

Domaine Bernard Burgaud

AOC Côte-Rôtie, Rhône Valley

A dedicated, meticulous wine grower, the modest Bernard Burgaud is one of the stars of Côte-Rôtie. He took over the Domaine after the untimely death of his father in 1980. There were just 5 acres of vines then, which the Burgauds used to sell in bulk. Bernard has since doubled the holdings to 10 acres. He began bottling his wine seriously in 1982 and today produces up to 20,000 bottles a year.

Today, Bernard has land in the Le Champin, Leyat, Les Moutonnes, Côtes-Blonde, Fongeant and La Brosse *lieux-dits*. His vineyards are split between the steep inclines guarding the slopes above the town of Ampuis (66%) and the controversial flat plateau (34%), which has only been planted since the 1960s. On the sandy-granite, ferruginous soils covering the steep hills, his dark red Syrah grapes descend in zig zag fashion towards the Rhône. The average vine age is 30 years.

The winery itself is a small, neat, compact affair, located in the small hamlet of Le Champin, directly beneath the family home. It's perched high on the hillside, overlooking the back of the Côte Brune.

Bernard Burgaud has strong views

regarding Côte Rotie and has little time for the so-called modernist new-wave producers. He studied viticulture in Beaune and has a Burgundian approach to winemaking. To that end, he ferments his 100% destemmed Syrah grapes at a high temperature (34°C). During fermentation he does frequent punch downs (*pigeage*) up to 8 times a day for maximum extraction of color, tannin and aroma from the skins. The wine is then transferred from the open enamel-lined concrete vats into large wooden *foudres*,

in which they undergo their malolactic fermentation. Finally, the wine is racked into small oak *barriques* for 15-18 months.

Bernard was one of the first winemakers to replace a proportion of his barrels each year (up to 20% in some years), thus allowing the wines to increase in complexity. Finally, he bottles his wines unfiltered and unfiltered. The wines

that are not used for his own bottling are sold off in bulk to négociants and it is this selection that ensures the quality of the wines sold under his own label.

Bernard Burgaud produces deeply colored, rich, well extracted wines that are now amongst the finest in the Côte-Rôtie. They are structured with the finest tannin for a long, distinguished life. The intelligent work of this vigneron has today brought him to the forefront of the band of young winemakers in this Appellation.

