



International Wine Cellar

the consumer's passport to fine wine

Steve Tanzer praises Domaine Courbis' wines, with "Fresh, fruit-driven personalities...loaded with sweet fruit and usually drink well soon after release." See January/February 2007 Issue.

Domaine Courbis. The Courbis brothers' wines are decidedly in the modern camp, with fresh, fruit-driven personalities, polished tannins and sometimes pronounced oakiness. They are also loaded with sweet fruit and usually drink well soon after release. The vineyard holdings here are enviable, among the best in Cornas, including some nearly century-old vines in Sabarotte, widely regarded as one of the finest sites in the appellation. I tasted with Laurent Courbis, who offered the opinion that "2004 is not the richest vintage but the wines are wonderfully fresh and pure," while the 2005s "are superb, with incredible concentration as well as balance." He concluded: "I am very happy with both of them." (Russell Herman/World Wine Source, Berkeley Heights, NJ; importers include V.O.S. Selections, New York, NY; Carolina Wine Co., Norwood, MA; and Adventures in Wine, Daly City, CA)

2004 Saint-Joseph (\$27): Medium red. Fresh, spicy and floral, with bright raspberry and strawberry scents. Very silky, with sweet red fruit flavors and supple tannins. 88. 2004 Saint-Joseph Les Royes (\$35): Dark red. Rich, full and warm on the nose, with powerful red berry and *kirsch* aromas. Fleshy, round and ripe, with deep, sweet raspberry and cherry flavors and some finishing warmth. While this is more powerful than the basic Saint-Joseph, I like that wine just as much for its freshness. "This is from a very hot amphitheater vineyard," Courbis noted. 89. 2004 Cornas Champelrose (\$45): Ruby-red. Pungent, high-pitched raspberry and strawberry liqueur aromas, with an elegant floral touch. Very sweet, with expansive red and dark berry flavors, soft tannins and a supple, long finish. This is all about delicious ripe fruit and is drinking extremely well now. 90. 2004 Cornas Les Eygats (\$45): Deep ruby. Explosive raspberry, blueberry and boysenberry on the ripe nose, complicated by herbs and underbrush. Sexy oak spices accent sweet, fresh red and dark berry flavors. Deepens and becomes more serious on

the finish, where the dark fruits take a medicinal turn. Serious sturt and in need of cellaring, but the tannins are velvety and suave. 91. 2004 Cornas La Sabarotte (\$75): Deep red. Powerful, utterly room-filling bouquet encompasses the full range of red and dark berries, with pungent cola, licorice, exotic spice and smoked meat qualities; like a lesson in syrah aromas. Inky, deep and round, with extremely sweet dark berry and *kirsch* flavors accented by sexy oak spice and vanilla, and supported by gentle acidity and fine-grained tannins. The vines here average over 60 years of age. 92. 2005 Saint-Joseph: Deep ruby. Bright, zesty raspberry and strawberry aromas, with hints of white flowers and exotic orange peel. Quite densely packed, with very sweet red berry flavors, silky tannins and medium weight. Finishes clean and brisk, with very good energy and a lingering minerality. 88-91. 2005 Saint-Joseph Les Royes: Ruby-red. Suave, oak spice-dominated raspberry and redcurrant scents, with a strong vanilla undertone. Deep in sweet red fruit flavor, with a velvety texture and smooth, well-knit tannins. If the oak is absorbed this will be an outstanding wine. 88-91. 2005 Cornas Champelrose: Deep ruby. Open-knit, spicy and explosively fruity, with aromas of dark berries, cherry pit, espresso, licorice and violet. Deep and ripe, the dark fruit flavors showing a liqueur-like sweetness and a gentle, creamy texture. Very soft tannins slowly build on the finish but this is all about lush, sweet fruit. 89-92. 2005 Cornas Les Eygats: Inky ruby. Powerful, head-spinning aromas of *crème de mure*, blackberry and boysenberry, with very subtle woodsmoke and dark chocolate accents. Lush and remarkably sweet, offering a gaudy display of ripe, deeply concentrated blueberry and blackberry flavors and sexy vanillin oak. Really clings to the palate on the finish. There must be some tannin here but you'd have to dig through a ton of fruit to find it. 91-94. 2005 Cornas La Sabarotte: Opaque ruby. A black hole of ripe dark fruits on the nose, underscored by candied licorice, mocha and violet pastille notes. A stunningly sweet range of dark berry flavors is supported by fresh acidity and firmed by gentle tannins that build slowly through the seemingly endless finish. This remarkably persistent wine boasts superb sweetness and concentration, but also great clarity and energy. Who said that Cornas was always rustic? 93-96.