

Robert Parker acclaims Autard's 2006s, pronouncing:

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PAUL AUTARD	2006	CHATEAUNEUF DU PAPE	(not yet released)	RED	(87-89)
PAUL AUTARD	2005	CHATEAUNEUF DU PAPE	(\$40.00-45.00)	RED	90
PAUL AUTARD	2006	CHATEAUNEUF DU PAPE CUVÉE LA CÔTE RONDE	(not yet released)	RED	(91-93)
PAUL AUTARD	2005	CHATEAUNEUF DU PAPE CUVÉE LA CÔTE RONDE	(\$50.00-55.00)	RED	94
PAUL AUTARD	2006	CHATEAUNEUF DU PAPE CUVÉE JULINE	(not yet released)	RED	(92-94)

At times proprietor Paul Autard has clearly moved into the modern school of Châteauneuf du Pape with the use of barriques, still very much a minority school, but like so many who have experimented with new oak for the Syrah or Mourvèdre components, there seems to be a gradual shifting back from the percentage of new oak to larger barrel formats such as demi-muids, etc. I felt this was Paul Autard's strongest lineup of wines since his 1998s. The **2006 Châteauneuf du Pape** displays beautiful sweet currant and black cherry fruit intermixed with a touch of roasted peanuts, tobacco leaf, and licorice. It is well-made, with a gorgeous medium to full-bodied texture, low acidity, and ripe tannin very much in the style of the vintage. Drink it over the next 7-10 years. The **2006 Châteauneuf du Pape Cuvée La Côte Ronde**, which does see some barrique aging, doesn't really show much new oak at all. Quite dense, and certainly one of the more impressively constituted 2006s, this full-bodied wine is admirably deep, concentrated, with light to moderate tannin, decent acidity, and beautiful black currant and black cherry fruit intermixed with some loamy soil notes, a subtle hint of *pain grillé*, and spice box. This beauty should drink well for 12-15 years. A new cuvée added to the portfolio in 2006 is the **Châteauneuf du Pape Cuvée Juline**. It is 100% Grenache from the oldest Grenache vines of Autard, aged in barrel and given *pigeage* during vinification. This looks super. Some new oak does show up, but it is completely overwhelmed by the

kirsch, licorice, lavender, and Provençal herbs that are tell-tale characteristics of ripe Grenache. With full body, huge glycerin, great richness, and depth, this is a stunner and certainly looks to be one of the top dozen or so wines of the 2006 vintage. The tannin in this wine, somewhat uncharacteristically for the vintage, suggests that 4-6 years of bottle age will be necessary, and the wine should keep for 20-25 years.

The **2005 Châteauneuf du Pape** has turned out to be a beauty. Dark ruby/purple to the rim, with a flamboyant black currant, sweet cherry, floral, licorice, and spicy nose, the wine is deep, full-bodied, with supple tannins and long, heady glycerin and extract in the supple finish. This is a surprisingly approachable 2005 that already drinks well but should continue to evolve for 10-15+ years. The **2005 Châteauneuf du Pape Cuvée La Côte Ronde** is undeniably the best wine Autard has made since the 1998 rendition of this cuvée. This got a big "Wow!" when I smelled it. A stunning nose of black truffles, melted licorice, blackberries, and sweet cherries is followed by a multi-dimensional, multi-layered, full-bodied wine with tremendous power, richness, and a hint of barrique. One could say this is modern, but the Provençal personality jumps from the glass of this meaty, dense wine. Give it 2-3 years of bottle age and drink it over the following 15+ years. These are very impressive showings for Autard. Represented by Russell Herman, Berkeley Heights, NJ; tel. (908) 771-9082. Various American importers.