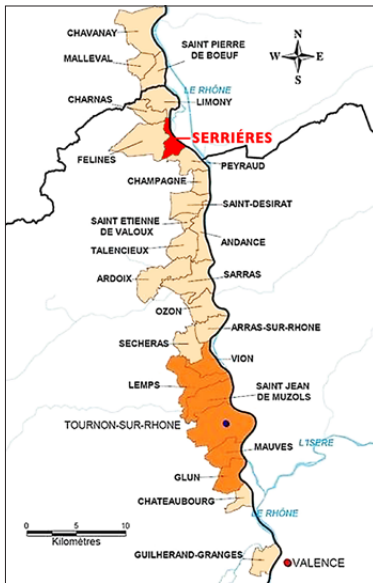




SUPERB ST. JOSEPH
VALLET
 NORTHERN RHÔNE



In the village of Serrières in the northernmost quarter of St. Joseph's 37-mile-long appellation, just below Côte-Rôtie, Château-Grillet and Condrieu, Louis Vallet and his son Anthony preside over this small artisan domaine. In addition to their 150 years of wine-growing on St. Joseph's steep slopes, the Vallet family also farms cherries and apricots on the plateau below.

Domaine Vallet reds are 100% Syrah, despite AOC law that allows St. Joseph reds to include up to 10% Marsanne and/or Roussanne. The family does grow white grapes but uses these for two albeit quite limited white St. Joseph and a similarly rare Condrieu. With plantings dating back to the 1970s, some now exceeding 40 years of age, the Vallet's 30 vineyard acres are distributed over 4 distinct terroir zones around Serrières and include 25.5 acres of Syrah, 1.5 acres of Marsanne, an acre of Roussanne, and about 2.47 acres of Viognier (in Condrieu).

The family pushes the envelope on ripeness and punches down more than is typical here. Many of their vines are on such steep slopes, mechanical harvesting isn't an option, and the family consequently harvests all fruit by hand using small bins.

From Syrah grown on steeper hillsides, Vallet reds exhibit the characteristic concentration, length, and complexity of the region's finest producers, a departure from the majority of today's St. Joseph made from fruit grown on the flat lands that account for most of the appellation's currently-assigned acreage.

These days Anthony runs his family's vineyards and cellar, but few will be surprised to hear the father is unlikely to stop advising his son.



ST. JOSEPH "Cuvée Méribets"

Cuvée Méribets is 100% Syrah from 3 lieux-dits in Serrières: Les Rouasses, Le Grand Moure, and Charamelin, sharing subsoils of clay and granite sands over a base of granite. Yields here average 40 hl/ha. Shrewdly-selected, hand-harvested fruit is destemmed and crushed in a traditional vertical press. Must is fermented with indigenous yeasts in open vats with twice-daily remontage for 3 weeks. "Maribets" is aged 10-11 months in (truly) neutral, older barriques.

Instead of the Mediterranean climate of the Southern Rhône, St. Joseph and the rest of the Northern Rhône enjoys a continental climate featuring wet winters marked by cold *le mistral* winds that can last into Spring. Sharing varieties and traditions with the rest of the Northern Rhône, St. Joseph reds from steeper hillsides have long been prized as attractive, user-friendly alternatives to the more expensive and cellar-demanding wines from Côte-Rôtie and Hermitage.

Thank you for your time and for your interest in Connoisseur Wines.