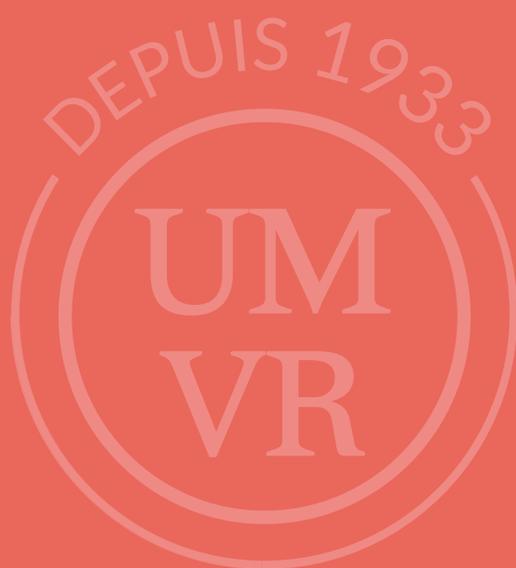


Les Wineries du Rhône

**Vignobles
& Compagnie**



PORTRAIT —

VIGNOBLES & COMPAGNIE TURNING THE CORNER

In 2017, Vignobles & Compagnie adopted a new visual identity, to better reflect the spirit of the Winery and highlight their 50-plus years of commitment to protecting and promoting the terroirs of the Rhône Valley. It was a bold move, but it's been a great success so far.

Social conscience

Vignobles & Compagnie have been growers in their own right since 2017, when they leased Château des Sources and a neighbouring property - a total of 50 ha planted to Costières de Nîmes plus a further 20 ha waiting to be replanted. The Winery's commitment to its winegrowers is central to its code of practice, and the basis of its positioning. **When you work with only 20 estates or so, and have been with some of them for over 25 years, there's a certain bond.**

"One of the challenges of this business" says Thomas Giubbi, MD since 2011, "is the future ownership of the vineyards. In four cases, the children have taken over from their parents, possibly because they've worked with us for many years; they enjoy good visibility and know they can earn a good living from their vineyards with enough left over to keep investing in plant material and equipment."

Back to basics

The strategic U-turn and decision to improve quality meant taking a close look at the profiles of the wines, and at the overall system based on supporting partner winegrowers through the whole production process, from agricultural techniques to vinification. Close collaboration is what partners and customers both want, so Vignobles & Compagnie are involved throughout, from working the soils, pruning and replanting to choosing varieties and root stocks, from guiding the harvest to obtaining the required levels of ripeness, acidity, alcohol and intensity of flavour, from choosing yeasts to deciding on ageing time. "It's our commitment to delivering the wines the customer wants without compromising terroir," explains Thomas.

Economic governance

Thomas Giubbi is equally committed in his role on the board of the UMVR, where he co-chairs the Côtes du Rhône Marketing Department and works with Anivin and Inter-Rhône. His work there gives him the chance to address priority concerns such as economic governance. **He feels the industry needs a detailed analysis of the market to help pre-empt trends and make better management decisions.** And that means developing reliable indicators and having a good relationship with producers, all of which supports the decision-making process. "For example, the 2016 harvest was one of the lowest ever for varietal wines. But as prices rose sharply, we found we had effectively shot ourselves in the foot. Despite ultra-low yields we had a large surplus; we hadn't grasped that the market had changed and no longer wanted what we were making. And that included France as well as Spain, Chile etc," says Thomas.

Thomas Giubbi (right), MD and UMVR Treasurer, and Nicolas Rager, Agricultural Engineer and Winemaker.



Established in 1963

Employees: 43

Sales: 78,986 hl

Turnover 2016: €22 million, including €7 million to export

Brands include: *Les Granges de Papes, Les Sources de Montmirail, Les Combelles, Les Mobiles.*



"A commitment to delivering the wines our customers want, without compromising terroir."

A Rhône Winery

The UMVR now groups all its négociant businesses under the name Rhône Wineries, putting a French slant on the English word denoting the place where wine is not only

made, but from which it's marketed and sold. Some of the more traditional houses may still be reluctant to use an English term, but the advantage is that the word wineries is universally understood. **And it's the perfect forum for everyone to express professional pride in their work, which includes creating value across the board.** So what are the differences between the Rhône Wineries and those in Mendoza? "Well, there are a few," says Thomas Giubbi. "There's a strong feeling of entrepreneurship here. We're in a historically significant environment, and regulations are much stricter. Then we've got the AOPs and terroirs – they're more tangible here in the Rhône Valley than elsewhere in the world. And lastly, there's that trademark quirky Rhône Valley attitude: we do serious work without taking ourselves too seriously."



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