

*The benchmark Saint Joseph domaine! John Livingstone-Learmonth*

**Producer Information:** Brothers Pierre and Jean Gonon work their 9 hectares of vines situated around Mauves, Tournon and St Jean de Muzols, birthplace of the appellation St Joseph. The family name is embedded into the very history of this sector and liberally peppers the record books as one turns back the pages to learn of the important *lieu-dit* (named parcels) of the villages and the names of those who farmed them. They have continued to develop their small 'domaine' by planting new vines on the hillsides of Tournon and acquiring older vines in St Jean de Muzols.

The *massale* selection vines average 35 years and are densely planted. The soils are fertilized only with their own composts and plowed for aeration. Only natural treatments are used in the vineyard, including copper, sulphur and plant extracts. Yield are kept very low by short pruning and green harvesting in July, resulting in yields of 30 hl/ha for the reds and 38 hl/ha for the whites. Grapes are harvested only by hand and fermentation takes place only in the presence of indigenous yeasts.

Uninterested in the current trend toward single vineyard bottlings at the expense of the "entry level" cuvées, the Gonon brothers uphold the best virtues of the appellation system and draw from all of their historic parcels, each lending a distinct character, to craft only a single white and a single red Saint Joseph cuvée.

## **Saint Joseph 2006**

**Terroir:** 5.5 hectares of vines situated around the original St. Joseph villages of Mauves, Tournon and St. Jean de Muzols. The individual parcels, *Les Oliviers, Aubert, Montagnon, Martinot, Côtes des Rivoires and Croix de Peygros*, range in altitude, the highest at 308 m, and soil composition, but all with varying percentages of poor, crumbly to sandy granitic base.

**Average age of vines:** Massale selection, 35 years and planted to density of between 6,000 and 9,000 vines per hectare.

**Characteristics of the Vintage:** April snowing and near freeze served to reduce yields. After some wet weather at the start of September, the winds came with ample sunshine which ensured a harvest on the 19th of healthy, fully ripened fruit. The 2005 vintage wines are rich and powerful and will need some time to fully express themselves but should also be exceptionally long-lived.

**Tasting Notes:** The Gonon brothers produce wines that are built for the cellar and the 2005 is no exception. On the nose, a savory bouquet of game, red and black fruits, licorice and an intense backbone of iron minerality which surely originates from the heavily granitic soils upon which the vines rest. Wonderful concentration of fruits, structure and ripe tannin all together foretell a long storied life ahead. Exquisite!!

**Grape Varieties:** 100 % Syrah

**Harvest:** All harvesting done by hand in small trays each with a 7.5 Kg capacity.

**Vinification:** All of the grapes are vinified in large, open top, wood fermenters, using partially de-stemmed grapes. Only indigenously occurring yeasts are used. In its early stages of fermentation and maceration, regular attention is given to the 'remontages' and 'pigeages' which is repeated twice a day for two to three weeks.

**Elevage:** The wine is then transferred to large casks, *foudres* and barrels, *demi-muids*, ranging in age from 3 to 15 years, where it stays for 14-16 months. During this time it is racked three times, and fined using egg whites before being bottled without additional filtration.

**Production:** 23 000 bottles / 1916 cases

