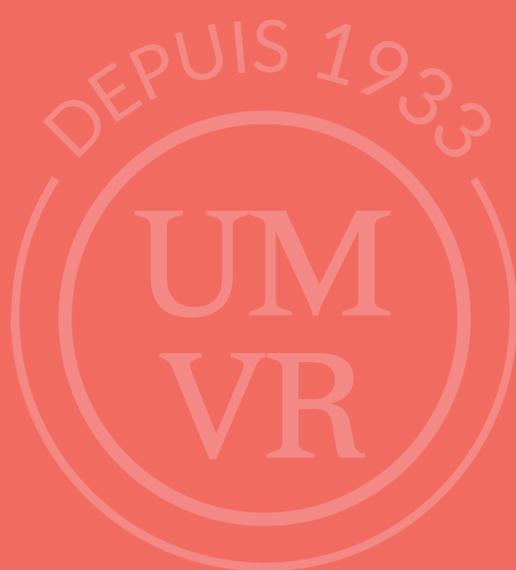


# Les Wineries du Rhône

**Ravoire et Fils**



## A FAMILY AFFAIR

Maison Ravoire et Fils was established in 1987 by Roger Ravoire and his wife Francine. They were joined in 2004 by their son Olivier, fresh from his studies at the École de Commerce in Reims. Today production is based in Salon-de-Provence, while the cellars and tasting rooms are in Châteauneuf-du-Pape. Their policy is to steadily grow the company, with a clear focus on putting people first.

Roger has been in the wine industry all his working life. He was educated in Burgundy, his first work placement was in Rasteau and his first job in the Luberon, at the Marrenon cooperative, where he worked as an intern before taking overall charge. Under his leadership, production at Marrenon soared from 10,000 bottles to over 10 million within 14 years. “It was a time when wine was getting more and more popular,” he smiles. “The business grew by 10% without us doing anything. Then by working hard, we pushed that up to 40%.”

### Steady growth

In 1987, armed with a long list of contacts in the hospitality sector in Paris, Roger set up his own Maison. Then in 1996, he bought the Manon (Côtes de Provence) brand, which opened the doors to the large-scale retail sector. When Olivier joined the business, annual turnover stood at around €5 million; by 2019 it had reached 27 million. Two thirds of this came from domestic sales, and the rest from exports to some 60 countries, primarily the USA and China. The Maison’s production is spread evenly across two of the great French

winegrowing regions, the Rhône (mainly the southern sector) and Provence.

### The next level

The company’s rise in fortune came largely as a result of acquisitions. In 2008, Ravoire et Fils bought Partenaire, a company specialising in the distribution of Château and Domaine wines to large-scale retail outlets; then in 2017, they took over Sénéclauze’s large-scale retail distribution arm, which took the business to the next level: from 15 to 26 million with no undue pressure on production facilities, as the Sénéclauze operation traded only in the finished product.

### New equipment

As the business grew, its quarters were becoming decidedly cramped. “The situation at Lauris was becoming untenable. We were bursting at the seams. We needed a proper manufacturing base,” Olivier recalls. The company moved to Salon-de-Provence in 2016, their sights set on a three-hectare site with 7,000 m<sup>2</sup> of newly refurbished buildings. “Salon didn’t appeal to us at first, but in terms of logistics it’s perfect, close to Marseille with its port, airport and high-speed rail links. And the motorway is nearby too.”

### The human touch

“The wine industry has very few big-name brands,” says Olivier, “and we are certainly not one of them. We’re part of an industry where the human touch makes all the difference, and that’s what helps us improve year on year. We like to take on people with character, and we give them plenty of autonomy. Good people make good wines. It’s a strategy that’s worked well for us so far, and we’re keen to keep this family dimension as part of our business.”

Roger and Olivier Ravoire



**Established 1987**  
44 employees  
2019 turnover: €27 million, 30% of which from export.



“We’re part of an industry where the human touch makes all the difference.”

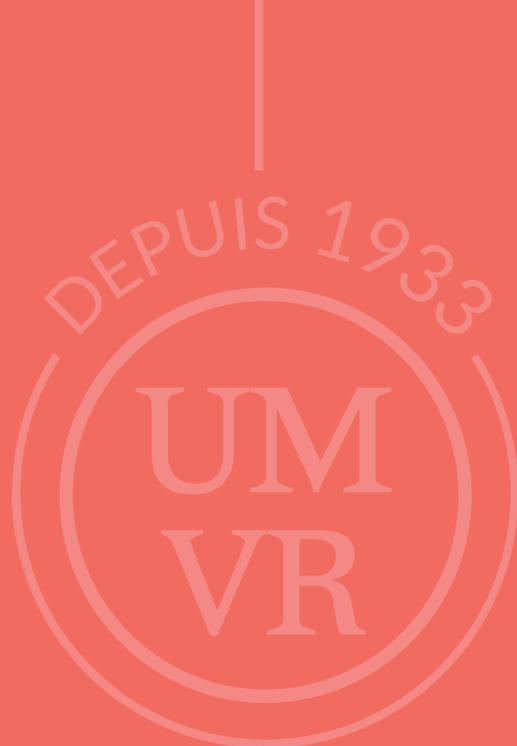
### Going organic

Ravoire et Fils work with about 30 winegrowers in the Rhône Valley, all passionate about their vines. “We don’t need enormous volumes,” Olivier says, “because our job is to blend and age the wines. What we look for is good, potentially long-lasting relationships with our growers, with a growing emphasis on caring for the environment and organic agriculture. Organic wine accounts for around 15% of our

output, and that’s not enough. We’d like to get up to 30% as quickly as possible; it would be good for everybody. And we don’t really have much choice: if we don’t do it, we’ll be squeezed out of the market. But we can’t make that change unilaterally: our clients and customers will need to accept that they’ll pay a little more, but it’ll be for a better quality product.”

### Back to the classics

After their experience with Rhône to the Bone – a range of Côtes du Rhône wines presented in a deliberately non-traditional way which struggled to find a footing in the US market – Ravoire et Fils launched their new Maison Ravoire range in 2019. The clean, elegant lines of the bottles showcase the appellations in a classic, sophisticated way. And it’s worked! “Sometimes you want to try something new and different but it’s way off the mark, so you go back to the old tried-and-trusted methods. You learn from your mistakes.”



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