

The Rhône Wineries

Brotte



PORTRAIT —

THE FUTURE OF BROTTÉ IS — BROTTÉ

The apple doesn't fall far from the tree. Thibault and Benoit Brotte are actively gearing up to take over the family wine business when their parents, Laurent and Christine, retire – Thibault as Sales and Marketing Manager and Benoit as Technical Director. Their roles will mirror those currently held by their parents as they guide the business into the future.

“We've always been négociants first and foremost. It's what we live and breathe,” says Thibault. Founded in 1931 by Charles Brotte, Maison Brotte is noted for its keen ability to introduce innovation. They quickly adjusted to selling their wines in bottles and created the popular *La Fiole du Pape* brand, its bottle shape slightly twisted as if bent by the Mistral – to this day it's the top-selling brand of Châteauneuf-du-Pape. They expanded into international markets, establishing a presence in some one hundred countries and generating 70% of their turnover from exports. And finally, they improved quality to the point that 10 of their wines consistently score 90/100 or higher every year. So what do the brothers hope to add to this impressive list of achievements? Thibault gives us the first part of the answer.

Winemakers and négociants

The Brotte business consists primarily of 90 hectares of vineyard across three properties and three appellations: Domaine Grosset in Cairanne, Château de Bord in Laudun and Domaine Barville in Châteauneuf-du-Pape.

Domaine Barville has been certified organic since 2023, while the other two are in conversion, due to be fully accredited in 2025. Thibault and Benoit's goal, their driving force, is to build on the quality improvements initiated by their parents.

Aiming for excellence

Benoit continues. “From our 90 hectares, we've identified 12 where quality is especially high. From these we'll be able to give every wine from our three estates a distinct identity. It's all thanks to my mother, who knows the vineyards so well. Also, we've set up a system of microvinification, where we vinify wines in small batches of between 30 and 60 hectolitres, the equivalent of one or two hectares of vines. Micro-plot selection, you could call it. The aim is to be absolutely precise, from start to finish. And if it's vinified separately, it's also aged separately. We want to express terroir, not mask it, as can be the case with excessive extraction during vinification or overuse of wood at the maturing stage. So we choose neutral containers such as terracotta amphorae or concrete tanks.”

Three ranges

The Brotte brand comprises three ranges of wines: the Domaines and Château range, showcasing wines from the three properties. Then there's the Essentials range, where the bulk of the wines comes either from the properties or from grapes bought in from selected winegrowers in Brotte's signature appellations of Cairanne, Laudun and Châteauneuf-du-Pape. These are available at a lower price-point and in larger volumes. And finally there's the Signatures range, showcasing the top Rhône Valley appellations from Condrieu to Tavel, including Crozes-Hermitage, Gigondas and Vacqueyras to name but a few. “Brotte has amazing potential,” says Thibault. “There are so many countries we haven't reached yet, or where we're not as strong as we'd like to be, and these markets are vital for the Rhône Valley. We're currently launching a new partnership in the UK

Thibault and Benoit Brotte



Established: 1931
40 employees
2023 turnover: €18 million
incl. 70 % to export.



“Today, thanks to our properties, all our efforts are focused on Brotte.”

with North South Wines, who will focus on the hospitality sector.”

New directions

For the next 20 years, the brothers have set themselves two goals: to double turnover, and to introduce the sixth generation of the family to the business – in the shape of their own children. So far, this has meant working alongside their parents to restructure the company, strengthen the sales team and establish a management board made up of trusted executives. They have also created a new department, the Support, Services and Organisation Division, to oversee human resources, finance, IT and certifications. “This will lighten our load,” says Thibault, “so we can devote 100% of our time to our core competencies. For me that's sales, and for Benoit it's production.”



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