



Jean-Louis Chave – the 2014 & 2015 Vintages

As reviewed by Jeb Dunnuck

The Wine Advocate #228 – December 2016

One of my favorite visits during my trip through the Northern Rhône is with Jean-Louis Chave and Family. This iconic estate continues to produce reference point wines from Hermitage and more and more St Joseph, where Jean-Louis has spent an incredible amount of time and effort over the past decade or more. Looking at the vintages reviewed here, the 2015s were all tasted from barrel and are spectacular wines. Both Gérard and Jean-Louis compared this vintage to a mix of 2009 and 2010, and when I asked if there were any similarities to 1990, both commented that the tannins in 2015 were more ripe and supple. I suspect that the 2015 will slot in among 1990, 2003, 2009 and 2010 as one of the greatest wines from the estate, and readers owe it to themselves to have at least a few bottles in the cellar. As to the St Josephs, the quality continues to soar, and the big question will be if they decide to release single vineyard cuvées. I sincerely hope they do, as these two vineyards (Beshesson, located north of St-Jean-de-Muzols and Le Clos, located just south of Mauves) are singular beauties that I'd love readers to taste.

2015 Jean-Louis Chave Hermitage Rouge

As to the reds, the 2015 Hermitage looks to be about as profound as they come. As usual, I'm able to taste the different components, and while the differences in each sample were striking, the quality wasn't; each sample showed full-bodied richness, gorgeous concentration, ripe tannin and impeccable purity. Possessing a sexy, voluptuous style, it's a hypothetical mix of the 2009 and 2010. **(97-100 points)**

2015 Jean-Louis Chave Hermitage Blanc

Chave continues to make a full-throttle, concentrated and unctuous Hermitage Blanc, and refuses to buy into the ridiculous trend toward making Sauvignon Blanc-like whites from this tiny, magical terroir. God bless him for that and there are few whites I'd rather drink than a

mature Hermitage Blanc from this genius winemaker. Starting with the latest vintage and tasted from multiple barrels, the 2015 Hermitage Blanc will be a sensational wine. This rich, unctuous beauty has terrific purity and depth, with the classic concentration, extract and fat that's the hallmark of the estate's Hermitage Blanc. White currants, buttered citrus, toasted bread and hints of flower oil are just some of the nuances here and this beauty will deliver the goods. **(95-97 points)**

2015 Jean-Louis Chave Saint-Joseph Rouge

Regarding the St Josephs and starting with the classic cuvée of the estate, the 2015 St Joseph Domaine comes from vines located around Tournon and Mauves, and offers a tight, structured, even backwards style. It has beautiful fruit and good complexity, with a vibrant granite character that will reward patience. **(93-95 points)**

2014 Jean-Louis Chave Hermitage Rouge

Looking at the 2014 reds, the 2014 Hermitage is resting as a final blend and is scheduled to be bottled early next year. It has a serious floral character as well as the classic minerality imparted from the Bessards lieu-dit (which makes up the bulk of the cuvée), gorgeous depth of fruit, medium to full-bodied richness and fine, polished tannin. Like most 2014s, it will be approachable at an early age, but this beauty has class and will evolve gracefully. **(94-96 points)**

2014 Jean-Louis Chave Hermitage Blanc

Jean-Louis called 2014 a good year for the whites, and his 2014 Hermitage Blanc had just been bottled a month prior to my tasting. It has terrific minerality as well as classic stone fruits, buttered citrus, honeysuckle and crushed rock, full-bodied richness and an elegant, fresh, pure style. It will have two decades of longevity. **(95 points)**

2014 Jean-Louis Chave Saint-Joseph Rouge

The 2014 St Joseph Domaine is a wine readers should buy by the case. It's not going to be the longest-lived St Joseph out there, but it's absolutely loaded with character. I was able to drink a bottle of this over lunch and it's one of those bottles that's always the first to be emptied. Ripe, polished and sexy, with medium-bodied richness, it has perfumed notes of dark fruits, graphite, crushed flowers and spice in an ethereally textured, seamless package. **(92 points)**



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