



DOMAINE BELLE

REVUE DE PRESSE

2020



# Guide de la Revue des Vins de France – 2020



## DOMAINE BELLE

Derrière la colline de l'Hermitage, la cave de la famille Belle domine les hauteurs du village de Larnage. Louis, le grand-père de Philippe Belle, a été l'un des fondateurs de la coopérative de Tain. Philippe et son père Albert l'ont quitté en 1990. Depuis le domaine ne cesse de s'agrandir. Le vignoble s'étend sur six communes, trois appellations et couvre une superficie de 25 hectares, auquel s'ajoute des abricotiers et une activité de pépinière viticole gérée par Jean Claude, le frère de Philippe Belle. Les vignes en Crozes-Hermitage sont très bien situées sur les coteaux de Larnage, d'où

est issue la Cuvée Louis BELLE, et dans la plaine alluviale pour la cuvée Les Pierrelles. En Hermitage, une parcelle modeste est issue la cuvée Les Pierrelles. En Hermitage, une parcelle modeste située dans le quartier les Murets pour les rouges et Péléas pour le Blanc.

**Les vins :** ils gardent leur style bien particulier, tourné vers la garde, ce qui nous convient parfaitement. En Blanc, Roche Blanche est un peu engoncé ; sa fermeté s'oppose à la richesse du millésime. L'Hermitage blanc est une grande bouteille racée et tendue qu'il faut avoir dans sa cave. Parmi les rouges, Les Pierrelles est moins ouvert en 2017 qu'en 2016. Le fruit se montre plus mat. Roche Pierre est un crozes-hermitage qui peut faire pâlir certains Hermitage. L'Hermitage rouge se montre fin : ce n'est pas le plus puissant des vins de cette appellation, mais il se distingue par son jus délié et longiligne.

— Crozes-Hermitage Roches Blanches		
2017	33€	15,5
— Hermitage		
2017	55€	18
— Crozes-Hermitage Les Pierrelles		
2017	18€	14,5
— Crozes-Hermitage Roche Pierre		
2017	38€	16,5
— Hermitage		
2016	68 €	17

### DOMAINE BELLE

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[www.domainebelle.com](http://www.domainebelle.com) / Vente et visites : au domaine  
sur rendez-vous / Propriétaire : Philippe Belle



## Domaine Belle Crozes Hermitage les Pierrelles



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

Belle's 2017 Crozes Hermitage les Pierrelles is as good an entry-level Crozes as one is likely to find. Scents of leather, mocha and plum give it a sense of complexity not often found in such a round, generous Syrah. It's full-bodied and a bit creamy across the mid-palate, then tightens up to finish firm, with notes of cracked pepper and dark fruit. Tasted twice (once blind), with consistent notes.

**2018 : (90-93)** 247# The Wine Advocate

The 2018 Crozes Hermitage les Pierrelles made for a great start to my visit at this standout estate. It's grapey and intense, with hints of cedary wood accenting blueberry and blackberry fruit. It's full-bodied and supple, finishing lush and even a bit warm. It should be a lot of fun to drink as a young wine.

## Domaine Belle Crozes Hermitage Cuvée Louis Belle



**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 outrush of silky tannins.

**2018 : (92-95)** 247# The Wine Advocate

Showing every bit of its 30% new oak, the 2018 Crozes Hermitage Cuvée Louis Belle displays notes of cedar, vanilla, sawdust and baking spices. Yet backing up the wood is a wine that's full-bodied and rich, with concentrated plum and licorice notes that come through on the lengthy finish.

## 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.

**2018 : (94-96)** 247# The Wine Advocate

Easily the equal to some Hermitages, Belle's 2018 Crozes Hermitage Roche Pierre comes from the estate's oldest Syrah vines, planted on granitic soils. It's aged in up to 40% new oak, but it has the fruit intensity and full-bodied richness to measure up. Crushed stone, pencil shavings and mocha notes accent blueberries, licorice and black olives in this impeccably balanced and complex offering.

## 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.

**2017 : 93** 247# The Wine Advocate

The Belle family works a small granite parcel of Saint-Joseph located between Tournon and Mauves. Despite being full-bodied and boasting accents of cedar, mocha and licorice, the 2017 Saint Joseph Les Rivoires features a stony austerity to its powerful dark-fruit flavors, finishing with some firm, mouth-drying tannins. Give it another year or two in the cellar and drink it through 2030.

## Domaine Belle Crozes Hermitage Terres Blanches



**2019 : 89** 247# The Wine Advocate

A 70-30 blend of Marsanne and Roussanne, the 2018 Crozes Hermitage les Terres Blanches is matured in both oak (60%) and tank (40%). It hints at pineapple, pear and melon on the nose, then delivers more pear and melon notes on the palate. Full-bodied, yet crisp and vibrant on the finish, it should be drunk over the near term. Tasted twice (once blind), with consistent notes.

## Domaine Belle Crozes Hermitage Roche Blanche



**2018 : 94** 247# The Wine Advocate

The all-Marsanne 2018 Crozes Hermitage Roche Blanche comes from 70-year-old vines in Larnage, barrel-fermented and aged in 25% new oak (the other 75% goes into second-fill barrels). There's a gentle hint of caramel or honey on the nose, but the bulk of the aromas and flavors are ripe pear, melon and citrus notes. Full-bodied and creamy in texture, it turns briny and zesty on the lingering finish. I adore these wines in their opulent youth, but adventurous souls may want to put a bottle or two away for up to a decade.

## 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.

**2018 : (94-97)** 245# The Wine Advocate

A 60-40 blend of Marsanne and Roussanne from Péléal, the 2018 Hermitage Blanc is a powerhouse white Hermitage. Barrel fermented and aged in two-thirds new oak, it's full-bodied, rich and broad, loaded with honeyed notes of pear, melon and citrus yet comes across as balanced, with a long, refreshing finish. Tasted blind on another occasion, I liked it less, finding it slightly tropical and confected and shorter on the finish, but otherwise similar (91 - 93).

## Domaine Belle Hermitage Red



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.

2018 : **(95-97)** 239# The Wine Advocate

Belle's 2018 Hermitage is dark, intense and smoky, with mocha and roasted-meat accents to the concentrated blueberry and plum fruit. Full-bodied, packed and powerful, it's another blockbuster Hermitage from the family's parcels in Les Murets and Péléal.

2009 : **95** 247# The Wine Advocate

The full-bodied 2009 Hermitage is rich and concentrated; still packed with material, it looks capable of going another 10 years or so. Hints of mocha, cured meat, red berries and licorice all surround a sturdy, ripe core of cassis fruit, supported by a framework of ripe tannins and ample texture. It's a lovely effort, at its peak of maturity.



# JEB DUNNUCK

**JEB DUNNUCK**

**91**

## 2018 Domaine Belle Crozes-Hermitage Les Terres Blanches Blanc

The 2018 Crozes-Hermitage Les Terres Blanches Blanc is terrific and well worth seeking out. A blend of 70% Marsanne and the rest Roussanne, it has a rich yet also fresh style that carries classic melon, quince, and honeysuckle aromas and flavors. Medium-bodied, nicely textured, and balanced, it's going to shine on the dinner table. It should keep for at least 4-5 years.

*I always love tasting through the releases from Domaine Belle, and they always show classic yet clean, pure profiles that are a joy to drink. While the domaine is located in Crozes Hermitage, they have small holdings in Hermitage and have produced a blockbuster in 2017.*

- Jeb Dunnuck (12/12/2019)

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**JEB DUNNUCK**

**93**

## 2018 Domaine Belle Hermitage Blanc

As to the 2018 Hermitage Blanc, it's a blend of 60% Marsanne and 40% Roussanne that spent 20 months in 75% new French oak. Beautiful white flowers, quince, currants, honeysuckle, and a touch of minerality all flow to a medium to full-bodied white that has good acidity, a great texture, no hard edges, and loads of class. There are a scant 125 cases made, but it's well worth seeking out. It should be capable of drinking nicely for 15 years or more.

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**JEB DUNNUCK**

**93**

## 2017 Domaine Belle Crozes-Hermitage Cuvée Louis Belle

The 2017 Crozes-Hermitage Cuvée Louis Belle is a winner. Lots of black raspberries, toasted spice, new leather, and savory peppery notes emerge from the glass, and it's ripe, rounded, and sexy on the palate, with light tannins and plenty of upfront accessibility. It should keep for at least 7-8 years.

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**JEB DUNNUCK**

**92**

## 2017 Domaine Belle Crozes-Hermitage Les Pierrelles

The entry-level from Crozes is the 2017 Crozes-Hermitage Les Pierrelles, and it's a great introduction to this estate. Classic blackberry, spice box, ground pepper, and leafy herbs notes all give way to a medium-bodied Syrah that has a rounded, supple texture, plenty of intensity and depth, and a great finish. It will keep for a solid 7-8 years.

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**2017 Domaine Belle Crozes-Hermitage  
Roche Pierre**

Brought up in 30% new French oak, the 2017 Crozes-Hermitage Roche Pierre is also brilliant, with the exuberant, forward, sexy style of the vintage. Christmas spice, forest floor, new leather, dried herbs, and assorted darker berry fruits all emerge from this medium to full-bodied, balanced, mineral-laced Syrah that has plenty of tannins, no hard edges, and a great finish. It's another rocking wine from this estate that readers should snatch up.

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**2017 Domaine Belle Hermitage**

The 2017 Hermitage is another gorgeous 2017 from this domaine. Revealing a deep purple hue as well as knockout notes of crème de cassis, liquid rock-like minerality, toasted spice, and graphite, it hits the palate with full-bodied richness, a deep, layered mid-palate, and a great, great finish. It's young and primordial, yet still offers pleasure due to its balance and purity. Do your best to hide bottles for 4-5 years and enjoy over the following two decades. This wine comes from the more limestone and sandy portions of Hermitage Hill and was brought up in equal parts new and once-used French oak.

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Domaine Belle  
Hermitage Red 2015, Rhône



Domaine Belle  
Hermitage White 2017, Rhône

