

Wicked Cellars Tasting Notes
Friday, February 15th, 4:00-7:00 p.m.
Tasting France's Rhone Valley
With Dave Nesbitt of Cru Selections

\$10 Tasting Fee

Two millennia of winemaking in the Southern Rhône Valley have created a selection of grape varieties extremely well adapted to the region and its terroir. This natural heritage is a true asset to the region, and leads to today's well-balanced and harmonious Rhone wines.

This Friday afternoon into evening from 4 to 7 p.m. we'll travel the Rhone Valley with glass in hand as Dave Nesbitt from Cru Selections leads us through the wines of three fabulous and traditional Rhone wine estates: *Domaine Courtois, Chateau de Montfaucon and Comte de Lauze.*

2011 Domaine Courtois La Source Cotes du Rhone Blanc \$13.99

This is a soft and pretty blend of several of the main white Rhône grapes: Clairette, Grenache Blanc, Marsanne, and Roussanne that's just perfect for winter chicken or seafood dinners.

2011 Chateau de Montfaucon, Les Gardettes Rosé \$11.99

Les Gardettes are the two towers that guard the entrance to castle of Montfaucon and the Montfaucon range of wines. In keeping with the 'Montfaucon' spirit and quality, this deep pink blend of Cinsault, Carignan, Mourvèdre, Grenache, Cunoise and Syrah offers delicate aromas of peach and violets and is convivial and easy drinking with a fresh and joyful spirit for any occasion.

2009 Chateau de Montfaucon, Les Gardettes Rouge \$12.99

The Les Gardettes red is a seductive blend of Syrah, Mourvèdre and Cinsault with a touch of Grenache that yields a wine full of intense red fruit notes and spice, definitely a wine for pleasure.

2009 Domaine Courtois Cotes du Rhone Villages "La Grande Vigne"
\$13.99

This is a serious, complex and full-bodied wine from clay soils, 20 year-old vines, and low yields in the Vinsobres AOC. The component wines in its blend are aged separately in stainless steel vats for 18 months before forming a blend of 70% Grenache, 20% Syrah, and 10% Mourvèdre.

Robust and vibrant, this wine will age nicely but can be enjoyed immediately as well. The Grenache provides an intense perfume, the Syrah an underlying echo of the northern Rhone, while the Mourvèdre adds structure and a dark complexity appealing to both purists and hedonists alike.

2009 Chateau de Montfaucon, Baron Louis Cotes du Rhone \$23.99

The Baron Louis de Montfaucon was the family ancestor, who restored the castle at the end of the 19th century, saving it from falling into ruin. For this reason the winery's top cuvee was named in his honor. An exceptional blend of six Rhone varietals (Grenache, Syrah, Cinsault, Carignan, Cunoise and Mourvèdre) in quest of perfect balance, finesse and elegance, the Baron Louis expresses the richness of the Southern Rhone wines.

Robert Parker rated this vintage at 90 points, saying, "There are plenty of various berry fruits and spices in this wine, which is complex and should continue to drink well for 7-8 years."

2009 Comte de Lauze Châteauneuf-du-Pape \$39.99

This is a blend of Grenache, Syrah and Cinsault- rich and silky with flavors of black cherry, licorice and pepper only recently available in the United States.

"A masculine profile with loads of ground pepper, iron, meat and ripe herbs on the nose. This fleshes out with air and gains more textbook, classical notes of garrigue, earth, and sweet Grenache driven fruits. Medium to full-bodied on the palate with more finesse than the nose would have you believe, this very well done Châteauneuf should be given a year or three in bottle, and then drunk over the following decade." **90 Points! Rhone Report, September 2011.**