

Aléofane - Natacha Chave

Saint-Joseph & Crozes –Hermitage



The Domaine at-a-glance

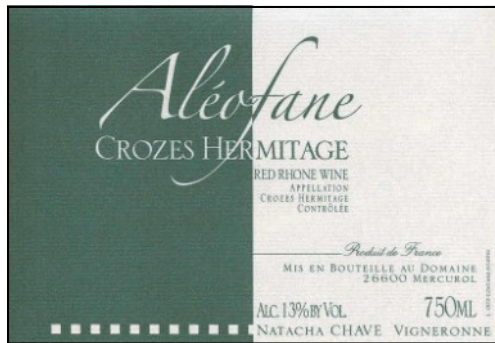
Owner / Winemaker: Natacha Chave **First Vintage:** 2006
Soil: Granite and decomposed Granite (Gore)
Size: 3.1Ha **Location:** Tournon sur Rhône, Northern Rhône
Appellations Produced: Saint-Joseph, Crozes-Hermitage



Natacha Chave

After passing her Baccalauréat, Natacha decided to study for a master's degree in philosophy. The subject of her Masters was: Animal Metaphors Found in Nietzsche. However, for many years Natacha had the desire to make wine. Her parents realized their dream of making wine in the 1970s, establishing a small winery in Crozes-Hermitage. Her brother later took over the domaine that they created. She didn't like the limitations that would go along with joining her brother. Natacha wanted her independence, and to make her own wine from beginning to end. She also wanted to make wine in the region in which she grew up, the Northern Rhône. Natacha has a deep love for the grape Syrah, especially from the Northern Rhône, where she believes the perfect expression of pure Syrah is found. In 2004 Natacha bought her first parcel of Saint-Joseph. She found a nice 1.3 hectare (3.2 acres) hillside plot in the heart of Saint-Joseph, Tournon sur Rhône. In 2007 she was able to buy a small, old vines, plot in Crozes-Hermitage, to which she has added some new plantings as well.

The name **Aléofane** comes from the name of a fictional island in the book "Riallaro, the Archipelago of Exiles", by John MacMillan Brown (1846-1935). Natacha found that some of the situations that Mr. MacMillan described in his book corresponded, in great detail, to the controversies surrounding wine in our own society. While wine is considered a source of conviviality, it is simultaneously subject to very strict laws. In the City of Aléofane fermented beverages, like wine, were considered both diabolical and healing. There, wine was prescribed by doctors. In some ways MacMillan's writing was visionary, almost predicting the modern medical view regarding the health benefits of wine. In his book, the people of Aléofane prized, above all, truth. In their own language Aléofane meant "the gem of truth". It doesn't seem at all coincidental that for millennia people have been saying "in vino veritas" (in wine there is truth). With her Aléofane Saint-Joseph, Natacha has found her own "gem of truth".



Natacha is meticulous with her vines. She works very hard to keep her vines healthy, and to limit yields. None of the work she does in the vines can be mechanized due to the steep configuration of this vineyard. Natacha therefore, has to do all of this work by hand. Natacha is very interested in using only natural products in the vines that help the vine build up its own natural defenses. Since 2006 she has used a treatment made of seeds from a plant, fenugreek (used in Indian and Thai cooking), that causes a resistance in the vine to an attack of odium. She also uses an experimental treatment against mildew made from yucca, chitin, and tea tree oil.

Wine Spectator - 91 Points

Aléofane - Natacha Chave, Crozes-Hermitage 2009 - 100% Syrah

Technical Notes: In 2006 Natacha acquired a small 1.80 ha (about 4.5 acres) parcel of Crozes-Hermitage on the plane of Le Chassis, in Beaumont-Montoux. The "lieudit" (name of the vineyard) is "Les Pichères". The soil consists of pliocene era clay, covered with alluvial stones (Galets roulés). After harvest, the grapes were 100% destemmed before undergoing a cold pre-fermentation, followed by a temperature-controlled maceration. Only natural, wild yeasts, were used for fermentation. The wine was aged in 500 liter barrels (demi-muid) for 12 months before bottling. Her Crozes-Hermitage is neither fined nor filtered.

Tasting Notes: Natacha's 2009 Crozes-Hermitage is dense and concentrated. Even with this concentration of fruit, she was able to maintain a beautiful balance in the wine. The Crozes is deep, dark, purple in the glass, with a rich black cherry and blackberry nose. In the mouth the intense black fruit flavors mingle with hints of black pepper, and soft ripe tannins. While this is a wine that could be cellared for several years, the rich fruit flavors also make it enjoyable now.

