

# Woodshed Rhones Wines

## Edmunds St John

1. Edmunds StJohn Viognier (Alban/Durell vnyds) 1997:
2. Edmunds StJohn Los Robles Viejos (RozetVnyd) 2000:
3. Edmunds StJohn Heart of Gold (WylieVnyd) 2010:
4. Edmunds StJohn Les Cotes Sauvages NV (1988):
5. Edmunds StJohn Les Cotes Sauvages 1999 (en magnum):
6. Edmunds StJohn Les Cotes Sauvages 1992:
7. Edmunds StJohn Syrah (DurellVnyd) 1995:
8. Edmunds StJohn Syrah (BassettiVnyd) 2005:

# Qupe

1. **Qupe Marsanne 2000:**
2. **Qupe Marsanne 2013:**
3. **Qupe Roussanne (BienNacidoVnyd) 2006:**
4. **Qupe Roussanne (BienNacidoVnyd) 2011:**
5. **Qupe Syrah Sonnie's (Sawyer-LindquistVnyd) 2011**
6. **Qupe Syrah Hillside (BienNacidoVnyd) 2006:**
7. **Qupe Syrah (BienNacidoVnyd) 1999:**

## Some Qupe Reviews (RP via Larry Archibald)

### **2011 Marsanne**

Not reviewed by RP

### **2000 Marsanne**

The 2000 Marsanne/Roussanne (76% of the former and 24% of the latter) is a crisp, medium-bodied, pleasant effort revealing notes of citrus and stone fruits, but it is essentially simple as well as short. The wine should be consumed over the next 12 months. 85 points.

[This review was for the Marsanne/Roussanne blend from Ibarra Young and Stolpman Vineyards]

### **2011 Roussanne – Bien Nacido**

Not reviewed by RP

### **2006 Roussanne - Bien Nacido**

Not reviewed by RP

### **2011 Sonnie's Syrah - Sawyer Lindquist**

Jed Dunnuck: Showing a similar focused, lightly textured and medium-bodied style, the 2011 Syrah Sawyer Lindquist Vineyard Sonnie's possesses impressive aromatics of white pepper, venison, game and assorted dark fruits. While I love the complexity, it lacks a smidge of depth on the palate and has bright acidity, moderate richness and a clean finish. Plan on drinking bottles over the coming 3-5 years. 89 points. Reviewed in August 2014. [He gave the 2010 92 pts., and Galloni, while working for TWA, gave the 2009 89 pts.]

### **2006 Syrah - Bien Nacido Hillside**

RP: A Crozes-Hermitage look-alike, the 2006 Syrah Bien Nacido Vineyard Hillside Estate exhibits notes of graphite, tapenade, damp earth, and black cherries in its medium-bodied, earthy, spicy personality. The other wines came across as superficial, with little depth and texture. While pleasant, given this estate's talent and experience, I expected something more interesting. 89 points.

### **1999 Syrah - Bien Nacido**

Not reviewed by RP; all other vintages (9) given 85 to 91 points

Where's the Beef, by Jeb Dunnuck: "The **2011 Roussanne Bien Nacido Hillside Estate** is a medium-bodied, juicy, fresh and lightly concentrated effort that had me asking, "Where's the beef?" Showing pretty citrus blossom, poached pears, white flowers and subtle toasty, nutty nuances on the finish, it should be better in another year, but I question how much pleasure this will ever actually deliver. 88 points." [Reviewed August 2014.]

By contrast, here's **my review** of that wine, from February 17th, 2016 at Tom's house: "Medium yellow; fabulous, big fat Roussanne nose -- classic; same in the mouth, even with that [only] 13% ETOH, big fat oily mouth feel. Yum! Good acid, too, and some spice. 1-1/2 stars [roughly 92-93 pts.]" I.e., plenty of beef. Of course, I had the advantage of the extra year and a half, but reviewers are supposed to be able to anticipate that kind of evolution.

Jeb did not review the 2011 Marsanne, but here's what he said about the 2013: "The **2013 Marsanne Santa Barbara County (75% Marsanne and 25% Roussanne)** is similar in style to the Viognier, with a focused, fresh straightforward personality. Giving up lemony fruits, lemon curd, white flowers and hints of toasted nuts, enjoy this medium-bodied, easy-drinking white over the coming 4-5 years. 88 points."

And the **2012**: "Another interesting wine that will age, yet might not dish out too much pleasure at the end of the

day, the **2012 Marsanne** is juicy and tangy, with green apple, melon, crushed stone, mineral and leafy herbs to go with a medium-bodied, juicy palate. I like the purity here and it is beautifully balanced, with the capacity to evolve for 15 years or more. Acid heads will enjoy this even more than me. Drink 2015-2026. 87 points."

There seems to be a theme here: These may be well-made wines, but you're not likely to enjoy 'em much! Couldn't disagree more. I got six bottles of the 2011 Roussanne through Tom. I think I'll have to get younger fast in order to enjoy them at their peak.

Larry A

## **Some Edmunds StJohn Notes** (from Steve Edmunds) **2016 WOODSHED WINGDING**

Here are the wines from Edmunds St. John for this august occasion:

**1997 VIOGNIER "ALBAN/DURELL"** John Alban offered me some Viognier grapes in '97, and it's the only fruit he ever offered me so I took my best shot with it. When the grapes arrived they were being fussed over by a significant number of small Central Coast ants, which made me a little nervous, since I'd had a wine ruined by the cadavers of ants a few years earlier. However, after spending a few hours in my gentle membrane press they seemed pretty much unfazed, though they were no doubt disappointed to have been separated from all those sweet grapes.

'97 was also the second, and last year that Durell Vineyard produced any Viognier grapes at all. They didn't end up being enough of a tax deduction to warrant the effort and expense of growing them, though they did make nice wine. In the blend they added some savor to the piquancy of the Alban fruit, and a bit of fat.

I don't remember how this wine was received in Monkton. I remember enjoying it a few times, and wish I could be there to drink it with you all. Cheers!

**2000 LOS ROBLES VIEJOS WHITE** 2000 was the first year that Rozet Vineyard (now Derby Estate) yielded any grapes. It was the first chance I'd ever had to work with Roussanne, and with grapes grown in limestone soils. What I remember most vividly about producing this wine is that I'd spent the three days just prior to the beginning of harvest (Viognier, about ½ of this blend) flat on my back recovering from my back having gone into spasm.

I was excited about these grapes, and liked the way they played off each other. It seemed to me when the wine went into bottle it was pretty nicely balanced, and might possibly do fairly well over the long haul. I hope it's true!

**2010 HEART OF GOLD** This is the last vintage of Heart Of Gold that we made from the Wylie Vineyard. Wylie had sold his land to B J Rome a year or two before we got Vermetino and Grenache Blanc planted there. Turns out there were some strange goings-on in that neck of the woods, involving some sort of cult activity, and Ms. Rome kept changing the combination on the lock on her gate, which made it pretty hard for Ron Mansfield to take care of the vineyard. After a couple of years of that, things came to a head during the harvest of 2010 when Ron showed up at 6 one morning with a picking

crew, and couldn't get in to pick the grapes for several hours. Hard to believe she's now in the hospitality business!

Lots of Vermentino in this one, and it's still lively and fun to drink.

**1989 LES COTES SAUVAGES** Here we've got Mourvedre from the old vines at Brandlin Ranch, on Mt. Veeder, plus some Mourvedre from Pato, in the San Joaquin Delta sand in Oakley, Grenache from Gibson Ranch in McDowell Valley, and Syrah from Durell Vineyard, in Sonoma, and Fenaughty Vineyard, in Placerville, and a bit of old Carignan, from Brandlin, and even a couple of boxes of Cinsault from Brandlin.

The '89 is the first vintage of Les Cotes Sauvages I'd made about which I felt confident that I really had a strong sense of knowing what I was doing. It wasn't something I had any sort of concise explanation for, at the time, but more an intuitive sense of how to interact with my raw material. More than anything, I think, I'd internalized an appreciation for the importance of freshness in wine made from grapes with the kind of ripeness we get in California. Completely ignored by Monktown. Of course.

**1990 LES COTES SAUVAGES (N/V CUVÉE WAHLUKE)** Grenache from the Wahluke Slope in Washington State, and from Pallini Vineyard in Ukiah. Mourvedre from Brandlin, Carignan from Brandlin, Syrah from Durell and Fenaughty.

I'd had a bottle of a Grenache wine made from these grapes in 1988 by a winery in Zillah, WA, that reminded me of some of the wines I'd drunk from the Northern Vaucluse, and decided to try my hand with them. I liked the result sufficiently that I wanted to see if I could work a bit more closely with the grower in '91, to get a better handle on the fruit, but in December of 1990 the entire planting was killed by the hard freeze we came to know hereabouts as the Siberian Express. 5 or six days in Berkeley with temperatures in the upper teens and low 20's. Pipes bursting under our house, all that good stuff.

**1992 LES COTES SAUVAGES** '92 was a warm year. Everything that year was MONKTOWN BIG! I felt like I'd finally gotten the kind of spice in Grenache that calls to mind Chateauneuf, and the Mourvedre from Brandlin was breathtaking in '92. All the fruit was exceptional, and when we first bottled the LCS, it was intoxicating! Part of the explanation, of course, was all the alcohol! And after a couple of years in bottle I found that aspect of it bothersome. It had fallen out of balance, to my palate. It's taken all this time to pull itself back in, and a bottle I had a few days ago was lovely, and still vigorous, and, for all it's age, still fresh.

**1995 DURELL VINEYARD SYRAH** At the time the '95 Durell was bottled, I thought it might be the finest thing I'd ever put into bottle. For all the expected power, and intensity, there was also great subtlety and restraint. It was persuasive without being loud.

In a tasting I attended of '95s from CA and Northern Rhone, it was behind only Chave Hermitage., and not by much. I hope it's still showing well!

**2005 BASSETTI VINEYARD SYRAH** The last Bassetti Syrah for us. Not by choice; Ellis Bassetti

decided he wanted to make all his grapes into wine himself. They were amazing grapes. I can't begin to predict how long this wine will go. I don't expect to outlive it. I wish, sometimes, I'd had a few more vintages to work with this fruit.

I'm sorry not to be present at this event; I had a great time at the one last year. One of the things that makes me sorry is not getting to taste Bob's wines. They've always been reminders, to me, of how transcendent wine can be when you combine great quality fruit, and the focus of attention of someone who's truly and completely engaged in the moment with the task before him, and who brings to bear, in that moment, the reverence and respect for the great work and devotion of the masters who came before him.

Thanks so much to Tom for putting this together, and for any and all the behind the scenes work, and to Ken for getting my wines there. Best to all

Steve

## A Brief History of Woodshed Rhones

This is a celebration of the wines of Qupe and Edmunds St John. Some years ago, Steve Edmunds was badly savaged by Parker in the Wine Advocate for the decline in quality of his Rhone style wines. Not long after that, Bob Lindquist was also taken to task by Parker for not making his Rhone wines in a style that appealed to a Monkton palate. I chided both Bob & Steve for being sent to the Monkton Woodshed and admonished them to change their style of winemaking for a greater appeal in Monkton. Which they have not (yet) done, alas.

Both Bob & Steve make wines that show a high degree of elegance and balance...wines that I have followed from the very start. They are not low-acid/high-alcohol/loads of new French oak/highly-extracted wines that appeal to that certain kind of palate. They are not show-boaty/flashy kind of Rhones and are often under rather underwhelming upon release. They really need some age to show their pedigree. Unless you've followed these wines closely and understand that, you are unlikely to "get" how really good these wines can be. I think Parker and Dunuck just don't understand these wines because of that. Amateurs doing a pro's job.

Last year, afore Rhone Rangers 2015, Bob & Steve agreed to provide some of their Rhones from their respective libraries to illustrate how well they do with age. A group of irreverent wine geeks convened at the Baywolf Restaurant in Oakland to taste thru their wines. After each wine was poured, the Parker review was read by Patrick Comiskey. Waves of laughter would sweep up & down the table as the Parker note was compared to what was in our glass. Truly, some folks just don't "get" the wines of Qupe and EdmundsStJohn.

## T-Shirt Order Form

If you would like to order a T-Shirt with the Woodshed Rhones cartoon on the front and the back labeled:

Woodshed Rhones 2016  
Bob Lindquist  
Steve Edmunds

fill in the order form below. Color will be a light Dodger blue. Cost will be whatever my cost. There will be a 4XL version sent to Monkton. Many thanks to Laura Chancellor for the graphics design.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Size: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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