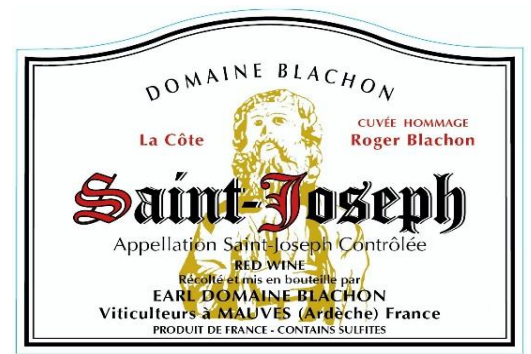




THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR QUALITY



Domaine Blachon • Mauves, Saint-Joseph

On the Northern Rhône scale of small to big, the Saint-Joseph region is big. Over forty years ago, Saint-Joseph grew from an appellation of 6 towns to an appellation of 25 towns, covering a boggling distance of forty miles and creating an umbrella of so-so, eh wines. The shiny kernel of Saint-Joseph is the vineyard area surrounding the three original towns: Mauves, Tournon, and Saint-Jean-de-Muzols. Here the soil is highly decomposed granite (versus the less decomposed northern sectors), the vines are older, and light-bulb hillsides ripen grapes into flavors of fleshy blackberry and dark cherry. You don't get the mean-lean green spice note in the wines from this southern region. If you like those flavors, then please, head north.

There is an intimate circle of winemakers in Mauves, Tournon, and Saint-Jean-de-Muzols who have been bottling Syrah since before WWI and Domaine Blachon is among them, producing Syrah that is wildly aromatic, energetic, polished and rugged all at the same time. Blachon is fifth generation Mauves-ian, but the domaine began in earnest when Roger Blachon inherited the responsibility of his parents' vines in the early 1970s. His parents were growers and bottled wine for local consumption. As interest in Rhône wines resurfaced in the 1970s, wine grapes became a competitive valuable asset in Mauves (an agricultural mecca for cherries and apricots). Roger knew that his 6 hectares of vines grew alongside the best, including the hill of Saint-Joseph, the site that anointed the entire region.

Roger bottled his first Syrah for the commercial market in 1983. The wines had a brief flirtation in the US market in the 1980s, but with low-yielding vines and small-batch quantities, Roger decided to focus on the regional market. Roger passed suddenly in 2006, thrusting his children, Delphine and Sylvain, teenagers at the time, into the spotlight. The next several years were a period of patient transition, as the two aspiring vigneron gained skill and confidence in the cellar, while mastering the personalities of their esteemed vineyards. Now 15 years later, they know their cellar and their vineyards like the back of their hands, following very much in their father's footsteps. What began as a curiosity about *terroir* with their father, is now a passion with the siblings. Indeed, the Syrah and the Marsanne that they now offer as their truest expression of Saint-Joseph are their single-vineyard bottlings. Ask any Saint-Joseph vigneron what vineyards they most covet and the answer will always be "Les Oliviers" for Marsanne and "Les Côtes Saint-Joseph." for Syrah. Well, you guessed it, these are the "core" vineyards of the Blachon domaine. Beyond their stellar vineyards, Delphine and Sylvain keep things simple letting the wine make itself without manipulation or distortion. Of course, they must steward the wine, but nothing happens here that their father and grandfather would not recognize or approve of.

The Wines of Domaine Blachon

Saint-Joseph Blanc "Les Oliviers"

Saint-Joseph Rouge "Hommage à Roger Blachon "





Old-vines of Syrah in monopole Les Côtes Saint-Joseph

