

9 Southern Rhône Reds to Try if You Love Châteauneuf-du-Pape

The star of the southern Rhône, [Châteauneuf-du-Pape](#) sets a worldwide standard for luscious, powerful reds. (The name, which translates as “The New Castle of the Pope,” refers to the time in the 1300’s when the Roman popes decamped from the Vatican to Avignon, due to political unrest.) To the east, across the Ouvèze river and higher up, lies the smaller appellation Gigondas, divided in two by the craggy Dentelles de Montmirail, a small mountain chain.

Gigondas offers much of the same complexity and richness as Châteauneuf du Pape but at a more modest price, as do — if one hunts carefully — the up-and-coming appellations of Lirac and Vacqueyras. All these wines are driven principally by the sultry allure of Grenache, though they are typically blends involving a number of other grapes as well, principally [Syrah](#) and [Mourvèdre](#).

The character of the entire southern Rhône is defined by its warm climate and glorious Mediterranean sunshine, channeled by [Grenache](#) into opulent, silky-smooth reds, though often with underlying power and tannic muscle. The best can age for decades, but have the virtue of being seductive on release as well.

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of 09

2019 E. Guigal Gigondas (\$35)



“There’s a trend today for Gigondas to become ‘Châteauneuf-du-Pape light,’” Philippe Guigal noted the last time he came to the Food & Wine offices. “We want Gigondas to stay a bit more rustic, a bit more powerful, a bit gritty. So we always have at least one-third Mourvedre in our Gigondas. It brings the spice, the weight, the rusticity, and a kind of lacquer-like savoriness.” That’s a spot-on assessment of the character of this brooding red; which only makes sense, coming from the man who made it.