

It's International Grenache Day – WHWC Top Picks

We've always suggested that if you want to drink great wines without breaking the bank, learn to love Grenache. Very few grapes provide the tremendous gratification offered by Grenache. In terms of complexity, flexibility with food, and budget pricing, this grape has few peers. Grenache hits its heights in the great southern Rhône wines, such as Châteauneuf-du-Pape. But the charm of this grape is its expression as Côtes-du-Rhône, along with the many excellent wines from southwest France and of course, as Garnacha in Spain.

Last year's inaugural Grenache Symposium saw 250 delegates from 23 countries gather in the Rhône region to promulgate the international notoriety and profile of the world's most widely planted grape varietal. This year, WHWC has decided to get on board to promote International Grenache Day, which is today, Friday September 23rd. We're thankful for this grape which gives us crisp rosé, muscled Châteauneuf-du-Pape, and just about every style in between. While there are so many selections that represent screaming values, here are our top picks!



2010 Mourgues du Grès Les Galets Rosé Costières de Nîmes \$13.95

88 points Josh Reynolds (*International Wine Cellar*): "(almost all grenache, with a bit of syrah): Vivid pink. Lively, highly aromatic bouquet of raspberry, cherry, rose and cinnamon. Energetic red berry and floral pastille flavors are lifted by zesty minerality, showing good concentration and a touch of warmth. Finishes smooth and round, with an echoing raspberry note. This is very easy to drink. (Jun 2011)"

2009 Borsao Garnacha Campo de Borja Tres Picos \$14.95

92 points Jay Miller (*Wine Advocate*): "The 2009 Tres Picos is a worthy successor to the string of splendid vintages which have preceded it. Heady black cherry and blackberry aromas, Asian spices, incense, and mineral notes lead to a dense, layered, rich old-vine Garnacha that over-delivers in a big way. A tasting of every vintage of Tres Picos ever produced (back to 2001) at the Bodega in January 2011 indicates that 8-10 years of pleasurable drinking is a reasonable expectation. However, this is a wine that is ready to drink on release. (Jun 2011)"

2008 Celler Cal Pla Black Slate Porrera Vi de la Vila Priorat \$16.95

90 points Josh Reynolds (*International Wine Cellar*): "(\$20 list; 60% garnacha and 40% carinena) Deep ruby. Pungent dark fruits and smoky minerals on the nose, with a hint of dried flowers adding complexity. Then brighter in the mouth, offering dense, sweet black raspberry and bitter chocolate flavors and a late note of zesty minerality. Rich but animated, with very good finishing clarity and cut. (Nov/Dec 2010)"

2009 Grand Montmirail Gigondas Les Deux Juliette Vieilles Vignes \$17.95

88-90 points Robert Parker (*Wine Advocate*): "Composed of 65% 50-year-old Grenache vines and 35% 15-year-old Syrah vines. The deep ruby/purple-tinged 2009 Gigondas Les Deux Juliettes Vieilles Vignes exhibits lots of blue fruits intermixed with spring flowers, crushed rocks and a distinctive cool climate but impressively rich, medium to full-bodied style displaying both elegance and depth. There are some noticeable tannins, but they are well-integrated and sweet. This 2009 should drink well for 7-10 years. (Oct 2010)"

2007 Mas de la Devèze Côtes du Roussillon Villages 66 Année \$19.95

92 points David Schildknecht (Wine Advocate): "Named for the number of the French Department Pyrenees-Orientales, and designed to provide instant gratification, Bernstein's tank-raised 2007 Cotes du Roussillon Villages 66 combines Grenache with 30% Syrah and 10% Carignan. Rich aromas and flavors of chocolate-covered black raspberries and blackberries once again dominate the luscious, fat, forward cuvee, but there is a striking note of wet stone in the finish and a wreathing of resinous scrub and herbs (cedar, rosemary). Here too, despite elevated alcohol, the wine is a complete lip-smacker and not the least burdened by heat or roughness.(Jun 2009)"

2009 Maison Bleue Le Midi Grenache Yakima Valley Boushey Vineyard \$32.95

94 points Jay Miller (Wine Advocate): "The 2009 Le Midi Grenache was sourced from the great terroir of Boushey Vineyard. The wine was blended with 20% Syrah and aged in seasoned French oak for 10 months. Cedar, exotic spices, white pepper, leather, game, lavender, black cherry, and blueberry scents compose the wine's alluring aromatic array. This leads to a medium to full-bodied, dense, rich, velvety-textured, plush wine that deftly conceals enough structure to evolve for 2-3 years. It will deliver optimum drinking from 2013 to 2024. (Aug 2011)"

2009 Orin Swift Grenache Vin de Pays des Côtes Catalanes "D66" \$37.95

Producer notes: "D66 is the inaugural release from our new winery and vineyards in Maury, France. The small town of Maury is in the outer Roussillon very close to the Spanish border and nestled in the Pyrénées-Orientales. We own approximately 235 acres (93 ha.) of mostly Grenache (80%) vines with a little Syrah (12%) and Carignan (8%). The majority of the vines were planted more than 60 years ago, with many of the vineyards being even older. The wine has a very dark, opaque red color with subtle aromas of toasted oak, ripe blueberry jam and dried rose petal. The entry is mouth coating and lush. Opulent plum and ultra ripe cherry are balanced with Asian spices and a bright vein of minerality and acidity that give great structure, weight and balance to the long finish. The tannin chains are long and will lend to ageability for 5 to 10 years. 15.2% alcohol."

Cheers,

Woodland Hills Wine Co.



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1-800-678-9463 • WWW.WHWC.COM

Woodland Hills Wine Company, 22622 Ventura Blvd, Woodland Hills, CA 91364
818.222.1111 or 800.678.WINE

www.whwc.com

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