

# Domaine Pierre Jean Villa

## Saint Joseph



### The Wines

- *Syrah*: This comes from two parcels of old *sélection massale* vines formerly classed as AOC St Joseph but reclassified as Vin de France in 2018 under the rules restricting the total surface of the appellation. In addition, it comes from young vines in Villa's other parcels. The wine is aged entirely in large oak uprights. Production averages 2,400 bottles.
- *Croze-Hermitage "Accroche Coeur"*: The name refers to the tendrils that sprout out of very young vine leaves in the springtime and form a kind of cowlick or the curling shape of a heart. The domaine owns 1.5 hectares (about 4 acres) in the Chanos Curson zone in alluvial soils with galet stones. The grapes are all de-stemmed and aged in older barrels for 12-13 months.
- *Condrieu "Jardin Suspendu"*: 100% Viognier. From three parcels totaling five acres. About half was planted in 2009 while the other half dates from the 1970s. The young vine parcel was put in by Pierre Jean behind the original Villa winery on the hillside back of Chavanay; the two older parcels are in the commune of Vérin. About 50% of this is raised in foudre, 25% in neutral demi-muids, and 25% in clay jars. Normally there's no fining and one minimal filtration, but this depends on the year. Pierre Jean loves the textured fruit that Condrieu amply provides and aims to couple this with lift and freshness. Production averages 1,667 6-packs.

The name comes from the post-WWII days, when the terraces behind Ampuis were largely abandoned and the locals took to growing vegetable gardens on the steep hillsides. *Jardin* referred to vegetables, not grapes."

- *Saint Joseph blanc "Saut de L'Ange"*: A lovely, dense Roussanne coming from a parcel in the northern end of the appellation in Chavanay and three smaller ones in the southern end of the appellation. This is one of the few 100% Roussannes made in the north (only four or five producers make one). The total vineyard surface comes to 0.6 hectares, or 1.5 acres. Like the Condrieu, some 50% of this is raised in foudre, 25% in neutral demi-muids, and 25% in clay jars. Normally, this is bottled without filtration. The name—Angel's Leap, or Swan Dive—comes from the parcel growing on a steep hillside that ends at a cliff above his winery. Production averages 1,500 bottles.

- *Saint Joseph "Préface"*: This is the first red cuvée of the domaine, a wine with a terrific core of Syrah fruit, and it sets the tone (hence its name). At roughly 12,000 bottles, it's the largest production. The vines grow in the northern, cooler sector of the appellation, the wine is made in a mixture of 225-liter and 500-liter barrels, all older, and the *élevage* goes for 12-13 months (which will probably increase in the years ahead). The vineyard parcels total two hectares, or five acres, and normally as much as 30% of the grapes--especially those from the old vines of *serine*--are fermented with stems.
- *Saint Joseph "Tildé"* This is the old vine cuvée made from four parcels planted in 1963, 64, 65, and 1970 in the very center of the St Joe appellation in the commune of Sarras. The four parcels grow close to one another at roughly 300 meters in altitude, high on the hillside. Total vineyard surface is one hectare, or 2.5 acres, growing in sandy soils on top of a mother rock of pure granite. Depending on the year, some of this wine is declassified into Préface. Like its sibling, this is made in a mixture of large and small barrels, but here the *élevage* goes for up to 24 months. In addition, ferments are always done with a portion of stems, and since vintage 2016 that figure has been for at least 60% whole cluster in the ferments. Pierre Jean's father came from Spain, and the word *Tildé* refers to the Spanish accent mark ~ which forms the logo on Pierre Jean's labels. In the old dialect of Occitane, *Tildé* refers to an inscription, a stamp or seal put upon an object, and this cuvée could well bear the seal of the domaine. Average annual production is 3,000 bottles.
- *Côte-Rôtie "Carmina"*: Pierre Jean has two parcels in Côte-Rôtie for this wine: an old vine parcel (Fongeant: 1954 and 1964 plantings) measuring an acre and a quarter; plus five acres of younger vines to the north in the Vereney lieu dit of Lézardes. Thus the blend is roughly 20-80 from these sources. All of this is Syrah except for two lonely vines of Viognier that somehow got planted by accident, and these grapes are tossed into the vat.

Carmina is the proprietary name of a cuvée that is made primarily with old vine grapes and fermented with 30% (up to as much as 50% in good years) of whole clusters. Half of the *élevage* is done in a large oak upright while the remainder of the wine is raised in older demi-muids. It is bottled if possible without fining or filtration. The soil here is very fine mica schist, and the wine has a great deal of breed with a redder flavor profile than Préface, which definitely leans toward a darker profile. Average annual production is 3,600 to 4,800 bottles.

- *Côte-Rôtie "Fongeant"*: Syrah. Fongeant is a lieu-dit at the top of the Côte Brune hillside. Villa has a parcel of just over an acre planted in 1954 and 1964, and since 2013 he has plowed this parcel with a horse. Depending on the year, the wine is made with between two-thirds and 100% whole cluster after a strict triage and is not fined or filtered. *Elevage* takes place primarily in older demi-muids, with a few 228-liter barrels in reserve. Production averages 2,400 bottles.

The vines pre-date clonal selections. They are not the small berry *serine* strain of Syrah; rather, these vines constitute an old *sélection massale* plantation. Each vine is distinctive, there is little rhythm or reason about them, and their grapes range from small to large.