

Domaine Courbis featured in Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar

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Domaine Courbis. “Two thousand seven is a pretty vintage, which is a good thing,” said Laurent Courbis. “You’ll be able to drink the wines soon after release, which is good for restaurants and for the impatient, but they are also well-balanced and concentrated, which will allow them to age.” As for 2006, “it was an easy year. The wines are more concentrated than the 2004s and should easily outlive those wines. The tannins are gentle so they will be easy to enjoy young though.”

2007 Saint-Joseph Blanc (\$35; 90% marsanne and 10% roussanne): Pale gold. Spicy peach and white flowers on the nose, with a gentle kiss of anise adding complexity. Round, supple pit fruit flavors are firm by dusty minerals and gain sweetness with air. Easygoing and ready to drink. 87. 2007 Saint-Joseph Blanc Les Royes (100% marsanne, raised in 80% new oak): Greenish-gold. Exotically perfumed nose displays a sexy bouquet of pear, white peach, smoky minerals, marzipan and anise. Fleshy orchard and pit fruit flavors show palate-staining depth and are braced by zesty minerals. This offers the complexity of a serious Hermitage blanc. Finishes with strong minerality and impressive clarity, repeating the peach note. 90. 2007 Saint-Joseph: Deep red. Spicy red and dark berry aromas are complicated by cracked pepper and black tea. Pliant raspberry and boysenberry flavors are unencumbered by tannins and gain sweetness with air. Tangy raspberry and cherry preserve flavors linger on the finish, which is clean and refreshingly brisk if a tad stern right now. This was slated to be bottled in January 2009. 87-90. 2007 Saint-Joseph Les Royes: Saturated ruby. Fresh blackberry and cassis on the nose, with cracked pepper, incense and potpourri adding complexity. Deeply concentrated, energetic dark berry flavors are complemented by candied violet and a subtle vanilla quality. Spicy and focused on the finish, with the cracked pepper note repeating. 90-93. 2007 Cornas Champelrose: Opaque purple. Deep, youthfully brooding blackberry and plum compote scents are brightened by baking spices and dried flowers. Cracked pepper and candied floral qualities carry through the finish, which echoes the plum note. Showing good density and richness today. There are 25,000 bottles of this wine to go around. 88-91. 2007 Cornas Les Eygats: Inky violet. Sharply focused blackcurrant and minerals on

the nose. Zesty red and dark berry flavors are firm by tangy minerals and framed by solid tannins. This displays very good spine and minerality. Finishes bright, clean, sweet and long. Packs a serious punch but there’s an intriguing weightless quality to this. This *cuvée* gets 50% new *barriques*, except in lighter vintages. 90-93. 2007 Cornas La Sabarotte: Opaque purple. Exotically perfumed aromas of dark berry liqueur, cherry-cola, sandalwood, violet and licorice. Deeply concentrated black and blue fruit flavors braced by bright minerality stain the palate. Manages to be powerful and graceful at the same time, displaying excellent finishing grip and clarity. This should be a knockout. In most vintages, including 2007, this is aged in 100% new oak. 92-94. 2006 Saint-Joseph (\$35): Medium red. Spicy red berry and candied cherry aromas are complicated by anise and dried flowers. Lively red fruit flavors show good concentration, with no excess weight or fat. Finishes clean and energetic, with the floral note repeating. 88. 2006 Saint-Joseph Les Royes (\$60; 35% new oak): Bright red. Exotically perfumed nose displays sexy redcurrant and strawberry complemented by Asian spices and minerals; reminds me of pinot noir. Fresh and racy, with tangy red fruit flavors, fine-grained tannins and good mineral snap. The long, sweet finish is clean and tangy. This is already delicious. The Royes vineyard is situated on *calcaire*, which Courbis says explains why the wine shows such finesse. 90. 2006 Cornas Champelrose (\$65): Ruby-red. Very ripe, rich aromas of raspberry and cherry compote, licorice and dark chocolate. Smoky dark fruit flavors coat the palate, with zesty minerals giving the wine snap. The very ripe character repeats on the broad, deep, and persistent finish. This is showing even more power than it did last year and needs to be served with rich food. 90. 2006 Cornas Les Eygats (\$75): Vivid ruby. Energetic boysenberry and blueberry aromas are complemented by Asian spices and fresh flowers. Exotic fruitcake and candied blueberry flavors boast excellent concentration, with dusty, building tannins adding shape to the floral finish. This needs patience. 90(+?). 2006 Cornas La Sabarotte (\$100): Deep ruby. Impressively complex bouquet of dark berries, *kirsch*, violet and smoky Asian spices. Brighter red berries on the palate, with spicecake and molasses nuances adding complexity. Gains weight and power with air, finishing with impressive clarity and thrust. Even with extended aeration I didn’t detect the tannins that I’d expect from a young wine raised in 100% new *barriques*. 92.