

Domaine Rousset 2018 Saint-Joseph Rouge

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	Rousset's one hectare parcel is located in Tournon, one of the appellation's six original communes of Saint-Joseph. Around the corner from the original hill that gave the appellation its name are Rousset's two parcels within the lieu-dit, les Rivoires, positioned side-by-side, facing east. The house style of Rousset is elegance over power, and aside from the natural elegance the granite bedrock imparts and the shorter exposure to the sun due to its eastern face on a steep hill, the deft touch in the cellar accentuates the wine's natural affinity for finesse. By comparison to Rousset's other top red, the Crozes-Hermitage "Les Picaudières," this wine is more immediately upfront and continues a slow evolution without straying too far. Les Picaudières is somehow the opposite, within the context of only these two wines. It's a journey that starts slow by comparison but builds layer upon layer of deep palate textures and intense mineral characteristics.
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