



Arlequin One-Bottle Club
September 2018
Domaine du Vieux Télégraphe
Châteauneuf-du-Pape “La Crau” 2014
Rhône Valley, France

Grape Varieties 65% Grenache, 15% Mourvèdre, 15% Syrah, 5% other varieties, e.g., Cinsault, Clairette, etc.

Winemaker One cannot think of Châteauneuf-du-Pape, the most celebrated *cru* of France’s southern Rhône, without thinking of Domaine du Vieux Télégraphe. Its owners, the Brunier family, are legendary in their own right, having been rooted to the enigmatic plateau known as La Crau for over one hundred years. The Bruniers’ story begins in 1898 with Hippolyte Brunier. A modest farmer who lived off the land, Hippolyte kept less than a hectare of vines to make his own wines. His small vineyard was at one of the highest points in between Châteauneuf-du-Pape and Bédarrides, a stony plateau called La Crau. Its elevation led to the construction, in the late 1700s, of a telegraph tower to transmit messages between Marseille and Paris—hence the estate’s name. Hippolyte’s grandson, Henri, eventually joined the family business, and with him came great changes: replanting the vineyards, the construction of a new winery, bringing temperature control into the winery to protect the wines during fermentation, and most important, launching the Domaine’s first bottlings under the Vieux Télégraphe label.

Vintage Unlike 2013, which both started and finished late, 2014 in the Rhône appeared set for an early harvest. But cool conditions and sporadic rainfall in July and August turned what had promised to be a *laissez faire* vintage into one requiring industry and great vigilance with canopy management. Such things require effort and cost money, but naturally those who were prepared to make the sacrifices, to thin the leaves and sort, repeatedly, in the vines, were

those who were able to benefit from the more benevolent September and ultimately bring in wines of balance and superb quality. The best reds glory in approachable red fruit charm, yet do not lack for savory depth and that classic herbal ingredient that has always made Châteauneuf-du-Pape so attractive.

Vineyard For many, the high plateau called La Crau is Châteauneuf-du-Pape’s grandest *cru*. Otherwise, the allure of this barren landscape is not immediately discernable—there is nothing but *galets roulés*, or rounded stones, as far as the eye can see. The soil’s complex stratifications were millions of years in the making, and include early alluvial deposits, limestone, silica, and a robust red clay (known as *molasse*) that has become a signature of this terrain. Up so high, the vines are subject to all kinds of elements—rain, hail, scorching sunshine, and especially the unruly Mistral. Sitting on the surface of the soil, the *galets* hold important functions: they insulate the vines from cold and the heat, and they provide drainage for the roots.

Winemaking Grapes for this wine, the estate’s top bottling, come solely from old vines planted on *La Crau*. Vineyards are sustainably farmed; grapes are hand-harvested and sorted twice by hand, with only perfect berries allowed in the press, and partially de-stemmed. Traditional fermentation takes between 25 and 35 days in both steel and wood *cuves* (temperature-controlled), then rests in cement tanks for 10 months. Subsequently, it’s transferred to large old *foudres* to age another year, then bottled unfiltered.

Tasting Notes This is a fine-boned, classically structured Châteauneuf-du-Pape, offering fragrant, fruity aromas of raspberries and flowers. On the palate, ripe red fruit flavors carry earthy, tobacco-edged savoryness and a hint of dried herbs and peppery spice. The wine’s rich, red-fruited depth and concentration is balanced by bright minerality, providing balance and freshness.

Food Pairing This robust red will pair beautifully with beef, lamb and other full-flavored meats like squab or even, if you can find it, wild boar. The wine’s rich berry fruit makes it a natural with grilled foods, including char-grilled steaks and chops, and the hint of spice and bramble in the wine make it perfect for meats seasoned with potent herbs like sage and rosemary.