

Guigal Hermitage: A Vertical

Once again we seek to start our autumn tastings with an extraordinary red wine event. We will enjoy the wines from the famous Hermitage appellation in the southern Rhône valley. It has been suggested by some scholars that the Hermitage hill has been planted with Syrah since 600BC! Though the evidence is circumstantial, if it is true, this vinous slope would be the oldest in the Rhône valley and, therefore, in the whole of France. The appellation's name traces back to a thirteenth century legend. As the story goes, the Knight Gaspard de Stérimberg upon returning from a religious crusade found this bit of geography entrancing. There was no building on the site, so he applied to the then Queen of France, Blanche of Castille, for permission to build a retreat. Permission granted, the knight occupied this simple structure as a hermit (**ermite** in French) for nearly thirty years. The chapel, built in honour of St. Christopher still stands at the top of the Hermitage hill and is the visual icon for the appellation. The modern appellation was established in 1937. The high cost of Hermitage wine is based on quality, historical precedence and the finite boundaries of the tiny hill itself. The words "over-supply" are not in the winery's vocabulary.

Guigal is a recent addition to the old houses of the Rhône. It was incorporated in 1946 by the patriarch Étienne who worked an incredible 65 harvests as a vigneron and cellar master until his death at 79 years old. Late harvesting and a model of high fruit extraction are signatures of this house. These rich, dark, Syrah-based wines are described by our famous producer as "powerful and tannic wine with aromas of blackcurrant buds and vanilla. A spicy finish with licorice. A racy and seductive wine. A perfect wine for putting down". (There is a dispensation for up to 15% Marsanne to be added to the blend as some unplanned white grapes have made their way into the vineyards in historic plantings. Marsanne's high glycerin content is said to have a positive effect on Syrah by adding a measure of richness to the mouth feel.)

Our plans to present a Guigal Hermitage vertical going back to 1976 were temporarily interrupted by the LCBO not importing any of this wine for over 5 years – only resuming this year. We believe that our wines have been "put down" for sufficient time to reveal their secondary aroma secrets and shed their tannic cloaks. The vintage lineup is as follows 1976, 1978, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1996 and 2003 (RP94).

As always with our tastings, this event will be strictly non-smoking, and we request your cooperation in not wearing any scented after-shave or perfume.

Date: Wednesday, September 8, 2010
 Time: 6:30 p.m.
 Limit: 122 people

North York Memorial Community Hall
 5110 Yonge St. (under library)
 North York Centre Subway

Cancellations accepted up to September 3, 2010 — David Hutchison (416-690-0281 **evenings**). **No reservations by phone, please.** No confirmations will be issued — you will be contacted only if we are sold out. First come basis. Non-members may attend at guest rates, but preference will be given to members.

You can register online using a credit card at www.winetasters.ca, or send in this form with a cheque.

Tear and Enclose

Cheque payable to:
 Winetasters Society of Toronto
 c/o Dave Hutchison
 270 Glen Manor Drive West
 Toronto, Ontario
 M4E 2Y2

Names: _____

Phone: (____) _____ W (____) _____

Cheque Enclosed for: Guigal Hermitage

Yes, I wish to sit at a New Members Table with an expert to answer my questions.

_____ Members @ 51.00 each _____
 _____ Guests @ 81.00 each _____

Total _____

Attention All Members

At the first tasting of our 2010/2011 season we will be holding our elections for this year's Board of Directors.

The following members of WINETASTERS have agreed to stand for election and ask for your support:

Peter Curran

Steven Elphick

Richard Flack

Alan Gardner (Chair)

David Hutchison

Michael Johnston

Charles Orchard

Walter Pylypczuk

Peter Woods

This allows us an nine-member Board of Directors for this year in accordance with our club by-laws.

If there are any other members wishing to stand for election, they must be nominated by an existing member and present themselves before September 1, 2010.