

# WINE ADVOCATE

ROBERT PARKER

## PRESS REVIEW CHATEAU DE SAINT COSME



# 2010

## **2010 Saint Cosme, Little James Basket Press red**

*Rating : (87) points*

As for the inexpensive wines, one of his creations is his non-vintage Little James Basket Press, which is created from a solera system that he started in 1999, so it tends to have about 50% of the most recent vintage (in this case 2010) blended with a little from each of the previous vintages between 1999 and 2009. It is a real fruit bomb, with a dark ruby purple color, loads of raspberry, chocolate and black currant fruit, silky tannins and a slightly evolved style due to the solera system. It is a winner, especially at the humble price it sells for.

## **2010 Saint Cosme, Condrieu**

*Rating : (93) points*

Barruol has turned out a beautiful 2010 Condrieu which exhibits lychee, honeysuckle, white peach and apricot notes, good acidity, some crushed rock notes and a long finish.

## **2010 Saint Cosme, Cote Rotie**

*Rating : (90-92+) points*

Several of the 2010s to look for in a year or so include Louis Barruol's 2010 Cote-Rotie, which possesses plenty of black olive, black raspberry and cassis fruit, with hints of Christmas fruitcake, incense, and an almost exotic Asian spice note. Drink it over the next 15 years.

## **2010 Saint Cosme, Cotes du Rhone**

*Rating : (89) points*

Of the other wines to look for that I reviewed last year, which are now in bottle and showing even better, the 100% Syrah cuvee, the 2009 Cotes du Rhone, comes from cool microclimates of Syrah in Vinsobres and La Garde. Dense ruby/purple, with loads of melted chocolate, espresso, cassis and blackberry, this inky, full-bodied wine has no hard edges and is just a big, corpulent mouthful of Syrah to drink over the next several years.

## **2010 Saint Cosme, Cotes du Rhone White**

*Rating : (88) points*

The other 2010s I tasted included the 2010 Cotes du Rhone blanc, which is Barruol's wonderfully fresh, lively honeysuckle and white peach-scented and flavored blend of Picpoul, Roussanne, Marsanne and Viognier. This is another very good wine, with slightly better acids than the 2009 version.

## **2010 Saint Cosme, Crozes-Hermitage**

*Rating : (88-90) points*

The other negociant wines include the 2010 Crozes-Hermitage, which looks outstanding, although it was quite closed compared to some of the other wines from this vintage. It displays notes of black olives, black currants, damp earth and licorice. It is medium-bodied and should turn out to have outstanding potential.

## **2010 château de Saint Cosme, Gigondas**

*Rating : (91-93) points*

The black/purple 2010 Gigondas, which in this year is a blend of 60% Grenache, 15% Syrah, 17% Mourvedre and the rest Cinsault, has loads of sweet blueberry and blackberry fruit intermixed with camphor, barbecue smoke and scorched earth. Lots of tannin, very good acidity, and a massive mouthfeel make for a real vin de garde for Louis Barruol's 2010 Gigondas. This wine will need 3-4 years of cellaring and keep for at least 15.

## **2010 château de Saint Cosme, Gigondas Valbelle**

*Rating : (92-95) points*

The blockbuster 2010 Valbelle is the most opulent of the wines, displaying smoky barbecue notes intermixed with Asian soy, incense, black cherries, black currants, and a forest floor sort of character. Smoky, intense and full-bodied, with a multi-dimensional mouthfeel, this opulently textured blend of 90% Grenache and 10% Syrah should drink well for 15-20 years.

## **2010 château de Saint Cosme, Gigondas Hominis Fides**

*Rating : (96-100) points*

A candidate for perfection is the 2010 Gigondas Hominis Fides. This is 100% Grenache from sandy and limestone soils that, like the other single-vineyard cuvees, is aged in small barrels (30% new, 40% one-year and 30% two to three years old). Inky purple, with an exquisite nose of spring flowers intermixed with smoky barbecue notes, creme de cassis, blackberry liqueur, and kirsch, the incredible floral fireworks continue in the mouth of this full-bodied, deep wine that overloads the olfactory senses as well as the tastebuds. This deep, striking, exhilarating wine is one of the greatest Gigondas I have ever tasted. Give it 4-5 years of cellaring and drink it over the following two decades.

## **2010 château de Saint Cosme, Gigondas Le Claux**

*Rating : (92-94+) points*

The 2010 Gigondas Le Claux, which comes from yellow clay and Jurassic limestone, and is again 100% Grenache, possesses a crushed wet rock component, giving it minerality, followed by a dense purple color, massive extract, huge tannins, and a layered, powerful finish. This wine will need at least 7-8 years of cellaring and should prove to be a Gigondas capable of lasting 25-30 years.

## **2010 château de Saint Cosme, Gigondas Le Poste**

*Rating : (94-98) points*

A close rival will certainly turn out to be the 2010 Gigondas Le Poste, which comes from pure limestone soils, and in this case is aged in 50% new oak and 50% one-year-old barrels. Dense purple, it possesses loads of blueberry, blackberry and black currant fruit notes intermixed with some licorice, camphor, graphite and spring flowers. Full-bodied, with good acidity and a hint of lead pencil shavings in the mouth, oodles of black fruits cascade over the palate in this lavishly concentrated, extravagant Gigondas that is so overloaded. Give it 6-7 years of cellaring and drink it over the following 25+ years.

## **2010 Saint Cosme, Saint Joseph**

*Rating : (92-94) points*

The other 2010 that readers need to keep a sharp eye out for is the 2010 St.-Joseph. One of the sleeper cuvees of the entire cellar, ground pepper intermixed with tapenade, creme de cassis, and smoky barbecue notes are followed by a wine with great fruit, good acidity, and striking minerality. It should drink well for a decade or more.

# 2009

## **2009 Chateau de Saint Cosme Gigondas.**

### ***Rating : (90-92) points***

Wines sold under the Chateau Saint-Cosme label include the outstanding, pure, big 2009 Gigondas, a blend of 60% Grenache, 20% Syrah, 17% Mourvedre and 3% Cinsault aged 12 months in 1- to 4-year-old wood barrels (70%) and cement and wood tanks (30%). Its opaque ruby/purple color is followed by a massive concentration of black and red fruits intermixed with notions of crushed rocks, spring flowers, blueberries and black currants. The tannins are noticeable and the wine will benefit from 2-3 years of cellaring. It should keep for 10+ years.

## **2009 Chateau de Saint Cosme Gigondas, «Valbelle»**

### ***Rating : (91-94) points***

The 2009 Gigondas Valbelle exhibits perfumed floral notes intermixed with hints of underbrush, crushed rocks, roasted herbs, blueberries and blackberries. Medium to full-bodied with moderate tannins, it will benefit from 2-3 years of cellaring and keep for 10-15 years thereafter.

## **2009 Chateau de Saint Cosme Gigondas, «Hominis Fides»**

### ***Rating : (90-93) points***

The 2009 Gigondas Hominis Fides 100% Grenache from sandy and limestone soils aged 12 months in small barrels (30% new, 40% one-year-old and 30% two to three-years old) possesses slightly sweeter tannin but is not as massive or concentrated as the traditional cuvee. Rich and medium to full-bodied, with lots of minerality, red and black fruit, crushed rock and floral notes, this wine should be drinkable upon release, and evolve for a decade or more.

## **2009 Chateau de Saint Cosme Gigondas, «Le Claux»**

### ***Rating : (88-90+) points***

From yellow clay and Jurassic limestone, the 2009 Gigondas Le Claux is aged in the same manner as the Hominis Fides. This deep ruby/purple-tinged 2009 possesses excellent concentration, but its astringency and elevated tannins may present a problem with the wine's equilibrium in 4-5 years. I will have a better view of this wine once it is in bottle.

## **2009 Chateau de Saint Cosme Gigondas, «Le Poste»**

### ***Rating : (92-94) points***

The 2009 Gigondas Le Poste (from limestone soils) is aged in a slightly different way (50% new oak and 50% 1-year-old barrels are used). This vineyard was ravaged by hail in 2009, so only 75 cases were made from 2.47 acres. Normally this cuvee would be 100% Grenache, but in order to vinify the wine, Barruol had to add 30% Syrah, breaking his overall philosophy that these single terroir wines have to be 100% Grenache. In any event, while this wine is made in a slightly different style, it is an outstanding effort displaying a deep ruby/purple color along with sweet blackberry, cassis and floral notes, full body, a chewy style and plenty of well-concealed tannins. It should drink well for 10-12 years.

### **2009 Saint Cosme, Châteauneuf-du-Pape**

*Rating : (88-89) points*

Under the negociant label, the 2009 Chateauneuf du Pape (50% Grenache, 30% Mourvedre, 10% Syrah and 10% Cinsault from the lieux-dits of La Crau and Valori) is dominated by its rugged tannins. However, it possesses a deep ruby/purple hue along with hints of raspberries, kirsch, lavender and licorice. It is a solid effort, but its tannins reveal a certain astringency. Drink it over the next 10 years.

### **2009 Saint Cosme, Côtes du Rhône, «Les deux Albion»**

*Rating : (88-90) points*

A brilliant effort, the 2009 Cotes du Rhone Les Deux Albion is composed of Syrah, Grenache, Carignan, Mourvedre and Clairette, all co-fermented and aged in primarily concrete tanks and some of the newer wood tanks called tronconique. This potentially outstanding effort reveals a big, sweet bouquet of flowers, black currants, black cherries, camphor and exotic tropical fruits. The wine is intense, luscious and silky smooth with ripe tannin yet adequate acidity. This medium to full-bodied 2009 should drink nicely for 2-3 years.

### **2009 Saint Cosme Côtes du Rhône**

*Rating : (87) points*

Made from 100% cool climate Syrah from the sector of Gard, which is well-known for its favorable terroir for Syrah, the tank-aged 2009 Cotes du Rhone exhibits a deep ruby/purple hue along with loads of peppery black fruits and a delicious, soft style. Drink it over the next 1-2 years.

### **2009 Saint Cosme Côtes du Rhône white**

*Rating : (86) points*

The 2009 Cotes du Rhone Blanc, a blend of Viognier, Marsanne, Roussanne, Picpoul and Clairette, is a straightforward, fresh white exhibiting aromas of white peaches and apricots in its medium-bodied, dry, crisp personality. Drink it over the next 1-2 years.

### **2009 Saint Cosme Côtes du Rhône white, «Le Poste»**

*Rating : (90) points*

A more fascinating white wine is the 2009 Cotes du Rhone Le Poste (100% Clairette aged on its lees for 12 months). A sleeper of the vintage, it offers up notes of honeysuckle, spring flowers, nectarines and mangoes. Fresh, lively, crisp and medium-bodied with wonderful fruit intensity as well as considerable personality, it can be enjoyed over the next 12-18 months.

### **2009 Saint Cosme, Crozes-hermitage**

*Rating : (91-93) points*

Even better is the 2009 Crozes-Hermitage, which comes from a hillside sector in Gervans. Dense purple, with notes of licorice, incense, camphor, creme de cassis and charcoal, this wine is dense, rich, more seriously stuffed and powerful than the St-Joseph, but less floral and mineral-laced. It is a big, mini-Hermitage style of wine to drink over the next 10-15 years.

### **2009 Saint Cosme, Côte Rotie**

***Rating : (92-94) points***

The dense ruby/purple 2009 Cote Rotie possesses great acid, with loads of tapenade, black raspberry, and smoky lard/ bacon fats notes. Its outstanding texture, full-bodied mouthfeel, and terrific finish all suggest a wine that should drink well for 10-15 years.

### **2009 Saint Cosme, Saint Joseph**

***Rating : (90-92) points***

Proprietor Louis Barruol told me this came from schist soils and was aged 15 months in 100% new oak. A good value is the 2009 St.-Joseph, which comes from the granite soils of this appellation. Aged in 100% new oak, this opaque purple wine exhibits loads of tannin, acidity, and powerful floral notes intermixed with blueberry, black raspberry, and black currants. Medium-bodied, fresh and lively, it admirably showcases this brilliant vintage. Drink it over the next decade.

### **2009 Saint Cosme, Little James Basket Press red**

***Rating : (87) points***

Barruol's negociant offerings, which are sold under the Saint-Cosme label, include the innovative non-vintage Little James Basket Press, a 100% Grenache vin de table from a solera system of Grenache sitting in tank ranging from the oldest vintage, 1999, to the newest, 2009. A wine that sells for a song, it exhibits terrific notes of kirsch and licorice-infused fruit, medium body, and an exuberant, ebullient personality. It is an ideal choice for bistros, brasseries or consumers looking for immediate gratification from a wine that over-delivers for its price. Enjoy it over the next year.

# 2008

## **2008 Chateau de Saint Cosme Gigondas.**

### ***Rating : (89) points***

The basic cuvee of 2008 Gigondas has benefitted from having the declassified Valbelle fruit included in its composition. Very Pinot Noir-like, it offers up a medium dark ruby color, aromas of forest floor, berry fruit and a whiff of herbs, minerals and spice. Drink this soft, round, charming 2008 over the next 4-5 years.

## **2008 Chateau de Saint Cosme Gigondas, «Hominis Fides»**

### ***Rating : (91) points***

The 2008 Gigondas Hominis Fides (100% Grenache from sand and limestone soils) is a brilliant effort for the vintage. Perhaps the finest Gigondas produced in 2008, it reveals a Pinot Noir-like character of sweet and sour cherries intermixed with forest floor, good acidity, an elegant style and an attractive, medium-bodied texture. It should drink well for 6-7 years.

## **2008 Chateau de Saint Cosme Gigondas, «Le Claux»**

### ***Rating : (90) points***

The 2008 Gigondas Le Claux reveals a similar character with a Pinot Noir sensibility, good acidity and notes of forest floor, red currants, black cherries and earth. Consume it over the next 4-6 years.

## **2008 Chateau de Saint Cosme Gigondas, «Le Poste»**

### ***Rating : (90) points***

The 2008 Gigondas Le Poste reveals slightly more evidence of new oak, a soft, berry style and darker fruit intermixed with hints of graphite and earth. This serious wine may rival the Hominis Fides as one of the two top Gigondas produced in this vintage. Drink it over the next 6-8 years.

## **2008 Saint Cosme, Châteauneuf-du-Pape**

### ***Rating : (90) points***

In contrast, I thought the 2008 Châteauneuf du Pape was one of the more noteworthy successes of the vintage. Made from the same blend and from the same Châteauneuf du Pape sectors, it exhibits a dark ruby color along with sweet aromas of berries, roasted herbs, loamy soil and underbrush. Medium to full-bodied as well as surprisingly rich and concentrated for a 2008, it should drink nicely for 7-8 years

## **2008 Saint Cosme, Côtes du Rhône, «Les deux Albion»**

*Rating : (90) points*

The 2008 Cotes du Rhone Les Deux Albion comes from Grenache planted in the Plan de Dieu and around the village of Carignan. Dark ruby/purple-hued, it offers plenty of kirsch and cassis notes intermixed with notions of underbrush, pepper, and earth. The wine cuts a broad, medium to full-bodied swath across the palate, and possesses impressive purity, length, and depth. It should drink nicely for 2-3 years.

## **2008 Saint Cosme Côtes du Rhône**

*Rating : (87) points*

With respect to Barruol's negociant line of wines, called Saint-Cosme, the very good 2008 Cotes du Rhone is primarily Syrah, much of it coming from such cool areas as Vinsobres. Attractive notes of creosote, blackberries, black currants, licorice, and truffles are followed by a medium-bodied, admirably textured wine with excellent fruit and definition. Drink it over the next 2-3 years.

## **2008 Saint Cosme Côtes du Rhône white**

*Rating : (89) points*

The 2008 Cotes du Rhone blanc is a blend of Viognier, Roussanne, Marsanne, and the rarely encountered Picpoul. It offers exotic notes of tropical fruits, peaches, apricots, and honeysuckle. This medium-weight, crisp, fresh, lively white will provide plenty of pleasure over the next year.

## **2008 Saint Cosme Côtes du Rhône white, «Le Poste»**

*Rating : (90) points*

A brilliant effort regardless of vintage conditions, the 2008 Cotes du Rhone Le Poste (100% Clairette) reveals floral, chalkylike notes as well as a medium-bodied, crisp, zesty personality. Displaying plenty of intensity and elegance, it, too, should be drunk over the next year.

## **2008 Saint Cosme Little James Basket Press Red**

*Rating : (88) points*

The non-vintage Vin de Table Little James Basket Press is created from a solera system based on 50% from 2008, and the rest from older vintages. It is always 100% Grenache and is finished with a screw cap. This beauty offers lots of spicy, peppery, black cherry, and even blacker fruits along with medium body, a tasty, satisfying style, and a remarkably low price. It is best drunk in its first 1-2 years of life.

# 2007

## **2007 Chateau de Saint Cosme Gigondas.**

### ***Rating : (93) points***

The 2007 Gigondas possesses a dense purple color in addition to a stunning bouquet of charcoal, blueberry and blackberry liqueur, acacia flowers, and a hint of chalk. Full-bodied with terrific fruit intensity, a layered texture, gorgeous freshness, and acids that provide a well-defined personality to this blockbuster Gigondas. Despite its size, substance, and depth, the overall impression is one of sublime elegance and purity. Enjoy it over the next 10-12 years.

## **2007 Chateau de Saint Cosme Gigondas, «Valbelle»**

### ***Rating : (95) points***

The prodigious, full-bodied 2007 Gigondas Valbelle exhibits a dense purple color as well as a glorious perfume of spring flowers, blueberries, blackberries, dark cherries, and ink. It reveals prodigious concentration, a 45+-second finish, and no hardness or rough edges. The vintage's acids have given the wine tremendous aromatic and flavor freshness, delineation, and vibrancy despite its enormous size and richness. This wine should evolve for 10-15+ years.

## **2007 Chateau de Saint Cosme Gigondas, «Hominis Fides»**

### ***Rating : (100) points***

Utterly perfect, the 2007 Gigondas Homides Fides is the finest Gigondas I have ever tasted (it is first ever to merit a perfect score). The sad news is that there are only 250 cases for the world. A true elixir, a smorgasbord of aromas soars from the glass, including scents of blue, red, and black fruits, spring flowers, incense, and damp earth (somewhat reminiscent of a fresh black truffle). The wine possesses superb intensity, a seamless integration of acidity, tannin, and alcohol, phenomenal concentration and purity, and impressive precision as well as length (the finish lasts close to one minute). It is not as accessible as the Valbelle or Le Claux, so 2-3 years of cellaring will be beneficial. I suspect this wine will evolve for 15 or more years. Bravo to Louis Barruol.

## **2007 Chateau de Saint Cosme Gigondas, «Le Claux»**

### ***Rating : (97) points***

The 2007 Gigondas Le Claux (4,000 bottles produced) is another stunning example of this appellation. Full-bodied and deep with abundant notes of graphite, spring flowers, blue and blackberries, charcoal, and incense, a nearly endless finish, and stunning richness, purity, and overall flavor depth, it is accessible because of its fruit character, and will evolve for 12-15 years.

## **2007 Chateau de Saint Cosme Gigondas, «Le Poste»**

### ***Rating : (96+) points***

The most limited bottling of the 2007s is the 2007 Gigondas Le Poste (125 cases produced). Again, tell-tale floral notes are intermixed with blue and black fruits as well as hints of creosote and crushed rocks. This superb, full-bodied, but more restrained and reserved effort exhibits the most tannin and structure of all these Gigondas. While more backward and unexpressive, it is still a blockbuster in terms of force, richness, and potential complexity and ageability for a wine from this appellation. Forget it for 2-3 years, and drink it over the following 15 years.

## **2007 Saint Cosme, Châteauneuf-du-Pape**

### ***Rating : (94) points***

The 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape, which Barruol purchases from select vigneron, is dominated by Grenache, but it includes at least 30% Mourvedre and a small quantity of Cinsault. A dense purple color is accompanied by a ripe nose of red and black fruits, Christmas fruitcake, spice box, garrigue, and pepper. Rich and full-bodied with moderate tannin, good acidity, and a layered, intense mouthfeel, it will benefit from 2-3 years of cellaring, and should age for 15+ years.

## **2007 Saint Cosme, Côtes du Rhône, «Les deux Albion»**

### ***Rating : (90) points***

The 2007 Cotes du Rhone Domaine des Deux Albions is sensational. A blend of 40% Syrah, 30% Grenache, and the rest equal parts Mourvedre and Clairette, a domaine wine from a 15-acre vineyard, exhibits a deep ruby/purple color as well as a sumptuous bouquet of exotic flowers, blackberries, cassis, and a hint of peaches. This luscious, rich, concentrated, hedonistic as well as complex 2007 should drink well for 3-4 years.

## **2007 Saint Cosme Côtes du Rhône**

### ***Rating : (90) points***

The 2007 Cotes du Rhone ,100% Syrah, reveals excellent notes of blackberries and charcoal, medium to full-bodied, opulent flavors, beautiful freshness and length, and no hard edges. Enjoy it over the next 3-4 years.

## **2007 Saint Cosme Côtes du Rhône white**

### ***Rating : (90) points***

With respect to Saint-Cosme's white wine offerings, readers should check out the 2007 Cotes du Rhone blanc, a blend of Roussanne, Marsanne, Picpoul, and Viognier. Flamboyant scents of melon, tropical fruit, and honeysuckle jump from the glass of this beauty. It offers amazing richness, a dry, medium-bodied mouthfeel, superb freshness, and far more quality and complexity than one would expect from a white Cotes du Rhone. Luckily, there are over 1,000 cases of this cuvee.

## **2007 Saint Cosme Côtes du Rhône white, «Le Poste»**

### ***Rating : (90) points***

Another knock-out dry white is the 2007 Cotes du Rhone Le Poste. Produced from 100% Clairette, it exhibits abundant fruit and minerality as well as copious honeyed white currant and tropical fruit characteristics presented in a delicate, wellfocused style. It can be enjoyed over the next year.

## **2007 Saint Cosme Côtes du Ventoux «Domaine de la Crillone»**

### ***Rating : (89) points***

The 2007 Cotes du Ventoux Domaine de Crillonne is a fruity, bistro-styled red with soft tannin, abundant black cherry fruit, and medium body. It should be drunk over the next 1-2 years.

### **2007 Saint Cosme, Saint Joseph**

***Rating : (89-91) points***

The 2007 St.-Joseph reveals notions of powdered rocks, black cherry and raspberry fruit, and olives. It should drink well for 5-6 years.

### **2007 Saint Cosme Côte-Rotie**

***Rating : (90-93) points***

Medium to full-bodied, ripe, fresh, elegant, and powerful, with pepper, tapenade, cassis, and olive characteristics dominating its explosive, aromatic nose, the dark ruby/purple-tinged, medium to full-bodied 2007 Cote Rotie is extraordinarily pungent aromatically. That characteristic will no doubt be controversial, and consumers will either love it or leave it.

### **2007 Saint Cosme Condrieu**

***Rating : (90) points***

Barruol has turned out two outstanding offerings from Condrieu. Both the 2006 and 2007 Condrieu exhibit honeysuckle, tropical fruit, and apricot jam notes. The 2007 is more fruit-driven than the more mineral-dominated 2006. Both of these top-notch Condrieus are best consumed over the next 2-3 years.

### **2007 Little James Basket Press red**

***Rating : (89) points***

Under the Saint-Cosme label, his non-vintage Little James Basket Press Vin de Table is one of the top bargain picks available. It is based on a solera system, and the newest incarnation is composed of 50% from 2007 and the rest older vintages. It represents a confiture of black raspberries and cherries interwoven with pepper, spice, and earth. Deep, fruity, round, and pure, it is an attractive red to drink over the next year or so.

# 2006

## **2006 Chateau de Saint Cosme St Joseph**

*Rating : (87-88) points*

Barruol's 2006 St.-Joseph exhibits similar weight as well as a certain leanness because of good acidity, but the fruit is gorgeously crunchy and vibrant – mostly cherries and strawberries with a hint of roasted herbs.

## **2006 Chateau de Saint Cosme Gigondas le Poste**

*Rating : (93-95) points*

A new cuvee of 125 cases, the 2006 Gigondas Le Poste is a broad, savory, opulent Gigondas that comes from pure limestone soils in the area. This has an almost Burgundian forest floor/spring flower note intermixed with kirsch, blackberry, licorice, smoke, and earth. This is a brilliant Gigondas, but obviously there is not much of it. It should drink well for 10-15 years.

## **2006 Chateau de Saint Cosme Gigondas le Claux**

*Rating : (92-95) points*

Another wine that is backward and restrained but pure, rich, and impressive is the 2006 Gigondas Le Claux. Barruol thinks this is the most masculine and ruggedly constructed Gigondas in his portfolio. This wine (375 cases) comes from clay and limestone as opposed to the almost pure limestone of the 2006 Gigondas Le Poste. Less exuberant, more tannic, structured, and firm, the wine has terrific minerality, purity of fruit, and a structured, tannic feel. This is a big, big wine, and ruggedly built for the long haul. Anticipated maturity: 2013-2025.

## **2006 Chateau de Saint Cosme Gigondas Hominis Fides**

*Rating : (94-96) points*

The 100 or so cases of 2006 Gigondas Hominis Fides displays great elegance and a softer, silkier, more sumptuous personality than the Valbelle. With unbelievable fruit intensity, but otherwise similar in character, it is incredibly seductive.

## **2006 Chateau de Saint Cosme Gigondas Cuvee Valbelle**

*Rating: (92-95) points*

The 2006 Gigondas Valbelle stylistically represents a transition between the masculine Le Claux and the more feminine Le Poste. Dense ruby/purple with fabulous ripeness, great fruit purity, plenty of boysenberry, blackberry, and cherry notes intermixed with licorice, smoke, and meat juices, the wine is full-bodied, opulent, with good underlying acidity and a terrific finish. It should drink well for 15 or more years.

## **2006 Chateau de Saint Cosme Gigondas**

*Rating : (90-92) points*

The 2006 Gigondas, which one would call Tradition or Classique, looks to eclipse the 2005. Dense black cherry fruit and cassis, a deep ruby/purple color, floral black cherry and blackberry fruit notes, with plenty of tannin, good acidity, and freshness characterize this wine, which is structured and potentially long-lived. Anticipated maturity: 2010-2020+.

## **2006 Chateau de Saint Cosme Cotes du Rhone les Deux Albion**

*Rating : 90 points*

Perhaps his best achievement among the inexpensive wines is his 2006 Cotes du Rhone Les Deux Albion. This is a blend of 50% Syrah, 20% Grenache, and the rest Mourvedre and Carignan. Already in bottle, the wine exhibits a deep ruby/purple color and a sweet nose of peppery blackberry and cassis, with a hint of exotic flowers and tropical fruits. Remarkably, he blends in 10% of the white grape Clairette to give an almost Guigal Cote Rotie La Mouline-like floral complexity to the black fruit character. This is a fat, fleshy, delicious wine meant for drinking in its first 3-4 years of life.

## **2006 Chateau de Saint Cosme Cotes du Rhone**

*Rating : 87 points*

The 2006 Cotes du Rhone was made from 100% Syrah that was actually declassified wine from the estate vineyards in Gigondas blended with some stuff he buys from Vinsobres and Rasteau. This is dense ruby/purple, big, deep, and fruity, with loads of blackberry fruit. It is not terribly complex at the moment, but mouthfilling, very supple-textured, and corpulent. This wine should drink nicely for 4-5 years.

## **2006 Chateau de Saint Cosme Cote Rotie**

*Rating : (92-94) points*

The 2006 Cote Rotie, which comes largely from the Cote Brune vineyard Vialliere with another part from Les Plans, looks superb. Dense ruby/purple with sweet tannins, beautiful acidity, fabulous flavor intensity and penetration, and again, great aromatics, this is a terrific Cote Rotie that should ultimately eclipse the 2005. Anticipated maturity: 2010-2025.

## **2006 Chateau de Saint Cosme Condrieu**

*Rating : (92) points*

The 2006 Condrieu, a great vintage for this appellation, shows the exotic tropical/lychee fruit, medium to full body, a nice, steely elegance and minerality, and a beautifully textured, deep, full-bodied mouthfeel. These are wines to drink in their exuberant youthfulness as they generally drop their fruit and aromatics at a fast pace, so consume this one over the next several years.

## **2006 Chateau de Saint Cosme Chateauneuf du Pape**

*Rating : (88-90) points*

The elegant, unbottled 2006 Chateauneuf du Pape is still aging in foudre. Aromas of roasted herbs, new saddle leather, meat juice, and black cherries are followed by a medium-bodied, stylish red to consume during its first 11-14 years of life.

## **2006 Saint Cosme Little James Basket Press red**

*Rating : (88) points*

A real sleeper selection is his non-vintage vin de table, the Little James Basket Press, which is all from the 2006 vintage. This is a sexy, ripe wine dominated by Grenache and is an amazing value, with oodles of black cherry fruit in a thick, glycerin-emboldened style. It is full-bodied, lush, and ideal for drinking in its first several years of life.

# 2005

## **2005 Chateau de Saint Cosme St Joseph**

*Rating: 88+ points*

Barruol's 2005 St.-Joseph is very much in keeping with the firm, closed, austere style of the vintage. Coming from the hillsides of Sereine, one of the best subsections of St.-Joseph, the wine has high tannins, a dark ruby/purple color, good, pure fruit, but is incredibly backward and will require patience.

## **2005 Chateau de Saint Cosme Gigondas Hominis Fides**

*Rating: 94+ points*

Barruol's luxury cuvee, made for his most loyal clients, is the 2005 Gigondas Hominis Fides, which is essentially a choice of a handful of barrels from the Valbelle cuvee. This is a fabulous Gigondas, more backward and restrained than the Valbelle, but dense purple-colored and sharing most of the same characteristics, just richer and inkier. Give it 2-3 years of bottle age and drink it over the next 15+ years

## **2005 Chateau de Saint Cosme Gigondas**

*Rating: 90 points*

The 2005 Gigondas exhibits soft berry fruit intermixed with some licorice and roasted herbs in a soft but well-delineated, medium to full-bodied style. The wine has beautiful ripeness and shows none of the dilution or hard tannins that often plague so many producers in Gigondas. This is a beauty to drink over the next 7-10 years.

## **2005 Chateau de Saint Cosme Gigondas Cuvee Valbelle**

*Rating: 94 points*

The 2005 Gigondas Valbelle is also a candidate for one of the two or three best wines of the vintage. It is 90% Grenache co-fermented with 10% Syrah and has a terrific dense purple color as well as intense blackberry and cherry fruit notes intermixed with some roasted Provencal herbs, lavender, and a touch of graphite in the background. Beautiful, full-bodied favors ooze the character of Provence, and the wine should drink well and last 15 or more years.

## **2005 Chateau de Saint Cosme Cotes du Rhone les Deux Albions**

*Rating: 90 points*

The outstanding 2005 Cotes du Rhone Les Deux Albions (40% Syrah, 30% Grenache and the rest Carignan with 10% of the white grape Clairette) is beautifully made wine with lovely fruit and a big, floral nose with hints of white peaches intermixed with black and red fruits and earth. The wine has silky texture, and is totally seductive and impressively endowed.

## **2005 Chateau de Saint Cosme Cote Rotie**

*Rating: 94 points*

The 2005 Cote Rotie has a deep ruby/purple color and a beautiful, intense bouquet of black olives, a touch of pain grille, cassis, cherries, and incense. The wine is medium to full-bodied, a classic display of Cote Rotie that will probably benefit from 2-3 years of bottle age and last for 12-15 years.

## **2005 Chateau de Saint Cosme Chateauneuf du Pape**

*Rating: 92 points*

The 2005 Chateauneuf du Pape is superb, a blend of 50% old vine Mourvedre and the rest Grenache, aged in old used small barrels. The wine has a dense purple color and a full bodied style with plenty of tannin and sweet roasted meat smells intermixed with blackberry, licorice, incense, and forest floor. The wine is broad, dense, and in need of 2-3 years of bottle age. It should keep for 20 or more years.

## **2005 Saint Cosme Little James Basket Press red**

*Rating : (89) points*

Among the negociant wines, this is a terrific source of inexpensive wines with perhaps one of the best the non-vintage vins de table, Little James Basket Press. Made from 100% Grenache, and all from 2005, this wine comes from mostly young vines of the estate vineyards and is blended with old vine Grenache from the Cotes du Roussillon. It is a beautiful, in-your-face style with loads of black cherry fruit and heady, full-bodied flavors. The wine sells for a song, and should drink nicely for 2 or so years.

# 2004

## **2004 Saint Cosme Châteauneuf du Pape**

*Rating: (88-90) points*

Although made from the same blend as the 2003, the 2004 Chateauneuf du Pape is more tannic, structured, linear, and reserved than the opulent, exotic 2003. It will benefit from 1-3 years of bottle age, and should last for a decade.

## **2004 Saint Cosme Côte-Rôtie**

*Rating: (88-90) points*

The floral, exotic 2004 Cote Rotie is one of the better examples I tasted in this vintage (the crop was gigantic). Its deep ruby color is followed by copious amounts of sweet raspberry fruit intermixed with pepper, herb, and toasty new oak notes. Drink it over the next 8-10 years.

## **2004 Saint Cosme Côtes du Rhône Blanc**

*Rating: 89 points*

The up-front, medium-bodied 2004 Cotes du Rhone blanc (40% Roussanne, 40% Clairette, and 20% Marsanne) reveals notes of citrus oil, honeysuckle, and rose petals in its fruit-filled personality. This tasty 2004 is one of the finest white Cotes du Rhones money can buy.

## **2004 Saint Cosme Côtes du Rhône les Deux Albion**

*Rating: 89 points*

The 2004 Cotes du Rhone Les Deux Albions is a terrific buy. Made largely from Cairanne, it is a blend of 50% Syrah and the rest small quantities of Grenache, Carignan, Mourvedre, and Clairette (a white grape). It exhibits a deep ruby/purple color, a flamboyant, exotic bouquet of red and black fruits intermixed with flowers and peaches, ripe, medium-bodied flavors, and loads of fruit. Enjoy this hedonistic Cotes du Rhone over the next several years.

## **2004 Saint Cosme Côtes du Ventoux Domaine de la Crillone**

*Rating: 87 points*

The delicious 2004 Cotes du Ventoux Domaine de la Crillon is a blend of 80% Syrah and 20% Mourvedre. Crunchy, juicy, and fruit-driven, with medium body, lovely aromatics, and abundant flavor, it should drink well for 3-4 years.

## **2004 Chateau de Saint Cosme Gigondas « Le Poste »**

*Rating: 90 points*

The exotic 2004 Le Poste (100% Clairette) offers up scents of spring flowers and tropical fruits. Rich, heady, long, and impressive, it should drink well for 2-3 years.

### **2004 Chateau de Saint Cosme Gigondas**

*Rating: (91-93) points*

The 2004 Gigondas (75% Grenache and 25% Syrah) reveals more sweetness, mid-palate, and length than the 2003, but similar black cherry, blackberry, licorice, smoke, earth, and roasted meat characteristics. It is a delicious, vibrant, potentially longer-lived offering that should last for 10-12 years.

### **2004 Chateau de Saint Cosme Gigondas « Hominis Fides »**

*Rating: (90-92) points*

Made from 100% Grenache, the dense ruby/purple-tinged 2004 Gigondas Hominis Fides was completely shut down the day I tasted it, but it reveals outstanding potential. Intense licorice, kirsch liqueur, and mineral characteristics are found in this dense, tannic, pure Gigondas. Give it 3-4 years of cellaring after bottling, and consume it over the following decade.

### **2004 Saint Cosme Little James Basket press red**

*Rating: (87) points*

I enjoyed the non-vintage Little James. A blend of primarily Grenache (from both the Southern Rhone and the Languedoc-Roussillon), some of which is vinified carbonically, it is an excellent, surprisingly substantial, heady, full-flavored bistro red. Consume it over the next several years.

### **2004 Saint Cosme Châteauneuf du Pape**

*Rating: (88-90) points*

Although made from the same blend as the 2003, the 2004 Chateauneuf du Pape is more tannic, structured, linear, and reserved than the opulent, exotic 2003. It will benefit from 1-3 years of bottle age, and should last for a decade.

### **2004 Chateau de Saint Cosme Gigondas « Valbelle »**

*Rating: (92-94) points*

A blend of 80% Grenache and 20% Syrah aged in 40% new small barrels and 60% in foudres, the 2004 Gigondas Valbelle is superb. A big, floral nose revealing notions of blackberries, cassis, crushed rocks, and earth is followed by a wine with stunning concentration, good underlying acidity, ripe tannin, layers of fruit, and a superb texture. It should drink well for 12-15 years.

### **2004 Saint Cosme Condrieu**

*Rating: (85-87) points*

The light-bodied, crisp, elegant 2004 Condrieu is somewhat disappointing for this fabulous vintage for Condrieu.

### **2004 Saint Cosme Côtes du Rhône**

*Rating: (85-87) points*

The 2004 Saint-Cosme Cotes du Rhone (100% Syrah) exhibits notions of Italian sausage intermixed with animal fur, herbs, pepper, and sweet berry fruit. Although slightly funky, it is flavorful, and best drunk over the next 2-3 years.

## **2004 Saint Cosme St Joseph**

*Rating: (86-88) points*

The 2004 St.-Joseph exhibits smoky raspberry and red currant characteristics, a crisper, higher acid profile than the 2003, and an elegant, medium-bodied style. It should drink well for 7-10 years.

# 2003

## **2003 Chateau de Saint Cosme Gigondas « Valbelle »**

*Rating: 93 points*

The top cuvee, the 2003 Gigondas Valbelle, displays charcoal, blackberry, and cassis fruit along with hints of pepper, dried herbs, and roasted meats. The wine's high alcohol is well-matched by its fruit concentration and dense structure. Low acidity and sweet tannin suggest it can be drunk now or cellared for 10-12 years.

## **2003 Chateau de Saint Cosme Gigondas « Hominis Fides »**

*Rating: 95 points*

There are fewer than 250 cases of the 2003 Gigondas Hominis Fides, a candidate for the Gigondas of the vintage. A layered, full-bodied effort that tastes like the Valbelle on steroids, it boasts an explosive nose of, flowers, earth, licorice, violets, and minerals. This amazingly full-bodied, pure, intense wine possesses multiple layers as well as a blockbuster finish. It should drink well for 15+ years.

## **2003 Chateau de Saint Cosme Gigondas**

*Rating: 89 points*

Gigondas is the flagship wine from Chateau Saint-Cosme. The soft, round 2003 Gigondas is a sexy, full-throttle effort revealing plenty of black fruits, licorice, smoke, and earth. It is ideal for drinking over the next 7-8 years.

## **2003 Saint Cosme St Joseph**

*Rating: 89 points*

The dense purple-tinged 2003 St.-Joseph displays the vintage's exotic, ripe, concentrated character in its heady, alcoholic flavors of creme de cassis, blackberries, and tapenade. Consume it over the next decade.

## **2003 Saint Cosme Côte-Rôtie.**

*Rating: 93 points*

Gorgeous aromas of flowers, bacon fat, and overripe blackberry and cassis fruit soar from the glass of the 2003 Cote Rotie. Fashioned from low yields of 18 hectoliters per hectare, the wine is spicy and ripe with surprisingly good natural acidity as well as full-bodied, powerful flavors. Drink it over the next 12-14 years.

### **2003 Saint Cosme Châteauneuf-du-Pape**

*Rating: 91 points*

The negociant reds include the serious 2003 Chateauneuf du Pape (60% Grenache and 40% Mourvedre). Aromas of soy, blueberries, blackberries, creosote, tar, licorice, herbes de Provence, and meat emerge from this full-bodied, dense, moderately tannic red. It should drink well for 10-12 years.

### **2003 Saint Cosme Condrieu**

*Rating: 91 points*

The 2003 Condrieu is a honeyed, high alcohol, heady effort best drunk during its first 12-24 months of life.

### **2003 Saint Cosme Côtes du Rhône**

*Rating: 89 points*

One of the glorious things about this firm is their negociant line, called simply St.-Cosme, that includes so many extraordinary values, not to mention some profound wines at the top end. For example, the already bottled 2003 Cotes du Rhone, made from 100% Syrah from the department of the Gard, offers up lovely aromas of acacia flowers, blackberries, and creosote in an uncomplicated, fleshy, medium to full-bodied, high-octane style. This seamless, delicious, hedonistic, flavorful, textured Cotes du Rhone is a total turn-on. Enjoy it over the next 2-3 years.

### **2003 Saint Cosme Côtes du Rhône White**

*Rating: 90 points*

The non-oaked 2003 Cotes du Rhone blanc (30% Roussanne, 30% Viognier, 20% Marsanne, and the rest Picpoul and Bourboulenc) is a delicious 20,000-bottle cuvee filled with decadent levels of exotic fruits, medium body, and a dry, honeyed finish.

### **2003 Saint Cosme Côtes du Rhône les Deux Albion**

*Rating: 90 points*

A consistently brilliant effort from Louis Barruol is the Cotes du Rhone Les Deux Albions. Like its predecessors, the 2003 represents the poor person's Cote Rotie La Mouline. A blend of 40% Syrah, 30% Grenache, 10% Mourvedre, 10% Carignan, and 10% Clairette (a white grape), it offers an exotic, floral, tropical fruit, black currant, and cherry-scented bouquet. This hedonistic, beautifully-textured, medium-bodied red is loaded with fruit, glycerin, and the warmth of generous alcohol (a character of the vintage). It should be consumed over the next 2-3 years.

### **2003 Saint Cosme Côtes du Ventoux Domaine de la Crillone**

*Rating: 91 points*

A new entry in the St.-Cosme lineup is the outstanding 2003 Cote du Ventoux Domaine de la Crillone. Barruol found this 7.5-acre estate, planted on pure fractured limestone soils, and decided he had to have the grapes. Aged in old barrels, the 2003 exhibits a deep ruby/purple color along with a sweet nose of kirsch liqueur, licorice, spice box, and earth. Expansive and savory, its sweet fruit, high glycerin, and low acidity will provide a corpulent mouthful of delectable southern French wine over the next 2-3 years.

## **2003 Saint Cosme Little James Basket Press red**

*Rating : (89) points*

The non-vintage Little James is a 100% basket-pressed vin de table that is not permitted to have a vintage designation, even though this example is all from the 2003 vintage. It is produced from a combination of young Grenache vines from the estate, blended with old vine Grenache that Louis Barruol discovered in the Roussillon region. Even with the poor exchange rate between the dollar and the euro, this wine sells for \$10 or less. There are 40,000 bottles of this delicious, in-your-face concoction that represents the bottled essence of the sunny south of France. Aromas and flavors of Provençal herbs, pepper, kirsch liqueur, and hint of apricots emerge from this rich, fleshy red. It admirably proves that creative winemaking, good sourcing, and a minimal interventionalistic policy can result in tremendous value. Drink it over the next 1-2 years.

By the way, 2002 is a horrendous vintage in the southern Rhone. I do not say that lightly, because there are some producers who made very competent wines, but my scores for that vintage tended to plateau at 87-88. However, one of the top 2002s is the Chateau St.-Cosme 2002 Gigondas, a wine that I rated 88. Tasty and sexy with fine ripeness, it reveals no signs of dilution or greenness.