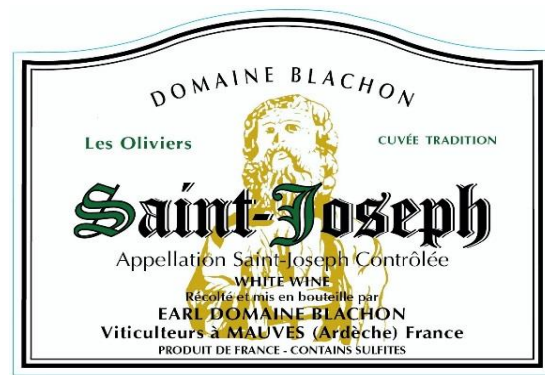




THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR QUALITY



Domaine Blachon • Mauves, Saint-Joseph

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.

Saint-Joseph Blanc "Les Oliviers" 2021

From one of the Northern Rhône's premier white wine vineyards, "Les Oliviers," this wine is 95% of 45 year-old Marsanne with a dot of Roussanne. Utterly hand-made wine. Life begins in cement tanks, then is transferred to large ovals for finishing. The wine reminds one of golden-brown flakes of almond croissants, warm honey, a dried but still juicy apricot, and apples baked with the flavor of their skin. When you graph this wine, it might stretch your comfort zone. Do not shy away from its texture and big aromas for this is what Marsanne is and tastes like. It's wonderfully dry, plays well with exotic spices, and is a tasting menu's best friend. Less than 60 cases to the US.



Blachon's Marsanne vines in the Oliviers vineyard