red fruit flavors that are a bit constrained. I like this wine's clarity and closing cut but would've appreciated more flesh. (Wineberry, New York, NY) **87**

Domaine de la Mordoree

2009 Chateauneuf-Du-Pape Cuvee De La Reine Des Bois Bright violet. Exhilarating, highly perfumed nose combines wild dark berries, smoky plum, cola and flowers. Impressively dense and sweet, with a surprising light touch to the intense black and red fruit flavors. A lively core of ripe acidity adds focus to a long, sappy finish. I really like this wine's blend of heft and finesse. **92-94**

2008 Chateauneuf-Du-Pape Cuvee De La Reine Des Bois Deep ruby. A pungent but reticent nose displays cherry, blackcurrant and notes of cracked pepper and licorice. Then sappy and expansive in the mouth, offering powerful dark fruit flavors complicated by smoky Indian spices. This is far from your average 2008 in style. Boasts impressive texture and concentration and finishes with very good thrust and clarity. (Kysela Pere et Fils, Winchester, VA) **92**

Pierre-Henri Morel

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Dark purple. Intense dark berry aromas are complemented by potpourri and smoky herbs. Broad, palate-coating blackberry and blueberry flavors become brighter with air and

show a subtle spicy character. Finishes with good clarity and juicy persistence, repeating the blueberry and spice notes. **89-91**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Lieu Dit Pignan Deep ruby. Racy, spice-accented aromas of redcurrant, black raspberry and pomegranate are complemented by fennel and white pepper. Tangy and precise on the palate, offering sweet red and dark berry flavors and a note of bitter orange. Finishes brisk, spicy, with very good persistence. (Terlato Wines International, Lake Bluff, IL) **90-92**

Domaine Moulin-Tacussel

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vivid red. High-pitched aromas of redcurrant, wild strawberry and a hint of blood orange; smells a lot like pinot noir. Juicy and precise in the mouth, offering spicy red fruit flavors and silky texture. Smooth and seamless, with a fruity, refreshingly brisk finish; this really shows the finesse side of the vintage. I like this wine's light touch. **89**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Hommage A Henry Tacussel Bright ruby. Pungent red fruits and smoky herbs on the nose, complicated by hints of dried flowers and mustard seed. Then brighter in the mouth, offering sweet raspberry and candied rose flavors and a late note of zesty minerality. Rich but lively, finishing with very good clarity and cut. **91**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Hommage A Henry Tacussel Vivid purple. An explosively perfumed, exotic bouquet exudes dark berry preserves, potpourri and Moroccan spices. Fleeshy and expansive black raspberry and floral pastille flavors are firm by a bracing mineral spine. The impressively long, supple finish repeats the spice note and lingers with impressive tenacity. The regular bottling of 2009 Chateauneuf du Pape was too reduced for me to judge this November; I'll take a look at it next year, after it has been bottled. (Wines of France, Mountainside, NJ) **92-94**

Vignobles Mousset-Barrot

Also recommended: 2009 Chateau des Fines Roches Chateauneuf du Pape (85-87), 2008 Chateau des Fines Roches Chateauneuf du Pape (86). (Bradley Alan Imports, New York, NY; Luneau USA, Westport, CT)

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Chateau Jas De Bressy Bright ruby. Exotic, oak-spiced aromas of dark berry compote, cherry-vanilla and licorice. Plump and ripe, showing palate-coating black raspberry and candied cherry flavors and a good dollop of vanillin oak. Attractive in a New World way and the fruit seems up to the oak. **89-91**

2009 Chateau Des Fines Roches Chateauneuf Du Pape Vivid ruby. Ripe blackcurrant and cherry-vanilla on the oak-spiced nose, made more complex by smoky garrigue and licorice qualities. On the exotic side, offering sweet dark fruit flavors and a distinctly smoky character. The finish repeats the cherry and vanilla notes and leaves a touch of peppery spice behind. **90-92**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Chateau Jas De Bressy Bright ruby. Redcurrant, cherry, flowers and spices on the nose. Deeper and darker on the palate, which offers red and dark berry and licorice flavors and a hint of bitter chocolate. Nicely round if not exactly fleshy. Finishes with firm grip, a note of licorice and lingering, slightly gritty tannins. **88**

Domaine de Nalys

Also recommended: 2009 Chateauneuf du Pape (85-87). (Bayfield Importing, Long Island City, NY; Frank-Lin, San Jose, CA)

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Reserve Bright purple. Pungent, soil-driven aromas of peppery red berries, singed plum and garrigue are lifted by a floral topnote. Chewy and focused, with a peppery quality giving lift to the bitter red fruit flavors. Has decent mid-palate heft, and dusty tannins add a serious quality to the finish. **86-88**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Le Chataignier Vivid ruby. An expressive, spice-accented bouquet evokes dried redcurrant and cherry, with nuances of garrigue and mace adding complexity. Sappy, sweet red fruit compote flavors pick up a refreshingly bitter quality with air and show very good clarity. The persistent finish features notes of spice cake and minerals; I like this wine's balance. **90-92**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Deep ruby. Fresh red fruit on the nose, with complicating notes of licorice and dried flowers. Tangy redcurrant and bitter cherry flavors are given spine by juicy acidity and pick up a hint of herbs with air. Finishes firm and slightly pinched and repeats the redcurrant note.

I'd have liked more flesh. **87**

Chateau La Nerthe

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Ruby-red. An expressive bouquet offers black raspberry, dried flowers and spice cake, accented by an exotic apricot nuance. Juicy, precise red and dark berry flavors are lifted by nervy acidity and show no rough edges. Delivers a lot of sweet fruit and maintains focus through the smooth, sweet, nicely persistent finish. **89-91**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vivid red. Sexy red berry preserves and cherry on the nose, along with pungent garrigue character and a touch of spice cake. Tangy, nicely focused cherry and floral pastille flavors show good energy and carry through a sweet, seamless, tenacious finish. This is already drinking well. **90**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Cuvee Des Cadettes Deep ruby. Aromas of spicy dark berries, cherry compote and smoky oak on the nose. The sweet dark berry flavors show good verve and definition but the oak is pretty pronounced right now. Finishes with resonating oak spice notes, with a supple texture and building, fine-grained tannins. There's very good depth to this wine, especially in light of the vintage; give it a little time to absorb the oak. (Pasternak Wine Imports, Harrison, NY) **90(+?)**

Antoine Ogier

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Les Closiers Bright ruby. High-pitched, spice-accented aromas of raspberry, garrigue and white pepper. Fine-grained and sweet, offering an array of red fruit flavors and slow-building smokiness. Tannins come up late, adding grip to a slightly pinched finish. This benefited from aeration. **86-88**

Ogier Caves des Papes

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Terroir Galets Roules Dark ruby. Expansive, highly perfumed scents of blackberry and mulberry compote, cherry-cola and licorice. Stains the palate with dark berry and bitter chocolate flavors, with smoky minerals adding precision. Tannins build with air and add grip to a long, chewy finish. Pretty serious for an '09; in fact, this reminded me a lot of a 2005. **89-91**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Terroir Eclats Calcaires Opaque ruby. An expressive, smoky bouquet evokes blackberry and cherry-vanilla, supported by complicating notes of cola, allspice and woodsmoke. Sappy, sweet dark fruit flavors show a refreshingly bitter quality that buffers the sweetness. The vanilla note repeats on the gently tannic finish, which features a note of tangy berry skin. **89-91**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Terroir Gres Rouges Vivid ruby. An exotic, intensely perfumed bouquet displays scents of dark berry preserves, apricot pit and potpourri, with a smoky licorice quality adding a serious touch. Round and velvety in texture, marked by sweet blackberry and mulberry flavors that display distinct ripeness. Finishes with very good, smoky persistence and lingering warmth. This big boy reminded me a lot of a 2007. **90-92**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Terroir Safres Bright purple. Intensely perfumed bouquet of primary red berries, minerals and garrigue, accented by a touch of blood orange. A spicy, focused midweight that offers lively raspberry and cherry flavors and a supple texture. Finishes with lingering sweetness, excellent clarity and a late note of spice cake. This wine's elegant character reminded me of a ripe pinot noir. **90-92**

Domaine de Panisse

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Noble Revelation Opaque ruby. Sexy, highly perfumed scents of blackberry, cherry-cola, apricot and olive, bolstered by a kick of white pepper. Lush and extroverted, offering exotic red and dark fruit preserve flavors and candied floral notes. Becomes smokier with air and finishes with good breadth, velvety tannins and a lingering floral quality. **90-92**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Confidence Vigneronne Bright purple. Sexy blackberry, cherry compote and blueberry scents are complicated by Moroccan spices and potpourri. At once rich and lithe, showing a seamless texture to its sweet dark fruit liqueur flavors. Expands nicely on the finish, with the spice and floral notes clinging with excellent tenacity. No shortage of fruit here. (Monsieur Touton Selection, New York, NY) **91-93**

Domaine des Peres de l'Eglise

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Le Calice De Saint-Pierre Medium ruby. Dark berries, cherry and

licorice on the nose and palate. Chewy and a bit rough-edged on entry, then smoother in the mid-palate, which shows a smoky quality. A hefty, masculine wine that finishes with good grip and lingering smokiness. **86-88**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Le Calice De Saint-Pierre Heritage Bright ruby. Expressive aromas of dark berry preserves, musky Indian spices and licorice. Smoke-accented blackberry and blueberry flavors gain depth and chewiness with air, turning to bitter cherry and picking up a peppery quality. The smoky note repeats on a long, spicy finish. **89-91**

Perrin & Fils

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Les Sinards Vivid ruby. Heady aromas of Asian spices, red berries and garrigue, along with a hint of white pepper. Fresh, precise and sappy, offering sweet red fruit compote flavors and showing very good energy. Finishes with excellent clarity and lingering spiciness. I like this wine's vivacity. (Vineyard Brands, Birmingham, AL) **90-92**

Domaine Le Pointu

Also recommended: 2009 Chateauneuf du Pape (85-87).

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Cuvee Mathieu Vivid ruby. A slow-to-unfold bouquet evokes red berry compote and dried flowers, made more complex by notes of smoked meat and licorice. Very spicy, with intense red fruit character and a strong smoky quality. Shuts down with air and finishes with solid tannic grip. A bit of a tough read right now; I'm looking forward to re-trying this in November. **88-90**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Cuvee Clemente Bright ruby. Ripe aromas of dark berry and cherry liqueur, enhanced by notes of candied licorice and spice cake. Deep, sweet and slightly warm, offering broad, spicy blueberry and bitter cherry flavors and a hint of cracked pepper. Clings tenaciously on the finish, which repeats the bitter dark fruit notes. **88-90**

Domaine Pontifical

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vivid ruby. Highly perfumed scents of cherry, redcurrant and cracked pepper, along with a strong garrigue quality. Very spicy in the mouth, offering a chewy texture, medicinal cherry flavor and firm tannins. A solid, slightly herbaceous wine that finishes with good cut and spicy persistence. (Wines of France, Mountainside, NJ) **88**

Domaine Porte Rouge

Also recommended: 2008 Chateauneuf du Pape (86). (Bond Street Imports, Charlotte, NC; Grape Expectations, Richmond, CA)

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Bright ruby. A highly perfumed bouquet evokes red and dark berry preserves and a hint of fresh flowers. Straightforward and fruity, displaying lively raspberry and cherry flavors and slight warmth. Finishes smooth and sweet, betraying no rough edges and with good tenacity. This looks like it will drink well young. **88-90**

Domaine des Quatre Vents

Other wines tasted: 2009 Chateauneuf du Pape (?).

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Lurid ruby. Very ripe, deep aromas of black raspberry, licorice and vanilla. Sweet, lush and densely packed, with a chewy texture to the oak-spiced red and dark berry flavors. In a distinctly New World style, with good finishing thrust and lingering oakiness. I wonder if this wine has the stuffing to handle the lumber? The 2009 bottling was also seriously burdened by oak but seemed to have a lot of dense, sweet dark fruit underneath the wood. We'll see. **87(+?)**

Reserve des Oliviers

2007 Chateauneuf Du Pape Inky-ruby. Deep, youthfully bound-up aromas of blackberry, cassis, licorice and olive tapenade. Chewy dark fruit flavors show good depth and are complemented by notes of anise and smoky herbs. Slow to open, but the fruit is nicely concentrated. Finishes long, with good grip and silky tannins. **90**

2007 Chateaufeuf Du Pape Vieilles Vignes Glass-staining ruby. Powerful, highly scented aromas of dark berries, kirsch and complicating notes of tapenade and lavender. Broad and fleshy on entry, then firmer in the middle, offering bitter cherry and blackcurrant flavors and good, solid structure. A serious, age-worthy wine that benefits enormously from aeration. (Sherbrooke Cellars, Scarsdale, NY) **91**

Domaine Roche-Audran

2009 Chateaufeuf Du Pape Vivid ruby. A sexy, assertively perfumed bouquet displays scents of black raspberry, cherry-cola, oak spice and smoked meat. Juicy and alluringly sweet, enhanced by spicy red and dark berry preserve and vanilla flavors and very soft tannins. Clings nicely on the finish, echoing the vanilla and cola notes. Showing a good whack of oak today but there's very good material here as well; I look forward to seeing how it looks after bottling. (United Estates Wine Imports, Columbus, OH) **90-92**

Domaine La Roquete

2009 Chateaufeuf Du Pape Bright ruby-red. Pungent, expressive aromas of black raspberry, licorice, spices, nori and tobacco. Round and velvety, supported by a firm tannic spine that helps to shape the hefty dark berry and spice flavors. A late note of bitter cherry carries through a long, spicy and penetrating finish. I like this wine's blend of density and energy. My samples of the 2009 l'Accent de la Roquete were very tired and impossible to judge. I'll report on the finished wine after I taste it this November. **90-92**

2008 Chateaufeuf Du Pape Deep red. Blackberry and cherry on the nose, complicated by floral and earth notes in the background. Juicy and showing plenty of power for the vintage, with dark berry fruit flavors, a smoky nuance and a touch of anise. There's good fruit intensity and structure here, and the finish is gripping and nicely persistent. This could use a few years of bottle age. (Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA) **89**

Domaine Roger Sabon

2009 Chateaufeuf Du Pape Les Olivets Deep ruby. Lively and complex nose exudes candied cherry, blackberry, violet, anise and spice cake. Intensely flavored and nicely detailed, offering juicy, vaguely bitter red and dark fruit flavors and complicating notes of allspice and anise. Closes with good clarity, length and an echo of licorice. **89-91**

2009 Chateaufeuf Du Pape Reserve Lurid purple. Smoky, primary aromas of black raspberry, anise and potpourri are heightened by a lively mineral quality. Juicy and incisive, showing sweet red and dark berry flavors and good clarity. Packs a punch but this wine is surprisingly light on its feet and finishes with mounting sweetness. **89-91**

2009 Chateaufeuf Du Pape Prestige Vivid purple. A highly perfumed, exotic nose evokes black raspberry, Indian spices, licorice and violet, along with a hint of beef jerky. Broad, sappy dark berry flavors are underscored by tangy minerality and become smokier and meatier with air. Finishes with firm grip and no excess sweetness and repeats the smoky note. **89-91**

2009 Chateaufeuf Du Pape Le Secret De Sabons Glass-staining ruby. A highly perfumed, seductive bouquet displays dark berry preserves, gingerbread, licorice and apricot, heightened by an assertive floral quality. Broad, palate-staining black raspberry and cassis flavors are lifted by a tangy mineral note and complicated by floral and Asian spice qualities. Benefits from aeration and offers an intriguing interplay of richness and vivacity. The long, sweet finish echoes the floral and spice notes and shows no rough edges. This is 100% grenache, from vines planted in the late 1800s and from a yield that was reportedly under 10 hl/ha. **93-95**

2008 Chateaufeuf Du Pape Les Olivets Vivid ruby. Lively red berry and floral aromas accented by a building note of smoked meat. Juicy red fruit flavors are straightforward and slightly bitter, with a hint of licorice adding depth. Finishes with decent length and lingering smokiness. **87**

2008 Chateaufeuf Du Pape Reserve Deep ruby. Fresh red fruit and floral aromas are given depth by nuances of licorice and black cardamom. Smoky and incisive, marked by good clarity and a snap of minerality that lift bitter cherry and red berry flavors. Finishes with strong cut and persistent smokiness. **88**

2008 Chateaufeuf Du Pape Prestige Ruby-red. Flamboyant aromas of blackberry, cherry-cola and dark chocolate, enlivened by minerals. Sweet and smoky, with chewy texture and good depth to its dark berry, violet pastille and cola flavors. This boasts serious depth and power for the year and leaves notes of candied flowers and peppery spice behind. (Eric Solomon Selections, Charlotte, NC) **91**

Domaine de Saint-Paul

Also recommended: 2008 Chateauneuf du Pape (85). (J et R Selections, Bloomfield Hills, MI; Serge Dore Selections, Chappaqua, NY)

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Deep ruby. Pretty, youthful aromas of black raspberry, cherry, flowers and herbs. Juicy and fresh but also supple and ripe in the style of the year, offering fleshy cherry and spice flavors supported by a spine of tangy acidity and tannins. Finishes brisk, with silky tannins and a suggestion of floral pastilles. **88-90**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Cuvee Jumille Bright violet. A fragrant, high-pitched bouquet displays scents of fresh red and dark berries, spice cake, potpourri and white pepper. Rich but lively, showing sweet blackberry and cherry flavors and a subtle note of candied lavender. Firmer on the finish, which strongly repeats the floral note. **90-92**

Domaine de Saint Siffrein

Also recommended: 2009 Chateauneuf du Pape (85-87), 2009 Chateauneuf du Pape Terre d'Abel (85-87). (JAO Wine Imports, McLean, VA; Free Run, Seattle, WA)

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vivid purple. Lively aromas of black raspberry, flowers, white pepper and spice cake. Energetic, bright and sweet, displaying good spicy lift to flavors of red berry preserves, rose and mocha. Open-knit and very easy to drink, with good clarity and silkiness on the finish. The 2009 Chateauneuf du Pape Terre d'Abel appears to be a rich, deeply fruity wine but it was showing way too much oak in November; I look forward to seeing if that lumber has integrated by next year. **89**

Saint Theodoric

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Les Sablons Deep ruby. Redcurrant and cherry scents are complemented by dried rose and garrigue. A juicy, red-fruited midweight, accented by a slightly tart edge to its tangy cherry and floral pastille flavors. The brisk finish offers good clarity and cut, with silky tannins arriving late. **89-91**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Le Grand Pin Vivid ruby. An exotically perfumed bouquet displays dark berry preserves, mocha and potpourri, highlighted by a smoky quality that gains power with air. Lush and creamy on entry, then firmer in the mid-palate, offering powerful blackberry and mulberry flavors and gentle spiciness. Rich but light on its feet, with very good finishing breadth and lingering spiciness. **90-92**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape La Guigasse Bright ruby. Highly fragrant scents of dried black and blue fruits, potpourri and singed orange. Sappy, palate-staining black raspberry and boysenberry flavors are given spine and lift by zesty minerals and are complemented by a suave candied floral note. Powerful but lithe, finishing with very good clarity and insistent spiciness. (Weygandt-Metzler Importing, Unionville, PA) **90-92**

Domaine des Saumades

Also recommended: 2008 Chateauneuf du Pape (85). (Palm Bay International, Boca Raton, FL)

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Vivid ruby. Pungent aromas of raspberry, strawberry and peppery spices. Then dry and light on its feet, exhibiting youthfully restrained but sweet red fruit and spice flavors. Finishes with slightly rustic tannins and good energy, echoing the spicy note. **87-89**

Domaine des Senechaux

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Deep ruby. Musky aromas of red berries, cherry skin and smoked meat, plus a strong hint of violet. A spicy, sweet and chewy wine, marked by palate-staining dark fruit flavors that pick up a hint of black cardamom with air. Finishes sappy and long, with a late touch of licorice. This looks like it will be an ager. (Verity Wine Partners, New York, NY) **90-92**

Chateau Simian

Also recommended: 2008 Chateaufeuf du Pape (86). (Free Run, Seattle, WA)

2009 Chateaufeuf Du Pape Bright purple. Pungent, high-toned aromas of blackberry, cherry, spices and smoky herbs. Juicy and penetrating, offering well-integrated acidity that adds life to smoky dark fruit flavors. Finishes with solid grip and lingering smokiness. **87-89**

2009 Chateaufeuf Du Pape Les Grandes Grenachieres D'Hippolyte Inky-purple. A complex, heady bouquet evokes dark berry preserves, lavender, spice cake and anise. Sweet dark berry and floral pastille flavors stain the palate and are lifted by tangy acidity, which adds focus and cut. Pretty showy right now, but this wine's liveliness, structure and finishing grip suggest that it will reward patience. I really like the energy here, and this wine's structure reminded me a lot of 2005. This is 95% grenache, with some vines reportedly now 130 years old, and 5% other inter-planted varieties. **92-94**

Eric Texier

2007 Chateaufeuf Du Pape Deep red. A complex, spicy bouquet displays red fruits, rose, licorice and allspice, backed by a smoky overtone. Smells like a rich pinot noir. Pure, energetic raspberry and cherry flavors stain the palate and pick up notes of herbs and spices with air. Powerful but very graceful, with strong finishing punch and lingering smokiness. (Louis/Dressner Selections, New York, NY) **92**

Tour de l'Isle

2009 Chateaufeuf Du Pape Dark purple. An expressive bouquet offers blackberry, flowers and an exotic note of apricot. Juicy, expansive dark berry flavors are lifted by tangy acidity but show no rough edges. A borderline fruit bomb that shows a lot of sweet, forward fruit; the finish is smooth, sweet and nicely persistent. (Volubilis Import, Inc., San Diego, CA) **89-91**

Domaine Tour Saint-Michel

2009 Chateaufeuf Du Pape La Tour Du Lion Deep ruby. Rich cherry, cassis and chocolate on the nose, enriched by a cola note. Cherry and dark berry compote flavors show serious depth, creaminess, and building tannins add a serious quality. Chewy, spicy and nicely persistent, closing on a sweet note and with real grip. **88-90**

2009 Chateaufeuf Du Pape Feminessance Lurid purple. Very ripe, slightly warm aromas of blue fruits, cola and oak, with a floral topnote. Sappy blackberry and mulberry flavors show a slightly jammy quality but also possess attractively velvety texture and spiciness. Quite modern in style, finishing with soft tannins and lingering warmth. **88-90**

2009 Chateaufeuf Du Pape Cuvee Des Deux Soeurs Vivid ruby. Powerful aromas of ripe dark berries and cherry-cola are complicated by notes of dried flowers and licorice. Broad and fleshy in the mouth, offering ripe black and blue fruit flavors and a hint of bitter cherry pit. Gains sweetness with air and finishes with very good clarity and chewy persistence. For a rich wine this possesses good balance. **90-92**

2008 Chateaufeuf Du Pape La Tour Du Lion Dark ruby. A pungent, expressive bouquet of dark berries, licorice, Indian spices and black pepper. Juicy blackberry and bitter cherry flavors stain the palate, picking up an exotic floral pastille quality with air. Impressively rich for the vintage, showing good punch and heft to the finish. (Wines of France, Mountainside, NJ) **89**

Domaine des 3 Cellier

2009 Chateaufeuf Du Pape Marceau Lurid purple. Smoke- and spice-accented aromas of blackberry, cocoa powder and garrigue are complicated by notes of smoked meat and licorice. Firm and focused on the palate, showing chewy dark berry and bitter cherry flavors, youthful acidity and dusty tannins. The tannins carry through the vibrant, persistent finish. **87-89**

2009 Chateaufeuf Du Pape Alchimie Bright ruby. Spicy, perfumed aromas of raspberry liqueur, minerals and a subtle whiff of incense on the nose. Velvety in texture, with good depth to its red and dark berry, floral pastille and spice flavors. There's a warmth here that reminds me of 2007. Finishes broad and smooth, marked by a light touch and good length. **88-90**

2009 Chateaufeuf Du Pape Privilege Glass-staining ruby. Musky red and dark berry aromas are complicated by Indian spices and licorice, with hints of saffras and cracked pepper. Lively raspberry and cherry flavors are firmed by tangy acidity, which adds nervy cut. Juicy and brisk, in the style of a good 2008, with a taut finish that echoes the peppery note. **88-90**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Alchimie Full ruby. High-pitched aromas of raspberry, flowers and minerals. Silky-sweet and open for business, bolstered by lively acidity and a slightly tart red fruit character. Offers good straightforward appeal and finishes with nervy cut and bite. **87**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Privilege Full red. Expressive aromas of raspberry, spice cake, anise and black olive. Open-knit and silky in texture, with a restrained sweetness and gentle smokiness to its flavors of red and dark berries. Seamless and a tad warm on the finish, which features very soft tannins and lingering sweetness. **88**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Marceau Deep ruby. Medicinal cherry, licorice, potpourri and smoked meat on the nose, plus a whiff of pungent herbs. Dense and chewy but with good energy to its smoky dark fruit and candied floral flavors. Showing good complexity now, accented by resonating floral and herb notes on the nicely clinging finish. (Free Run, Seattle, WA) **89**

Domaine Raymond Usseglio & Fils

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Bright ruby-red. Musky cherry and plum aromas are complicated by notes of anise and dried flowers, plus a hint of smoked meat. Sappy and refreshingly tangy in the mouth, offering brisk red fruit flavors and a hint of white pepper. Finishes with good length and a touch of palate-numbing camphor. This is drinking well now. (Weygandt Metzler Importing, Unionville, PA) **88**

Cuvee du Vatican

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Deep red. Redcurrant, raspberry and floral aromas are complicated by a whiff of licorice. Shows very good depth but there's an attractive sweetness and good energy to its spicy, bright red fruit flavors. Finishes with a fine dusting of tannins and slow-mounting smokiness. Surprisingly elegant for a southern Rhone wine, featuring admirable finishing clarity and length. **89-91**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Reserve Sixtine Deep ruby. Dark berries and cherry compote on the nose, plus a hint of dried violet. Seamless dark berry flavors are joined by notes of bitter cherry and dark chocolate, accented by building smokiness. Echoes the cherry and smoky notes on a long, sappy, gently spicy finish. I like this wine's blend of richness and energy. **91-92**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Bright ruby. A fragrant bouquet features raspberry, blackberry and rose, with hints of smoke and black olive. Fleshy and open-knit; the dark fruit flavors are smooth and straightforward. Finishes sweet and slightly warm; this drinks well now. **88**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Reserve Sixtine Deep ruby. Intensely perfumed, with sweet oak dominating red berry compote and floral qualities right now. Then lush and expansive, offering cherry-vanilla and raspberry flavors and a strong cola nuance. Comes off as very New World in its oaky, jammy expression, but the powerful back end features a touch of garrigue that says Rhone. A little bottle age might help the oak recede – this is actually far less oaky now than a year ago. (Wines of France Mountainside, NJ) **89(+?)**

Chateau de Vaudieu

2009 Chateauneuf-Du-Pape Bright ruby-red. Captivating, highly perfumed aromas of black raspberry, cherry, licorice and garrigue. Dense, sweet and intense, marked by noteworthy depth and underlying structure to the cherry compote, dark berry and spice cake flavors; an intriguing floral element comes up with air. Full but light on its feet, enhanced by impressive finishing clarity and lingering sappiness. **91-93**

2008 Chateauneuf-Du-Pape Deep ruby. High-pitched aromas of raspberry, cracked pepper and violet. Then rich, creamy and penetrating, with compelling sweetness to the flavors of black raspberry, cherry compote and candied flowers. Leans more toward 2007 in style than most '08s, characterized by lush, seamless texture and a long, gently tannic finish. (Sussex Wine Merchants, Moorestown, NJ) **90**

Le Vieux Donjon

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Bright violet. Deep aromas of cherry, black raspberry, garrigue and earth. Broad, spicy and sweet, with a velvety texture and lush dark berry and lavender pastille flavors. Finishes sappy and sweet, featuring fine-grained tannins and excellent thrust. This alluring wine looks like it will be approachable young. **91-93**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape Full red. Assertively perfumed, offering raspberry and strawberry preserve scents and intense floral character. Then fresh and energetic in the mouth, with bright red and dark berry and floral pastille flavors, fine-grained tannins and good mineral spine. A lingering white

pepper note adds complexity to a long, spicy finish. This is quite successful for the vintage. (Wines of France, Mountainside, NJ) **91**

Domaine du Vieux Lazaret

Also recommended: 2008 Chateauneuf du Pape (85). (David Milligan Selections, New York, NY)

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Deep ruby. Sexy, high-pitched aromas of raspberry preserves, blackberry, minerals and pungent flowers. Concentrated but not at all heavy; gently sweet red and dark berry flavors show a seamless quality and are lifted by juicy acidity. Open-knit and suave, finishing with silky tannins and good clarity. This wine is made from all 13 of the permitted varieties for the appellation. **89-91**

Domaine du Vieux Telegraphe

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Telegramme Bright red. Fresh red fruits, violet and minerals on the pungent nose. Suave and understated in the mouth, offering lively cut and pure redcurrant and raspberry flavors. Packs a good punch but this wine is quite feminine in style. Balanced and harmonious Chateauneuf, finishing with good spicy length and silky tannins. **89-91**

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape La Crau Vivid ruby. Explosive raspberry and blackberry aromas, sustained by hints of star anise and rose; showing excellent clarity and energy. Silky in texture and alluringly sweet, with palate-coating red and dark berry flavors and no rough edges. Finishes with impressive persistence and lingering sweetness, repeating the dark berry note. I really like this wine's seamless texture. **91-93**

2008 Chateauneuf-Du-Pape Telegramme Blanc Bright red. Raspberry and cherry on the high-toned, spicy nose. Light and precise, featuring slightly bitter red fruit and cherry pit flavors that are somewhat clenched. Opens up with air and finishes with good nervy cut and precision. **88**

2008 Chateauneuf Du Pape La Crau Bright ruby. Lively, musky aromas of red berries, cherry, anise, earth and spices, augmented by hints of lavender and resin. Energetic, focused redcurrant and bitter cherry flavors show good definition and pick up minerality with air. Taut on the back end, finishing with solid grip and very good, tangy persistence. I like this wine's vivacity and balance. (Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA) **90**

Les Vins de Vienne

2009 Chateauneuf Du Pape Les Oteliees Bright ruby. Deeply pitched red berries and cherry skin on the nose, with an herbal quality emerging with aeration. Spicy raspberry and blackberry flavors stain the palate and are lifted by zesty acidity. Offers a gentle floral quality on the firm, gripping finish, which leaves a gentle herbal note behind. These grapes (mostly grenache) are sourced from a vineyard in the southern sector of the appellation, near La Nerthe, and the vines are reportedly 85 years old. (Domaine Select Wine Estates, New York, NY) **88-90**

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