



DOMAINE BELLE

REVUE DE PRESSE

2019





Domaine Belle Crozes Hermitage les Pierrelles



2016 : 90 239# The Wine Advocate

Belle's 2016 Crozes Hermitage les Pierrelles comes not from the area around the winery but from the clay and galet soils around Pont d'Isère. It's a classic, fruit-forward expression of the appellation, meant to be consumed young. Pepper, licorice and clove notes accent cherry and plum in this supple, medium to full-bodied effort that goes down far too easy.

2017 : (91-93) 239# The Wine Advocate

Tasted from barrel, the 2017 Crozes Hermitage les Pierrelles looks destined to surpass the 2016 (and maybe even the 2015 as well). Plummy but fresh and vibrant, it's full-bodied, taut and powerful, showing attractive hints of licorice on the long finish.

Domaine Belle Crozes Hermitage Cuvée Louis Belle



2015 : 94 234# The Wine Advocate

The 2015 Crozes Hermitage Cuvée Louis Belle is cedary and rich, full-bodied and amply endowed with dark berry fruit and velvety tannins. It does show too much oak to be truly classic, but it's hedonistically delicious in a clean, modern style. It has a decade or more of pleasure ahead of it.

2016 : 92 239# The Wine Advocate

Bottled just one week before my visit, the 2016 Crozes Hermitage Cuvée Louis Belle comes from the Belle family's home village of Larnage. It offers scents of crushed stone and pencil shavings, plum and raspberry compote, even a bit of Christmas spice. Medium to full-bodied, it's supple and velvety enough to drink now, with enough concentrated fruit to think it will age well through at least 2025.

2017 : (92-94) 239# The Wine Advocate

Yes, the 2017 Crozes Hermitage Cuvée Louis Belle shows some oaky notes of cedar and vanilla, but they mesh well with the powerful fruit from Larnage. Full-bodied and rich, blackberry and licorice flavors come in waves, crashing ashore only to fade ever-so-slowly in an outburst of silky tannins.

Domaine Belle Crozes Hermitage Roche Pierre



2015 : 96 234# The Wine Advocate

Simply one of the best (if not the best) Crozes Hermitage I've ever tasted, Belle's 2015 Crozes Hermitage Roche Pierre is a huge, full-bodied wine with immense richness and unfathomable length. Crushed stone and black olive aromas set the scene, then masses of fine tannins leave behind an indelible yet velvety imprint on the palate. Mocha, stone and spice elements whirl together on the finish, transporting the taster to gnarly old vines on craggy granite slopes. The Belle family treats this wine like Hermitage, and in this vintage, it even surpasses their Hermitage. Wow.

2016 : 93+ 239# The Wine Advocate

Bottled just a week before my visit, the 2016 Crozes Hermitage Roche Pierre (old-vine Syrah on granitic soils, aged close to two years in barrel) seemed a bit reticent and tight. Pencil shavings frame plummy fruit in this medium to full-bodied effort. The suave, fine-grained tannins come close to being silky in feel on the lingering finish. This is the rare Crozes-Hermitage that's capable of rivaling Hermitage itself.

2017 : (94-96) 239# The Wine Advocate

The concentrated, rich 2017 Crozes Hermitage Roche Pierre looks terrific from barrel. Full-bodied and velvety, it's very much Hermitage-like in its power and length. Licorice, plum and dark chocolate notes all linger on the finish.

Domaine Belle Saint Joseph Les Rivoires Rouge



2015 : 95 234# The Wine Advocate

From a granite site between Tournon and Mauves, the 2015 Saint Joseph Les Rivoires is a major-league contender for Saint-Jo of the vintage. Crushed stone notes speak to its origins, while huge fruit points to the warmth of the vintage and mocha notes speak to the skillful élevage in fine oak. This full-bodied wine is remarkably round and rich yet lacks any sense of heaviness, remaining fresh, supple and spicy through the long finish. This has it all.

2016 : 92 239# The Wine Advocate

From a granitic site between Tournon and Mauves, the 2016 Saint Joseph Les Rivoires features aromas of pencil shavings, raspberries and crushed stone. Medium to full-bodied, it boasts beautiful fruit, supple tannins and an elegant, mouthwatering finish.

Domaine Belle Crozes Hermitage Terres Blanches



2017 : 90 239# The Wine Advocate

The 2017 Crozes Hermitage les Terres Blanches is a bit unusual for the appellation in that it's 70% Roussanne and 30% Marsanne. It's also 70% barrel fermented and aged, with the remainder being done in stainless steel. Full-bodied, ripe and round, it offers attractive notes of honeyed pineapple, cinnamon, clove and vanilla, even a hint of sweet corn, before fading on the finish.

Domaine Belle Crozes Hermitage Roche Blanche



2016 : 93 234# The Wine Advocate

The 100% Marsanne 2016 Crozes Hermitage Roche Blanche is the product of 70- to 80-year-old vines near Larnage. It's entirely barrel-fermented in 15% to 20% new oak, imparting subtle grilled notes to hints of toasted marshmallow and pear. On the palate, it's medium to full-bodied, with orange, brine and citrus pith notes on the lingering finish. It should drink well for a few more years.

2017 : 91 239# The Wine Advocate

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Domaine Belle Hermitage Blanc



2017 : 95 239# The Wine Advocate

Bottled only a week before I tasted it, Domaine Belle's 2017 Hermitage Blanc is a superb effort. Deep straw in color, it's a 60-40 blend of Marsanne and Roussanne, barrel fermented and aged in two-thirds new French oak. Hints of toasted cedar highlight ripe melon and pineapple aromas, leading into a rich, powerful, full-bodied palate. Big, expansive and layered, it delivers lovely trace notes of orange zest, dried spices and white pepper, lingering elegantly on the full-flavored finish.

Domaine Belle Hermitage Red



2014 : 91 228# The Wine Advocate

Belle's 2014 Hermitage is a meaty, smoky effort that offers plenty of ripe currants, vanilla bean and crushed rock characteristics in its medium to full-bodied, nicely concentrated, elegant style. Like all the 2014s, it stays fresh and focused, without a huge amount of depth, yet it has top-notch purity and elegance, with fine tannin. Give bottles a few years to shed some tannin and drink it over the following decade or so.

2015 : 95 234# The Wine Advocate

Plush, big and cuddly, the full-bodied 2015 Hermitage offers mouth-filling flavors of mocha cream and ripe cherries. It's concentrated and rich but maybe doesn't have quite the detail and precision of the estate's top wines from the granites of Saint Joseph or Crozes Hermitage. It's a bit drying on the finish at the moment, so give it a couple of years and then drink it over the following decade and a half.

2016 : 95 239# The Wine Advocate

An April hailstorm cut Hermitage yields at Domaine Belle by 50%, but the final quality was unimpacted (and maybe even improved). The 2016 Hermitage features hints of cedar and baking spices on the nose but also black cherries and black olives. This medium to full-bodied wine (it's only 13.5% alcohol) seems bigger, with plenty of depth and richness and a long, elegant finish. Powerful yet balanced, it's already approachable yet seems sure to age well for at least 15 years.

2017 : (96-98) 239# The Wine Advocate

A barrel sample of the domaine's 2017 Hermitage suggests it will be another strong vintage. Violets, pencil shavings, purple raspberries and baking spices all come together in a whirl of richness. Velvety, intense and long, it should be approachable relatively young yet have the stuffing to age for two decades.

JEB DUNNUCK

JEB DUNNUCK

94

2015 Domaine Belle Crozes-Hermitage Cuvée Louis Belle

I also loved the 2015 Crozes-Hermitage Cuvée Louis Belle which saw a traditional vinification followed by 20 months in French oak. Blackberry, currants, blueberries, violets and hints of black pepper give way to a rich, expansive, opulent Syrah that has sweet tannin and a great finish. Give it a few years of bottle age and enjoy over the following decade or more.

I always love the wines from this tiny estate and they've made a number of brilliant wines in 2015.

- Jeb Dunnuck (1/24/2018)

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93-95

2015 Domaine Belle Crozes-Hermitage Roche Pierre

Not yet bottled, the 2015 Crozes-Hermitage Roche Pierre is the flagship cuvée from Crozes-Hermitage and will spend a full 26 months in barrel. Cassis, toasty oak, espresso and floral notes all emerge from this beautifully concentrated, yet elegant Crozes that has ripe, present tannin and a great finish. It's more than a little impressive and easily the finest version I've tried from this estate to date.

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- Jeb Dunnuck (1/24/2018)

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94-96

2015 Domaine Belle Hermitage

Belle's inky colored 2015 Hermitage looks to be a stunner. This cuvée comes all from the more sandy, limestone soils of the Les Murets lieu-dit and will see 26 months in barrel. It has a gorgeous bouquet of cassis, Asian spices, vanilla bean and liquid rock. This gives way to a full-bodied, ripe, powerful Hermitage that has terrific purity, an elegant, balanced personality and building, ripe tannin. It needs 3-4 years of cellaring and will drink beautifully for two decades.

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91

2017 Domaine Belle Crozes Hermitage Les Terres Blanches Blanc

Starting out, the 2017 Crozes Hermitage Les Terres Blanches Blanc (70% Marsanne and 30% Roussanne) sports a medium gold color, as well as a beautiful bouquet of spiced citrus, white flowers, and salty minerality. Clean, impeccably balanced, and medium-bodied, it should drink nicely for 2-4 years and is a beautiful wine in a vintage that was more difficult for whites.

I've always loved the wines from this tiny family-owned estate in Crozes Hermitage, and they continue to produce classic, impeccably balanced wines that can at time lack some wow factor, yet grow on you with time in the glass, are impeccably balanced, and loaded with charm.

- Jeb Dunnuck (12/20/2018)

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94

2017 Domaine Belle Hermitage Blanc

The 2017 Hermitage Blanc is a blend of 60% Marsanne and 40% Roussanne that spent 20 months in 75% new barrels. Its medium gold color is followed by a beautiful perfume of ripe white peach, honeyed stone fruits, hints of spice, and white flowers. It's rich, full-bodied, has moderate acidity, and a ripe, sexy, full-bodied style. Drink it over the coming 2-3 years or give bottles a decade. It's ripe, sexy, and powerful.

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92

2016 Domaine Belle Crozes Hermitage Les Pierrelles

The 2016 Crozes Hermitage Les Pierrelles comes from sandy, pebbly soils and spent 14 months in 2- to 5-year-old barrels. Saturated purple/ruby-colored, with beautiful notes of blackberries, pepper, ground herbs, and hints of minerality, it hits the palate with a rounded, supple, elegant texture that carries terrific depth and richness. It's a beautiful Crozes that will keep for 7-8 years, probably longer.

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92

2016 Domaine Belle Crozes Hermitage Cuvée Louis Belle

The 2016 Crozes Hermitage Cuvée Louis Belle is another charming, impeccably made wine. Blackberries, peppery herbs, and earthy notes all emerge from the glass, and it's medium-bodied, nicely textured, and round on the palate, with ample charm.

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94

2016 Domaine Belle Crozes Hermitage Roche Pierre

The flagship cuvée is the 2016 Crozes Hermitage Roche Pierre, which spent two years in 30% new French oak. It offers a layered, multi-dimensional, full-bodied texture as well as classic notes of plums, blackberries, ground pepper, and incense. This complex beauty has subtle oak, a wealth of fruit, and terrific balance. Give bottles a year or two and enjoy over the following decade.

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Domaine Belle
Hermitage Red 2015, Rhône

