



Domaine de la Solitude

As reviewed by Jeb Dunnuck

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Domaine de la Solitude is located in the heart of the appellation, on the western edge of the La Crau plateau, in the lieu-dit of La Solitude. This historic estate can track its history back to the 1600s (even further actually), with estate bottlings going back as far as 1900. Brothers Michel and Jean Lançon took over the estate from their father, Pierre, in 1974, and today, the helm is quickly being passed to Michel's son, Florent.

The estate itself covers 35 hectares, all contiguous and located around the estate. The terroir here is a mix of sand and clay, with some parcels including plenty of rolled stones. While the winemaking is more modern than traditional, they're far from dogmatic and approach each vintage with an open mind; in fact, there's rarely a consistent blend for each of the cuvees from vintage to vintage as Florent does a blind tasting each year to determine the final blends. In addition to their classic cuvee, they expanded to produce others over the years, including a Cuvee Barberini starting in 1999, the La Reserve Secrete starting in 2000 and the Grenache-dominated Cornelia Constanza starting in 2006.

This retrospective took place at the domaine and focused on the classic Châteauneuf du Pape going all the way back to 1967 and the flagship cuvee, the Châteauneuf du Pape La Reserve Secrete, going back to 2001. The classic cuvee is 60-70% Grenache and the rest Syrah, Mourvèdre and Cinsault, mostly destemmed

(they started destemming this cuvee 1998), can see a touch of carbonic maceration and is aged mostly in concrete tanks. This is a classic, age-worthy red. The Châteauneuf du Pape La Reserve Secrete is a much bigger, richer wine based on 60-70% Grenache and the rest Syrah and Mourvèdre. It's completely destemmed and aged almost all in small barrels, a good chunk of which can be new. This is a killer, modern-styled wine that never loses its Southern Rhône soul, and top vintages have two to three decades of longevity.

2001 Domaine de la Solitude Châteauneuf-du-Pape “Réserve Secrete”

Easily my favorite in the retrospective, the 2001 Chateauneuf du Pape la Reserve Secrete (60% Grenache and 40% Syrah, aged mostly in small barrels) flirts with perfection and is a heavenly Chateauneuf du Pape that I wish every reader could taste. Possessing off-the-hook complexity in its ripe dark fruits, garrigue, tobacco, olive and cigar-laced aromas and flavors, this beauty is full-bodied, gorgeously concentrated and layered, with fine, elegant tannin and a blockbuster finish. Possessing both elegance and power, it's a quintessential Chateauneuf du Pape that's drinking at point! **(98 points)**

2004 Domaine de la Solitude Châteauneuf-du-Pape “Réserve Secrete”

The 2004 Chateauneuf du Pape la Reserve Secrete (65% Grenache, 25% Syrah and 10% Mourvedre) is about as good as it gets in 2004. Ripe, sexy, full-bodied, meaty, and yet always light on its feet and graceful, it offers lots of incense, fig, peanut and leather aromas and flavors that continue to change in the glass. **(94 points)**

2005 Domaine de la Solitude Châteauneuf-du-Pape “Réserve Secrete”

Made from 75% Grenache, 15% Mourvedre and 10% Syrah, the classic 2005 Chateauneuf du Pape la Reserve Secrete is a full-bodied, concentrated, tannic and almost austere wine that has lots of graphite, asphalt, licorice and chocolate aromas and flavors. Straight, structured, classic and focused are all the buzz words here, and it has budged a bit since release. Forget it for 3-4 years and it will have 15+ years or more of longevity. **(94 points)**

2006 Domaine de la Solitude Châteauneuf-du-Pape “Réserve Secrete”

I think even better than the 2007, the 2006 Chateauneuf du Pape la Reserve Secrete is a Grenache-dominated blend that includes 35% Syrah. This inky colored, big, rich and massively concentrated wine is certainly one of the wines of the vintage, but even now, at age 10, it needs further cellaring. Showing lots of ripe dark fruits, coffee, oak and

toasty notes, it has full-bodied richness and building, ripe tannin; forget bottles for 3-4 years and enjoy over the following decade or more. **(96 points)**

2007 Domaine de la Solitude Châteauneuf-du-Pape “Réserve Secrete”

The 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape la Reserve Secrete (55% Syrah and 45% Grenache) was completely destemmed and raised in 65% small barrels. It's far from a classic Chateauneuf du Pape, yet it's no less sensational because of it. Offering a fabulous array of jammy black currants, black cherries, flowers, menthol and incense, this beauty hits the palate with full-bodied richness, a big, layered mid-palate, a seamless, ripe, silky profile and lots of peppery and herbal notes on the finish. There's a suppleness here that makes it already hard to resist, yet given the higher Syrah content and its massive concentration, I'm sure it will evolve for another 15+ years. **(95 points)**

2009 Domaine de la Solitude Châteauneuf-du-Pape “Réserve Secrete”

A 60/40 split of Grenache and Syrah, the 2009 Chateauneuf du Pape la Reserve Secrete is a much more open, flamboyant and sexy wine, especially when tasted beside the more backwards, tight and structured 2010. Kirsch, spice box, incense, flowers and garrigue all emerge from this beautiful, full-bodied, sexy 2009 that has sweet tannin and a great texture. Drink it anytime over the coming 10-15 years. **(95 points)**

2010 Domaine de la Solitude Châteauneuf-du-Pape “Réserve Secrete”

A blend of roughly 70% Grenache and 30% Syrah that was brought up in 60% new barrels, the sensational 2010 Chateauneuf du Pape la Reserve Secrete is a big, concentrated bruiser whose inky purple color is followed by tons of jammy blackberries, hints of cassis, spice and violets aromas and flavors. Its oak elevage has been completely absorbed by its wealth of fruit, and this full-bodied Chateauneuf du Pape has a stacked mid-palate, building tannin and a great finish. It's just now starting to be drinkable, yet it still needs short term cellaring and will drink well for two decades or more. **(96 points)**

1967 Domaine de la Solitude Châteauneuf-du-Pape

Also made by Pierre Lancon, the 1967 Chateauneuf du Pape (carbonic maceration and aged all in foudre) is another beauty that comes from a warm vintage. A big, rich effort, even today, it has a solid ruby/amber color as well as lots of chocolate, spice box, licorice and mature fruit aromas and flavors. It's another impressive wine that's holding up nicely. **(90 points)**

1978 Domaine de la Solitude Châteauneuf-du-Pape

Made by Pierre Lancon, the 1978 Chateauneuf du Pape is a screaming wine, which Florent thinks is mostly Grenache that was fermented all via carbonic maceration, with no destemming, and aged all in foudre. Silky, evolved, sweetly fruited and textured, with lots of cherry, truffle, cigar and forest floor aromas and flavors, it certainly falls into the old wine category, yet the Grenache keeps it textured, rich and offering incredible pleasure. **(93 points)**

2006 Domaine de la Solitude Châteauneuf-du-Pape

As with most 2006s, the 2006 Chateauneuf du Pape from this estate is a classic wine that exudes southern Rhone charm and character. Made from 55% Grenache, 20% Syrah, 15% Cinsault and the rest Mourvedre, it offers ready to go notes of garrigue, sweet spice, currants and roasted herbs. Medium to full-bodied, nicely concentrated and with a touch chewy tannin, drink this pleasure bent effort through 2021. **(91 points)**

2009 Domaine de la Solitude Châteauneuf-du-Pape

Made from 50% Grenache, 30% Syrah and the rest Mourvedre and Cinsault (the Syrah and Mourvedre were aged in new barrels), the 2009 Chateauneuf du Pape shows the sunny, sexy character of the vintage and reveals a great bouquet of framboise, black cherries, garrigue, sweet spice and incense. Medium to full-bodied, ripe and concentrated, with loads to love, it has more finesse and polish that you find in a lot of 2009s. It's drinking nicely today, but will no doubt continue showing well through 2026. **(91 points)**

2010 Domaine de la Solitude Châteauneuf-du-Pape

Another beautiful traditional cuvee from this estate is the 2010 Chateauneuf du Pape, which is a dramatically shifted blend of 40% Syrah, 35% Grenache, 20% Mourvedre and the rest Cinsault. While they normally make 9,000 cases of this cuvee, in 2010 there's only 4,500 produced, so production is down 50% due to the poor weather in the spring. Possessing a deep, rich character (no doubt due to the higher Syrah content), with lots of pepper, black raspberry, framboise and spice, it hits the palate with medium to full-bodied richness, a great mid-palate and fine, silky tannin. It's enjoyable today, but will evolve nicely through at least 2028.

(90 points)

2012 Domaine de la Solitude Châteauneuf-du-Pape

A good showing, the 2012 Chateauneuf du Pape is a forward, supple and sexy beauty that has medium to full-bodied richness, lots of black cherry and framboise fruit, background notes of licorice and spice, and a layered, ripe, pleasure bent style. **(90 points)**

2013 Domaine de la Solitude Châteauneuf-du-Pape

A beautiful wine, especially in the vintage, the 2013 Chateauneuf du Pape was bottled last year and is mostly Grenache, with 20% Syrah and 10% Cinsault, fermented with roughly 10% whole clusters, which is a change from past vintages. Medium-bodied, concentrated and seamless, with lots of darker berry fruits, licorice and peppery herbs/garrigue, it has solid purity and outstanding length. **(91 points)**



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