

# Les Wineries du Rhône

**Brotte**



PORTRAIT —

## BROTTE FAMILY WISDOM

Laurent Brotte is Director of the Brotte Winery, as were his father and grandfather before him. His one purpose is to nurture and develop the legacy they have handed down to him.

First came Charles, then Jean-Pierre; now Laurent is at the helm of Maison Brotte, with Thibault and Benoit waiting in the wings. And we mustn't forget Jeanne, co-founder of the Châteauneuf du Pape wine museum which welcomes 22,000 visitors a year, 40% of them from abroad, or Laurent's wife Christine who manages the estates and looks after partnerships with winegrowers. The Brottes have worked together as a family for four generations. And they love it.

### Data driven management

The business was founded by grandfather Charles Brotte. Charles was also a co-founder of the UMVR, or rather its 1930s predecessor, a group of Châteauneuf-du-Pape négociants needing a forum to talk to producers in the wake of the phylloxera crisis. **More than 80 years later, Charles' grandson Laurent Brotte, owner and director of the Brotte Winery since 1998, continues to trust the UMVR to help with management decisions.** "We need a more accurate economic tool to help manage prices and inventory, particularly in the Côtes du Rhône where existing data isn't always very precise.

I'm happy to share my own data if it means we can make joint decisions with producers. When it comes to making decisions about yields, our market experience gives us the edge." By "us," Laurent means négociants in general.

### Heading in the right direction

The UMVR encourages cooperation. Just as good wine needs blending, the industry also needs to come together. Here, things are changing for the better. The UMVR Board now includes cooperative groups, licensed to trade as négociants and who deal with markets, prices and international competition. Meanwhile, more and more négociants are becoming winegrowers, sometimes facing harvests where yields don't fulfil market demand. "We're starting to understand each other better now," says Laurent

### The law needs to change

Laurent hopes the UMVR will play a full part in discussions with policymakers to ensure France can compete with its international counterparts on a level playing field. One major change introduced over the last 10 years has been to authorise table wines (now Vin de France) to be labelled with a vintage year and varietal name. The move is designed to put French producers on an equal footing with New World wines, and has transformed the way people work.

### Redefining tradition

**Being a family business has its responsibilities. Individual members are duty-bound not to rest on their laurels, to keep seeking out new markets, develop the ranges and increase capacity.** Fiole du Pape, the flagship wine in its iconic sandy-textured bottle (a tad unorthodox but eminently recognisable, designed by Charles in 1952) continues to sell well. In 2011,

**Laurent Brotte, Managing Director with wife Christine Brotte**



**Established in 1933**

*Employees: 36*

*Sales: 24,000 hl*

*Turnover 2016: €13 million, including*

*€1 million to export*

**Brands:**

*Laurus, Domaine de*

*Longue Toque, Château*

*Grand Escalion etc.*



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it was joined by the new Fiole Côtes du Rhône. The premium 'Brotte' brand, also deserves a mention; and besides the historic estate wines from Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Cairanne and Village Laudun, the Brotte winery have also created a range of signature wines in response to growing demand. In Châteauneuf-du-Pape, the cuvées parcelaires are made for the discerning palate, and the mid-range wines include a variety of Côtes du Rhône and crus.

**Maison Brotte currently sell 2.3 million bottles, with 75% going to export.** And what with setting up the new marketing department, finding new vendors and keeping up with technology, there's never a dull moment! Luckily, Thibault and Benoit realise what's in store for them...



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