

Domaine Pierre-Jean Villa Saint Joseph



Pierre-Jean Villa is a solid, well-built man, and maybe that's why he gravitates toward elegance in wine. He came from the Rhône Valley but learned to make wine in Burgundy, which may also explain his bent for finesse. He first learned the ropes working at Mommessin's Clos de Tart. After Boisset bought the Mommessin firm, Pierre Jean worked in Beaujolais and then for three years at Domaine de la Vougeraie with Pascal Marchand.

In 2003 he returned to the Rhône and became the manager for Vins de Viennes. This is the company that Yves Cuilleron, Pierre Gaillard, and François Villard created to resurrect the ancient vineyard area of Seyssuel, just north of Vienne on the left bank, as well as to do business as a *négociant*. Pierre-Jean became the fourth partner, and for seven years he was responsible for administration

and winemaking at the firm. The other partners had their own domaines to run; Vins de Viennes was Pierre Jean's bailiwick, and he made it what it is today.

In 2009, after a lot of thought, he handed in his keys and started his own domaine from scratch. He began with parcels in St Joseph, Condrieu, and Côte-Rôtie, plus he had a parcel in Seyssuel for his Esprit d'Antan . He made his first vintage at Domaine Jean-Michel Gerin while converting an abandoned fruit processing building in Chaveyriat into a winery.

These days Pierre-Jean is well ensconced in his new winery. He has 10 hectares (25 acres) in vine with 3 more to plant. He's got help now in the form of one full time employee, a sharp young man with degrees both in enology and viticulture, so that the parcels are being worked sustainably, with even more detail, and the domaine is increasingly on an organic path.

In the cellar, the same minimalist philosophy as always governs the winemaking: indigenous fermentations, normally no fining or filtration, and racking as well as bottling according to the lunar calendar. The domaine now has a sufficient quantity of older barrels to age its wine in ratios of new to old oak as it sees fit, and that's a welcome degree of flexibility.

Stylistically, Pierre-Jean's wines are clean, pure, deep, mineral and elegant. They emphasize depth of fruit without heavy-handed oak or extractive treatment.

www.pierre-jean-villa.com