

Domaine Rousset

2019 Crozes Hermitage Rouge Les Picaudières

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| Varietal(s) | Syrah |
| Region | Northern Rhône, France |
| Short Summary | Stéphane Rousset's vineyards are in Crozes-Hermitage's northern communes of Erôme, Gervans and Crozes-Hermitage, including the legendary Les Picaudières. The hill structures and soil types differ significantly throughout the appellation with various exposures on moderate to very steep rock terraces. Rousset's Marsanne grows mostly on loess topsoil and granite bedrock. The Crozes-Hermitage red wine terroirs are largely on granite with some variations of igneous and metamorphic rock. Across the river, in Tournon, two adjacent blocks of St. Joseph grow on extremely steep granite slopes. Whites are whole cluster pressed, fermented in concrete, mostly aged in steel without malolactic with remaining in oak. The reds are partial stem inclusion and are fermented in steel and then racked to barrel or tank where they age for about a year. |
| Terroir | East of Erôme and Gervans, two of Crozes-Hermitage's granite terroirs, lies Les Picaudières, perhaps the most singular terroir within the entire appellation. An unexpected fusion of Côte-Rôtie-like elegance with penetrating mineral textures and Hermitage's rich, upfront earthiness and darker fruit, it is indeed unique, especially to its own appellation of humble terroirs. A small hike is required to reach the vineyard tucked a few kilometers on the backside of Hermitage, back into a forest that surrounds the vineyard on all sides, except the ridgeline. A mixture of some kind of metamorphic stone and igneous granite, Les Picaudières is tailored for those who seek an experience, not merely a wine among many to be casually slurped down. This wine can stun the patient drinker as it unspools one complexity after another, reaching an unexpected weight and textural profundity reserved for only the best in show from the entire Northern Rhône Valley. It seems a bold statement, but given the proper time this wine will compete. |
| Cellar Notes | Once picked, the grapes are typically destemmed; however, exceptions may be made depending on the vintage, like in 2018 where 80% of the stems were left in the vat to bring more freshness to this atypically warm year. Spontaneous yeast fermentation takes place in stainless steel vats and pumpover extractions are principally made at the beginning but cease once the fermentation begins to slow; this is to avoid too much extraction of harder tannins from the seeds. Time on skins before pressing can be up to a month in order to move past some primary fruit and superficial fermentative aromas. This brings more emphasis to the wine's deeper complexities earlier on in the wine's life. Once pressed, settled and racked into barrel it undergoes malolactic fermentation naturally. |
| Farming | Sustainable—Organic Certified—Biodynamic Certified—Uncertified Naturalist |
| Total SO2 | None Added—Very Low—Low—Medium—High |