



## John Livingstone-Learmonth

Drink Rhone : <http://www.drinkrhone.com/>

Notes et dégustations du Montirius «Le Clos», Vacqueyras, Rouge

**40-50% Grenache, 50-60% Syrah (1989) from oak tree surrounded clay-limestone soils on Le Deves, destemmed, light crush, cold maceration, 3-4 week concrete vat vinification, wild yeasts, pumping overs, part vat emptying/refilling, vat-aged 12-24 months, unfiltered, organic, biodynamic wine, 10-40.000 b**

**2016 ★ ★ ★ ★**

dark robe. The nose has a brothy, full, black-fruited nature, coulis of Morello cherries in the heart of it. There is inner power, but soundly camouflaged. The palate works on texture, with a rolling sweet delivery of juicy matter, ripe, even savoury tannins attached. There is a cool, prolonged length, and this has been well made to go with duck breast, beef dishes. The fruit is tasty, instantly likeable. 15°. 17,200 b. 50% Gren, 50% Syr. From 2019. 2030-31 Feb 2018

**2015 ★ ★ ★ ★**

sombre dark red colour. The nose flirts with reduction, indicating Syrah, so there is a meatiness, along with a perfumed quality, violets and Pez sweets with red berries such as raspberry. It's a curvy, stylish opening. The palate is also floral, holds neat, soft juice with spicing in tow. There is an appealing serenity in this unhurried wine, with good, precise detail in its fruit and definition. The aftertaste persists in a fine register, gives scented red fruits. From spring 2018, decanting helpful. 13,5°. 10,000 b. 50% Gren, 50% Syr. €30. 2027-28 March 2017

**2014 ★ ★ ★ ★**

dark robe. The bouquet gives a brewed air of dark berry fruit, with a mulled nature, stewed plums on the agenda. The palate is based on sweet Grenache fruit, strawberry jam, has a liqueur, lightly floral leaning. Traditional Vacqueyras, one that moves rather sluggishly, but there are pockets of clarity. 13,5°. 10,000 b. €30.09. 2020-21. Dec 2015

**2013 ★ ★ ★ (★)**

dark red; blackberry liqueur, well lifted air, a nose that is all cleanly struck, with light licorice, but no real extras as yet. The palate delivers juicy and joli fruit with a garrigue presence, and **STGT**, local elements, as it closes. This is very faithful to its terroir – it is an expressive Vacqueyras, in the higher echelon of quality this year. It holds very pretty fruit in mid-palate. The finish is a wee bit dry, the aftertaste spiced. Allow time for fusion, notably on the finish. 13,5°. 60% Syrah, 40% Gren, instead of 50%-50%. Bottled Dec 2014. From 2017. 2024-26 Feb 2015 **Previously Dec 2014 \*\*\* (vat)** purple-garnet colour. Red and dark berry aroma on the nose. This is sweet on the attack with a firm follow through. Its finish is hard and dry, however 13,5°. From 2016. 2020-22 J.L.G.B. €66/6 bots in bond Berry Brothers 0800 280 2440 +44(0)207 022 8973 [www.bbr.com](http://www.bbr.com) Dec 2014

**2012 ★ ★ ★ ★ (★)**

**(vat)** bright, dark robe. The nose has a raw talent – a liberal stretch of black berry fruit, bacon, grilled touches. Lots of potential and bustle here – it is in a primary state now. It is dark in nature, has a grunt factor, with chocolate and some licorice in the breeze. The palate rocks well on its lively black fruiting, is full of purpose. This will drink well from mid-2015 – it is a good, up tempo Vacqueyras, but it may slow down and concentrate its forces over time, so a splendid second stage is on the agenda around 8 years old. The fruit is sleek to the end, and there is a low-level, crisp tannin present. It finishes solidly, is a good, no messing around wine. 14°. 17,000 b. €30 at cellars. 2023-26 Dec 2013

**2011 ★ ★ ★ ★ (★)**

dark robe, plenty in it. There is a note of reduction on the bouquet, which exudes an earthy-truffle combination. Comes with black berry fruit, is a very primary aroma, and hasn't gained maximum variety. It is well mixed, and combines hints of violet, chocolate, black olive, tar and grilling. The palate has a mixed flavour of tea, prune, smoked tar. Has good, genuine heart, works on abundance. It shows garrigue influences such as pine and herbs towards the finish, is authentic, **STGT** wine. From late 2014. 14°. 17,000 b this year, €30 at the cellars. 2025-26 May 2013 **Previously Oct 2012 \*\*\*\*** dark colour; notably ripe, also meaty air – there is a prominent wave of cassis blackcurrant here, tar and tobacco, a strong milled or liqueur note in the cassis. The palate spreads well, is tasty, bears a lot of succulent fruit, is shapely. It is fat, with its attack setting that trend. Grainy tannin comes forward on the finish, a smudge of lead pencil there. The aftertaste is wide, sustained, lip-smacking. 14°. From 2015 2025-26. Oct 2012

**2009 ★ ★ ★ ★ (★)**

dark, shiny robe; coffee-cocoa, brewed black fruit aroma – a good, primary thrust, sets it up well. Solid, meaty tinted black fruit delivery on the palate – a gutsy wine with deep content. The matter at its heart is ripe, the length continues well. Robust and persistent, will do well. From 2013. 2022-24 July 2010

**2008 ★ ★**

fair depth of red in the robe; crunchy, upright raspberry fruit airs – the nose is rather bold, but marked by downhome, Brett style yeasty influences. The palate has still stiff fruit, is beyond what I would call angular. It ends on that flat note, is a solid and compacted wine, not at all breezy. Decant this. Food a must. From late 2011. 2018-20 July 2010

**2007 ★ ★ ★ ★**

**2 bottles tasted, the 1<sup>st</sup> bottle a little dry.** **Bottle 2:** medium depth Grenache red; the nose shows reduction, but is stylish, leads with simmered plum fruit airs; it flirt with thyme, herbs. This is a calm 2007; it is smoothly textured, the matter is compact, holds round and entrenched tannins, is still wide near the finish. It is still running on the finish, which is round and shows some Provence herbs. 14°. 2022-24 Sept 2013 **Previously July 2010 \*\*\*\*** dark robe; funky, gamey, brooding, reductive bouquet – there is good persistence of fruit in it, is in a primary state still, needs decanting. The palate fruit is clouded by tannin, raw youth. The black fruit at its heart is polished and confident. Still very young, barely out of short trousers. There are good raw materials here, though I find a sense of lees late on, rather a brut de cuve/vat style. From late 2011. 2019-21 July 2010

**2006 ★ ★**

gamey, mulled red fruits nose with a sweet curve and a baked air. There is spice within the mature red fruit on the palate – this doesn't give a live feel. It ends tightly, on a pepper note. The length is OK. It needs more fat. Try from 2010 spring. 2013-15 March 2009

2005 ★ ★ ★ ★ (★)

full, black fruited bouquet, soft air with a slightly floral top. Stylish black fruit with some leather and prune tone. Good richness all through, elegant feel to it. This is classy and persistent, length is good. 2016-18 March 2007

2004 ★ ★ ★ (★)

well-founded black fruit on bouquet, leathery in style, gently cooked berries, some mint and licorice. Palate starts with black berries and plum flavours; there is helpful acidity here behind the sustained black fruits. The texture is woven, and there are nice bits of life and vigour here. The general tone is quite rounded. 2015-17. They have made good 2004s here. March 2007 **Previously July 2005 (vat) \*\*\*(\*)** reduced but solid nose – is well cut, has some earthiness. Tasty and full palate, with resources – notably the flavour runs with black jam and some leathery moments. The fruit is attractive, and there is plenty here. Good length and quality. Stylish wine, with body. Esp 2007-08 on. 2017-18

2003 ★ ★ ★ (★)

sound, quite dark plum colour; has a harmonious, lingering bouquet with a combination of jam and flowers to the fore. The palate's stone fruits come with an appealing cool thread. The length is good, there is a floating finale, and the finish is clear and elegant, especially for the vintage. **STGT** wine. 2013-15 March 2007 **Previously July 2005 \*\*\*** black tones in the robe; the aroma is well-knit – shows black jams with a touch of incipient game. The palate starts with black stone fruit, and develops a good, chunky nature as it goes. Has scale, and some meatiness, and develops a chewy, but well textured finale, with ripe and round tannins there. 2016-17 July 2005

2002 ★

mild, red berry jam aroma with a smoky top, and a leaning towards damp woods as it ages. The palate is wham – all over a bit quickly. Has a mid-weight plum flavour, but starts to dry towards the finish. Drink now to 2006. July 2005

2001 ★ ★ ★ (★)

**(Clos Montirius by name)** decent red robe; wholesome, gripping nose, here is the Vaucluse... it is meaty, shows some baked tones, garrigue and herbs. The palate is broad, bears good fruit with Syrah on top and adding both height and cut to the Grenache. Syrah in a cooler vintage such as 2001 can perform down here. Black fruits, more prune appear towards the finish. It is still in a primary condition, will move in 12 months' time. Good length. 2014-15 Dec 2004

1998 ★ ★ ★ (★)

**(Clos Montirius by name)** full, maturing robe; pebbly, leathery nose with good depth. The palate starts richly, with copious, round content in it: has life and some bounce. Good mix of red fruits trimmed with a leather effect from the tannins. Young for its age. 2011-13 March 2005

## Notes et dégustations du Montirius «Garrigues», Vacqueyras, Rouge

2016 ★ ★ ★ ★

fairly full red. Has a spicy, smoky aroma with a clear focus of cooked, nicely sweet raspberry fruit at its centre. The palate leads off carefully, carries minted content, live, sparky tannins with a rocky texture from them on the close; the length is good. There's a good Grenache presence here, flavours of plums, with notes of mixed dried herbs. It's moving in the right direction; drink from mid-2019. 14.5°. 70% Gren. 30% Syr. 2028-29 Feb 2018

2015 ★ ★ ★ ★

healthy red robe. Mixed red and black berries airs mix on the bouquet, which has a good, oily depth, comes with licorice, buffed leather also. The palate flows freely, has an even brisk presentation of spiced Grenache, and violet notes at the end. It is very naked, very joli, appealing, is a superior Vacqueyras. 13.5°. 2028-30 Feb 2018

2014 ★ ★

dark colour. The nose is restrained, a little sweet, gives a cooked, sweet plum fruit aroma. The palate is traditional, rather stewed in nature, could give more zip. It ends on plum jam, with spicing, the tannins being green, a big turn-off. 13.5°. €15.09. 50.000 b. From 2017. 2020-21 Dec 2015

2013 ★ ★ (★)

purple-garnet hue. The fruit on the nose is a little stewed. There are herbal notes on the palate, and the finish is dry and edgy. This is a little tough and austere. 14°. From 2016. 2020-22 JL Dec 2014

2012 ★ ★ ★ ★

**(vat)** dark red; has a grilled, nutty air, simmered black berry fruit and pork scratchings. The palate gives zappy black cherry fruit dosed with pepper and thyme, herbs. There is late crunch from its tannins, a build-up of dust from them. This works well between the nose and the palate. The juice on the palate travels a good long way. From mid-2015. 14°. 50.000 b. €15 at cellars. 2023-24 Dec 2013

2011 No Rating

**\*\*\*(\*) before bottling, NR after:** 2 bottles tasted, neither right. **Bottle 1:** dark plum colour; grilled, downbeat fruit on nose, bosky airs. The palate is demanding, the acidity on the outside, ends drily. **Bottle 2:** bit better than bottle 1, holds a little red jam fruit, but that bosky angle reappears on the nose. The palate is on the cliff edge, so there are drying moments and loose plum fruit. 14°. 50.000 b this year. €15. May 2013 **Previously Oct 2012 \*\*\*(\*)** **(vat)** dark, full robe. Sweet, mulled hedge fruits air, raspberry with a tang, is ripe, has a cooked plum, prune ripeness. The palate is spiced throughout, the texture fleshy until tannins take over at the end, where there is some tobacco smoke and a tangy note. The flavour rests on chocolate, blueberry. OK for early drinking. There is a cluster of tannin at the end. Promising. From spring 2014. 13.7°. 2021-22 Oct 2012

2010 ★ ★ ★ ★

purple-tinted, bright robe. Good, streamlined fruit, life and appeal on the nose – the bouquet races across the glass, has a dusty, grainy backdrop, and a good ripple of red berry beyond, which comes in waves, and shows licorice as well. A good start, off we go. Rocking Syrah fruit on the debut of the palate; there is a mineral cut in its cherry fruit, and so clear is it that it can be drunk solo. Has a fine grain, a powdered sprinkle of tannin. This is fun to drink, and in this young state, it is **w.o.w.** wine. Has balance and potential, marks also for fun. The fruit side of it comes forward when drunk with a file of Charolais. 14.5°. 2023-24 Feb 2012

2009 ★ ★ ★

just 3 stars, in effect: satisfactory, full red robe. Stinky, "high" first aroma that is reductive, sweaty, shows red fruits and berries within; it does indeed show garrigue herb airs, is broad. The palate is well-textured, glove-like, with a sprinkle of grainy and dusty tannins around it. It gains a "dark" interior towards the finish, takes on grip and a grounded offer, as it matter and alcohol come into play – reflects the 2009 Plateau des Garrigues under hot sun. There are late flashes of pepper, crisp prune fruit. Has a hum of alcohol within, and the tannins at the end are just short of being dry. 15°. €13.95 at Monoprix, Paris. 2018-19 Aug 2011

2008 ★ ★ ★ (★)

quite a full red; ink, pepper and some concentration in the nose – the fruit is like black cherry jam, has some damp mineral airs with it. The palate is nicely sturdy, holds engaging black fruit with violet tints in it, all well seasoned. Finishes on raisin and date notes. A wine that is a touch wild, a free spirit, marks here for character. 2017-18 July 2010

2007 ★ (★)

full, slightly sombre robe; cocoa, prune, smoky aromas that are wide across the glass. The palate starts loosely, while the fruit never really tightens and shows focus. It seems ready to go, and lacks cards up its sleeve. Rather tame, a wine without horizon. Acceptable, but not more. The length is OK. 2015-16 July 2010 **Previously Feb 2009 \*(\*)** snappy, nutty nose – nougat, raisin present. The palate gives red fruit with a blurred focus, ends on a mingle of tannin, shows a dry effect there. This could be clearer. From mid-2010. 2017-18 March 2009

2005 ★ ★ ★ (★)

(vat) chocolate, prune bouquet, with violet trimming. Round start to palate, and holds good black fruit with a scented nature in the mid palate. Has nerve and some life in it, generally promising. 2013-15 March 2007

2004 ★ ★ ★ ★

quite full robe; elegant bouquet – mature black berries that have been simmered. Good attack of bright, peppery fruit, grows in tannic content, has a good and clear texture. Violet, prune aftertaste, and is nicely airy and poised within. Lots of life in it. 2014-16 March 2007 **Previously July 2005 (vat) \*\*\*** good deep robe; fresh, peppery nose with chewy fruit in it. Understated richness on the palate that is nicely wide. Some tannin at the end, can live till about 2014. Drink from 2007. July 2005

2003 ★ ★ ★ (★)

calm bouquet with a secure, compact aroma of red fruits. Likeable, quite crisp fruit on the palate that runs on well and persists. Has a clear texture, especially for a 2003. It is peppery towards the finish. Its definition is good for the vintage. 2012-13 July 2005

## Notes et dégustations du Montirius «Perle de rosée», Vacqueyras, Rosé

2016 ★ ★ ★

light orange hues on the robe. The nose is backward, post bottling, perhaps some SO<sub>2</sub> present. It shows some citrus zest. The palate gives a cooked orange flavour with some tannin on the close, finishes with a firm grip. It can develop with another month or two, is table rosé. 13.5°. 100% Grenache. To 2020 Feb 2018

2014 ★ ★ ★ ★

peach tinted robe. The nose is refined, stylish: there are airs of fresh rose petals and quince, licorice – it is a bouquet with some mystery. The palate displays salty grip, is also refined. This is above average rosé with cool precision, a light quince flavour, and a good, tight finish. It is unadorned, neat, classy. 12.5°. 100% Gren this year. 4,000 b. €9.59 is V. To 2018 Jan 2016

2011 ★ ★ ★

orange-tinted pink colour. Broad, crabapple, soft redcurrant air with a wee note of honey, also orange marmalade. The palate is constructed for la table; there are quince notes in its rather fresh fruiting. It has grip, ends roundly, in a pretty complete manner. Nice and orderly, good balance. Good length. This will go well with soft cheeses. 13°. €9.50 at the cellars. 4,000 b this year. To 2015. "Drink this with grilled red mullet, asparagus with caillette, beetroot salad of Provence with olive oil or vinaigrette." Christine Saurel. May 2013

2010 ★ ★ ★

pale pink. Baked brioche, yeasty note on the nose, which has curved note of ripeness. It has some appealing sweetness, and redcurrant is the main fruit. The palate starts finely, with more matter than the 2011. The quince flavour leads into a note of honey. Drink now. 13°. To 2014 Oct 2012

## Notes et dégustations du Montirius «Minéral», Vacqueyras, Blanc

50% Bourboulenc (1992-93), 25% each Grenache blanc (mid-1950s), Roussanne (1992-93) from 2 hectares on garrigue soils with a sand, sandstone couch, destemmed, crop cooled, steel vat fermented at 15°C, assembled after fermentation, vat raised 6 months, malo blocked, filtered, organic, biodynamic wine, 4,000-5,500 b

2016 ★ ★ ★ (★)

pale yellow. Stewed white fruits compote aroma, likeable fruit, on the nose. The palate is neatly tucked in, has detail, mild gras richness, good life on the finish, all discreetly done. Charm in the glass. "The Bourboulenc was harvested mid-October, six weeks after the other two varieties." Eric Saurel. 2025-26 Feb 2018

2015 ★ ★ ★ ★

yellow robe has a peach tone in it, looks rather rich. The bouquet offers ripe fruits, exotic touches such as mango in with the more citrus, mandarin influences, and a light air of toasted nuts. The palate is intricately woven together, the flavour based on dried fruits such as apricot with late tang and a salty grip that encourages a second glass. Its mineral signature is most apparent on the close. This will accompany poultry, steamed fish such as sea bass and Asian cuisine, noodles to the fore. It correctly captures the Bourboulenc's "steel" and freshness. 13°. 5,000 b. 50% Bourb, 25% Gren bl, 25% Rouss. €25.29 at the cellars. 2023-24 Apr 2017

2014 ★ ★ ★ (★)

bright, very pale yellow. Has an aniseed, refined pear aroma with a neat display, as if on a tight rein. The palate gives salted, white fruits, quince, is very grippy wine. It is indeed mineral, and leaves the palate fresh and clean on the aftertaste. It is a tidy, self-contained white, which can do the aperitif, or accompany steamed dishes rather than sauced ones. The stylish juice persists in fine fashion. It can tick over, without evolving in a hurry; it is a wine that needs a second thought to appreciate it properly. There is definite saltiness here. 12.5°. 5,000 b. €25.09, not cheap. 2020-21 Jan 2016

2013 ★ ★

pale gold hue. The nose seems a touch murky and unclear. The palate is oxidative, with pointy acidity on the finish. This lacks precision or there is a problem with the sample? 13°. 4,000 b. €25, high. To 2016 JL Dec 2014

2011 ★ ★ ★ (★)

pale yellow. Smoky, pear and apricot, jam airs. The palate starts quietly, showing a note of reduction. It is fine at heart, has structure, lowish acidity. Smoky notes show up, and the finish is firm and controlled. It ends on saline touches. From mid-late 2013. Decant this. 13°. 2019-20. Bottled March 2012. Oct 2012

2010 ★ ★ ★ ★

yellow, legs, slight evolution. The nose is interesting, combines pepper, dried apricot, spice, honeycomb. It is a Northern Rhône style bouquet that is broad. The palate links well to the nose, offers almond, honey flavours with a gradual softening of its texture at the end. Attractive acidity, fresh length – there is a tiny lack of gras on the end, which is fresh with fennel notes. The aftertaste is tangy. This can be decanted, is coming along nicely, is stylish 13°. 2020-21 Oct 2012

**2009 ★ ★ ★ (★)**

light yellow; tilleul (lime-linden), garrigue, lavender, infused tea, almond airs on the nose with a light touch of pear – a stylish bouquet. The palate starts tightly, and is nicely earthy and southern under that. It shows a red wine style late on, moves towards tannin, with vanilla in the flavour. It is chevy on the finish, maybe from the thick skins in 2009 after all the hot, dry weather – it has a typical 2009 firmness. The aftertaste is nutted. "Suited to rich sauces, Asiatic dishes, veal in apricots," Christine Saurel. 13°. 2020-21 Oct 2012 **Previously July 2010** \*\* yellow tints; creamy, rather plain bouquet – no real distinguishing airs. The palate is also tucked up, lacks a breeze of clarity of its fruit. Best with food. A bit dull and got up, not a free spirit. Some improvement possible. 2013-14 July 2010

**2008 ★ ★ ★ (★)**

yellow-tinted robe, full and clear. The bouquet isn't exactly sorted – it shows cooked pear, has a wee candy notion, tobacco and white jam: it is fine. The palate is also a bit cautious; it carries the saline theme of these wines, is evolving slowly, ends comfortably, holds restrained gras. There are airborne notes in its feel – it isn't a table thumper, so drink with fine foods. It is young, and doing well, despite the caution. The aftertaste is smoky, with a light note of fungal, which is the only current clue to any evolution. Overall, though, the end is tender. 13°. 2021 Oct 2010 **Previously July 2010** \*\*(\*) yellow robe; closed, compact bouquet, salt and varnish present. The palate flavour is obscure; this is a wine that needs food since it is close-packed, but can emerge. Solid at heart. Decant this. From mid-2011. Can improve. 2017-18 July 2010

**2007 ★ ★ ★ (★)**

sustained yellow colour; there is some evolution on the nose, which has damp moments, shows "high" fruit, but is a classic white Rhône evolver – peach and white fruits tart feature. The palate offers a brush with bounty but quickly shuts down, ending on a rather distant, firm note. Changing its nature now, on the move. There are honey escapades on the finish. It will be more obviously rich from 2012. Reflects the vintage well. 2018-20 July 2010

**2006 ★ ★ ★**

shiny yellow in a robe that shows advance. Brioche, mandarin, butterscotch, vanilla, sesame seed, dried fruits airs here; there is a minor note of oxidation. The palate is oxidative but fresh, especially on the finish, where there is a honeycomb taste. It ends on a compact, almond flavour, dried fruits, firmly. Decant this: it is in transition as it moves along, and doesn't have a certain centre for now. It is a bit mean with its favours. Leave until 2014. 13°. 2018-19 Oct 2012

**2003 ★ ★ ★ (★)**

full aroma, with a floral nature from the Bourboulenc, shows mature white fruits. This is a sit-down wine, with good width and character. The finish is out of the ordinary, bears aniseed. It has a solid, but well-defined character. An interesting wine of honest southern attributes. To 2011. July 2005