

VIEW FROM THE CELLAR

By John Gilman

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Number Seventy-Three

Domaine Jean-Louis Chave

1995 Hermitage

Rhône Valley, France

Score: 96 Points

I bought a case of Chave Hermitage in every top vintage between 1988 and 1997, but given how much I loved these wines, the only ones that still remain un-drunk in my cellar are the 1988 and 1995, as they proved a bit sturdy out of the blocks and did not allow the same early accessibility that led so many good 1990s and 1991s (not to mention the utterly seductive 1997) to the dining table far before their time. But, though I drank most of these wines before they were really at their apogees, I have fond memories of each and every one! This most recent bottle of the 1995 Chave Hermitage was showing utterly classical in profile and starting to really blossom completely on the palate, offering up a pure and complex bouquet of cassis, pepper, a hint of red plum, leather, roasted game, a terrific base of stony soil tones and topnotes of violets and lavender. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and really opens up very nicely with a bit of time in decanter, with a superb core, outstanding focus and grip and a long, modestly tannic and tangy finish. I loved the less-extracted style of Chave Hermitage back in this era and the 1995 is one of the last of that genre.

