

## CHÂTEAU LA NERTHE PRESS FILE

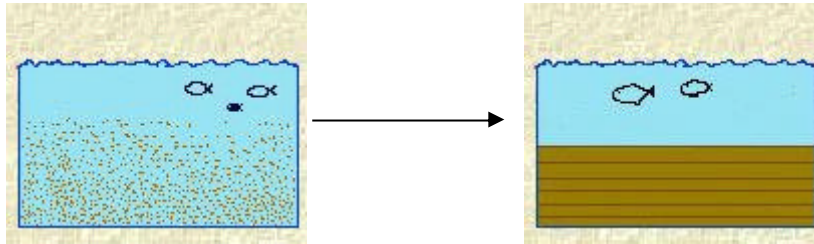


## TABLE OF CONTENTS

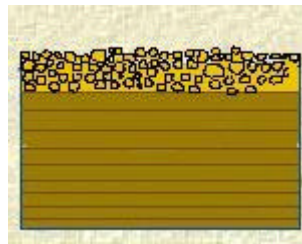
<u>THE TERROIR OF CHATEAUNEUF AND CHÂTEAU LA NERTHE</u>	<u>3</u>
(Pronounced: La Nairt)	
<u>THE HISTORY OF CHATEAUNEUF DU PAPE AND LA NERTHE</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>THE GRADUAL REGLEMENTATION OF WINE</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF CHÂTEAU LA NERTHE</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>THE ART OF LA NERTHE</u>	<u>13</u>
The winyard	13
Harvests	14
The cellars	14
Wine-making	15
Aging the wine	16
Blending	16
Brandy	17
Bottling and storage	17

## THE TERROIR OF CHÂTEAUNEUF AND CHÂTEAU LA NERTHE

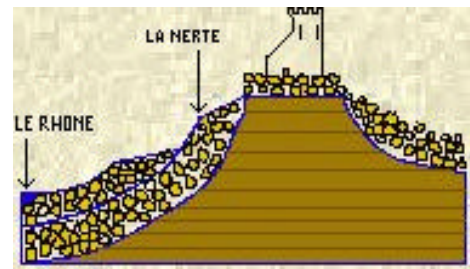
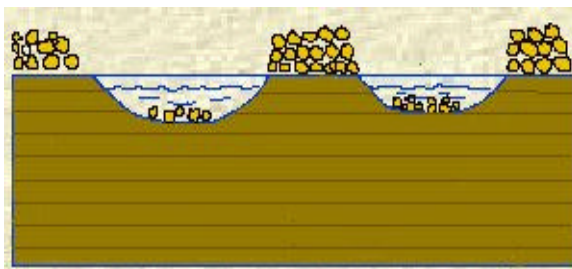
Seventy million years ago, a shallow sea covered this region. Its sedimentation produced bedrock of sand, clay and limestone. During the Ice Age, rushing waters from melting Alpine glaciers dug into the sedimentary rock to shape the Rhone valley.



The waters carried along stones that had been ripped from the mountains and polished them into small flat rocks. Further south, where the land was flatter and the river widened, the current slowed down, leaving rocks to settle on the bedrock.



When the waters receded, the rock rose to the surface. During four more cycles, glaciers formed and melted. Each time, they ripped away rocks from the Alps, and transported them into the valleys. Alternating periods of sedimentation and erosion formed alluvial terraces. The current terroir is thus composed of rocky slopes of clay and sand, rising above the Rhône river.



While it is difficult to grow wine in such soils, the rocks do help ripen the berries, since they store heat during the day and warm the vines at night. They also allow water to penetrate into the soil, reducing stagnation and disease.

The dry, warm Mediterranean summer provides an ideal climate for growing, with intense heat and little water. More than 200 days of sunshine help late-maturing varieties of grapes. Average rainfall is 25 to 30 inches a year, with spring and autumn rains providing reserves of water against summer dryness. Typically, there is one downpour in mid-August to foster growth. The famous Mistral wind blows fiercely for about 120 days a year, whistling down from the north. Although its intensity threatens young shoots and its chill hinders fertilization and ripening, the mistral also has virtues. Since it is a dry wind, it prevents mold and mushrooms from growing after rainstorms and keeps the berries from becoming diluted by retaining too much water.



## **THE HISTORY OF CHÂTEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE AND LA NERTHE**

Grapevines have existed in this region since the Gauls and were further developed by the Romans, who left behind remains of ancient Roman jugs in the section of La Nerthe known as the Clos de Beauvenir. Early on, this site organized as a privileged place, with just the right altitude above the river, excellent exposure to the sun, a freshwater spring. The village of Châteauneuf itself is almost a thousand years old. The first historical mention of it dates back to 1094 A.D., when it was called “Castro Novo”, or new fortified village, the origin of its modern name. In 1157 the German Emperor, Frederick Barbarossa, gave Châteauneuf and the surrounding area to the Bishop of Avignon. The first specific references of Châteauneuf vines appear in this period. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the town was called “Châteauneuf-calcernier”, because of the ground limestone, or calcernier, which was one of its earliest products.

In 1308 Pope Clement V set up a rival papacy and moved the seat of the Catholic Church from Italy to France. For the next 70 years, Avignon was home to nine successive popes:

- ❖ Clement V (1305-1314)
- ❖ John XXII (1316-1334)
- ❖ Benedict XII (1334-1342)
- ❖ Clement VI (1342-1352)
- ❖ Innocent VI (1352-1362)
- ❖ Urban V (1362-1370)
- ❖ Gregory XI (1370-1378)
- ❖ Clement VII (1378-1394)
- ❖ Benedict XIII (1394-1424)

Two of these popes were important for viticulture: John XXII planted vines and built the castle of Châteauneuf, whose ruins still exist. After the castle was destroyed by the Huguenots in the 16<sup>th</sup> century religious wars, it was used as a quarry until World War II, when it was dynamited by the Germans. Urban V was the second pope to have

contributed to wine-making, by introducing Counoise grapes into the region. Even after the Popes moved back to Rome, Châteauneuf remained the property of the Avignon Bishops until the French Revolution.

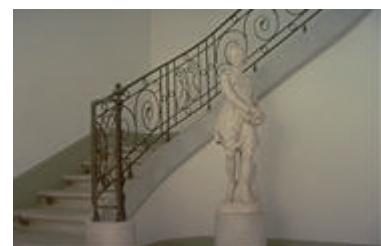
As early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Châteauneuf produced three types of wine: red, white, and light red wine that was somewhere between red and rosé. At this time, La Nerthe was called Beauvenir, and belonged to the Tulle de Villefranche family, who had come to France from Piedmont, Italy. The modern name of the domain was given by one of the four brothers, who was Prior of Notre Dame de la Galline on the plateau of La Nerthe near Marseille. By the mid 18<sup>th</sup> centuries wines from La Nerthe were already being sold in London, Moscow and America! In 1782, Darluc wrote in his History of Provence: "The best wines are produced in the Clos de La Nerthe... they have a velvety texture and charm. The time to drink them is in their perfect maturity, when they are three to four years old." In 1784, La Nerthe wine was already being bottled on the estate.

The marquis of Tulle de Villefranche, owner of La Nerthe at the time, was one of the first to make Châteauneuf famous around the world, through an extended network of retailers. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Châteauneuf wine was already one-third more costly than the wine of neighboring villages, and when a local poet named Anselm Mathieu established a price list of all the different Châteauneuf wines in 1850, he found that La Nerthe was the most expensive. It was also considered the best. As early as 1822, Julian's Inventory of all the known vineyards ranked La Nerthe as a "first class wine", ahead of all the other Châteauneuf.



A description of local wine-producing methods, published in 1860, includes many techniques that are still used at La Nerthe : meticulous removal of all stems from the grape clusters, crushing of the grapes, and a vatting time of 15 to 18 days. In this same era, the wine from La Nerthe was described as having: "A beautiful color, great finesse, freshness, a lightly pungent flavor, and distinctive bouquet".

Around 1870, the vineyard was destroyed, along with almost all European vines, by the Phyloxera disease. The Tulle de Villefranche family sold the property, which was one of the five major domains of Châteauneuf, to Commander Joseph Ducos, an alumnus of France's prestigious engineering school. At a time when every one else was pulling out vines to plant fruit trees, Joseph Ducos, presciently saw the possibility of keeping his



rootstocks and grafting on Phyloxera-resistant varieties. Using this method, he quickly reconstituted the entire La Nerthe vineyard, which won a gold medal in 1891 from the Chambre d'Agriculture of the Vaucluse region. Although Ducos' neighbors watched, initially, with astonishment or disdain, they soon imitated him, and French president Lebrun later cited Ducos as "the soul of the viticultural restoration". In 1893, the village was renamed "Châteauneuf-du-Pape", at the instigation of Ducos, who was mayor at the time. He went on to become deputy of the Vaucluse region, president of the first wine syndicate of Châteauneuf, president of the Chambre d'Agriculture of Vaucluse, creator of the Pierrelatte canal, and even a poet.

At La Nerthe, Joseph Ducos researched different types of grapes. Experimenting with 10 varieties, he determined the specific flavor and ideal quantity each one could bring to a blend. He noted for example, that Grenache and Cinsault offered "alcohol, warmth and mellowness" and should constitute up to 20 % of the blend. More than a century ago, he already realized that a small portion of Grenache best expresses the terroir of La Nerthe. Mourvèdre, Syrah, Muscardin and Camarese ( also called Vaccarese) bring "strength, aging potential, freshness, and a thirst-quenching taste", and should constitute 40 %. Counoise and Picpoul provide charm, freshness and bouquet, and a special winey taste, termed vinosity, for another 30 % of the blend. The white grapes, Clairette and Bourboulenc, in a proportion of 10 %, bring finesse, warmth and brilliance to red wine. All these grape varieties are approved under the strict regulations that govern which wines may carry the prestigious label, A.O.C, Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée. Ducos himself is said to have introduced at least three of these varieties – Cinsault, Roussanne, and Camarese – into the region.



Another of Ducos' innovations was to vinify the different varieties together from the beginning, in the tank, as soon as they were harvested. We still do it in La Nerthe. Ducos' unique blending soon brought renown and success to La Nerthe and was imitated by many vintners. Others, in contrast, chose to produce more "medicinal-tasting" wines that sold well in Burgundy to supplement their wines. Châteauneuf-du-Pape had resisted this trend in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, at a time when the rest of the region was captivated by the arrival of the Grenache in 1820 and planted it in abundance, to increase the alcohol content of their vintage. The wines they produced were heavy, high in alcohol, and had a tendency to oxidize. By the 20<sup>th</sup> century, even some producers in Châteauneuf had succumbed to the high yield of a heavier, less subtle wine – a practice denounced by Baron Le Roy de Boiseaumarié in 1939.

During World War II, La Nerthe was requisitioned by the Germans. Bunkers were installed in the garden and bombs damaged the buildings. After years of neglect, the property was brought in 1985 by the Richard Family. It is 225 acres large and one of the

369 individual domains that constitute the Châteauneuf region, which itself has 8 125 acres of vines.

La Nerthe has always been one of the most prestigious wines of Châteauneuf, in the avant-garde of progress. At crucial junctures, it has benefited from the arrival of new owners bringing fresh ideas into the region. The pioneering innovations have often become standard practice, including the implantation of new varieties, grafting, aging in barrels, and the most recently, «pigeage», the practice of punching down the grapes in the tank. For more than a century, La Nerthe has stressed the complex blending of noble varieties which age well. What is often mistakenly called the traditional “Châteauneuf-du-Pape” is, in fact, a highly alcoholic Grenache blend, low in tannin, and quickly impregnated with the scent of leather and animals, that dates from after the Phylloxera epidemic. It should really be called “Post-Phylloxera Châteauneuf”. Château La Nerthe is dedicated to traditional wine making as it was practiced long before the phylloxera.

## **THE GRADUAL REGLEMENTATION OF WINE**

As early as 1727, François Maurice de Gonteris, Archbishop of Avignon, wrote to the leaders of Châteauneuf asking them to stop premature harvesting and to wait for an officially authorized date to decree when the grapes were fully ripe. In 1801, the city council forbade making Châteauneuf with grapes from any other village. This emphasis on the distinctive role of the individual *terroir* in the style, marked the beginnings of the strict laws that would govern French wines. It was also a sign of Châteauneuf's success that it had inspired fraudulent imitations which needed to be controlled by legislation! Laws of August 1, 1905, and May 6, 1919, formally regulated the source of the grapes and the definition of Châteauneuf.

In the 1920s and 30s, Baron Le Roy de Boiseaumarié, a lawyer and owner of the Château Fortia, worked to constitute a model which has since been crowned with success. His efforts led to the creation of the National Institute for the Appellation d'Origine, INAO, in 1934, and to the first decree of Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée, A.O.C, defining the place of the origin and the standards that must be met for a wine to be labeled with an Appellation. There are now 400 AOC in France, all based on this model, although few are as strict as Châteauneuf-du-Pape's. Provisions of the A.O.C decree govern the following areas of wine making:

1. The definition of lands that are eligible to carry the A.O.C distinction, in Châteauneuf and some neighboring districts.
2. The 13 grape varieties which are allowed, in proportions determined by the vintner: Black and White Grenache, Syrah, Mourvèdre, Picpoul, Terret, Counoise, Muscardin, Vaccarèse ( also called Camarèse), Picardan, Cinsault, Clairette, Roussanne, Bourboulenc. In practice, there are four principal varieties used in red wine. Grenache offers mellowness, alcohol, and pleasant aromas (cherry, leather, ...) but is difficult to grow and vinify, because of its low yield, susceptibility to mold, and tendency to oxydize. Syrah provides color, tannins, aging capacity, and intense aromas violets, blackberries and truffles. Mourvèdre brings tannins and excellent aging capacity to the wine. Cinsault is a source of fruitiness and elegance. Grenache, Syrah and Cinsault ripen at about the same time, while Mourvèdre matures later. The other grape varieties, even in small proportions, offer depth and complexity to the wine. Counoise gives a hint of pepper. Among the white grapes, White Grenache is a source of alcohol; Clairette offers floral aromas; Bourboulenc gives freshness; Roussanne gives aromatic intensity. In short, no single variety can offer a well-balanced, subtle wine. That is why Châteauneuf is a blended wine, whose components have evolved over centuries.
3. The yield of the vines is regulated by the A.O.C provisions. Vines are drastically pruned to limit their growth.

4. Irrigation is banned, except in severe drought, and even then, must be done before August 15 so as not to slow the ripening process.
5. Sugar may be added only in unfavorable seasons, to reach a minimum alcohol content of 12.5 % by volume.
6. Only red and dry white wines are authorized.
7. In a practice unique to France, green or rotten grapes must be sorted and removed. This precludes mechanized harvesting, which gathers all grapes indiscriminately. The percentage of excluded grape ranges from 5 % to 20 % depending on the year. They are used to produce the ordinary, low-quality wine known as *râpé*.
8. Vines younger than four years old, may not be labeled as A.O.C since they are insufficiently mature.
9. The yield is limited to 2.6 tons per acre (35 hl/hectare), or 3.2 tons (42 hl/hectare) including the *râpé*. This is the severest limitation in France, based on the tenet “less is better”.

At the heart of one of the strictest legislation in the world, La Nerthe imposes even more restrictions upon its own production, especially in terms of yield, which it limits to 2 tons per acre (25-28 hl/hectare). The principle is one bottle of wine per vine. By comparison, the ratio is twice as high in Bordeaux and four times as high in Alsace.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF CHÂTEAU LA NERTHE

Director, Alain DUGAS, began his professional career in Paris before coming to the Domaine de la Renjarde in Provence. He acquired his particular expertise in Châteauneuf-du-Pape by collaborating with Dr. Philippe DUFAYS, a specialist in local grape varieties and owner of the Domaine de Nalys. In 1985, with fifteen years' experience, he was named director of Château La Nerthe. Since then, he has guided the course of the domain.



One of La Nerthe's goals is to ensure the right balance of alcohol content and tannins. This begins in the vineyards. By long tradition, and to avoid the errors that have given some Châteauneuf-du-Pape wines the reputation of being heavy, high in alcohol, and prone to oxydizing, La Nerthe favors varieties with high aging potential, notably Syrah and Mourvèdre. The yields at La Nerthe are purposely low in order to produce highly concentrated grapes.

Another key policy is to blend the different varieties, from the beginning in the vats. Just as no chef would conceive of cooking vegetables separately for a casserole, so the wine makers at La Nerthe believe in bringing the grapes together early so their flavors can intermingle. This produces a clearly recognizable synergy of different grape varieties and a marriage of flavors that would be impossible to achieve by blending at later stage. Such blending is delicate, however, as it requires that all the grapes be equally mature, even though they ripen at different times. Part of the art of La Nerthe is to understand the particular timetable of each different parcel of land and each kind of grape, so they will achieve ripeness over a period of 10 days to two weeks. The cellar can accommodate all the grapes during this time span. About a hundred grape pickers harvest each parcel at the precise moment of ripeness. Grapes with high potential for aging do not always lend themselves to traditional methods of vinification. This is why La Nerthe introduced "pigeage" to Châteauneuf-du-Pape. This involves pushing down the solids which tend to float on the top of the vat, so their flavor is continually re-incorporated into the juice. Another process involves the fermentation of uncrushed grapes. Still another provides for fermentation in wooden vats. Air coming through the wood fosters a pre-aging of the tannins, while the gradual decrease in temperature after fermentation prolongs the process of extraction. Since 1964, La Nerthe has pioneered in the use of specially-designed wooden tanks equipped with pneumatic jacks for the "pigeage" (pimping-over). They will no doubt set another trend in Châteauneuf-du-Pape.

Grape varieties with a high aging potential also require special conditions for maturing. While the "traditional" 800-1600 gallon cask is adequate for Grenache, it is not appropriate for the precious Mourvèdre and Syrah grapes from the most prestigious part of the appellation. This is why the richest wines are matured in barrels, to refine their

tannins while respecting the nature of the grapes. La Nerthe has reintroduced barrels to Châteauneuf, renewing with a hundred-year-old tradition.

All these choices come together in the wine glass. Wine is the result of concentrated grapes, perfect ripeness, a rich structure and appropriate vinification methods. It marries different flavors and varieties to give high-aging potential, mellowness, and subtle aromas of fruits and spices.

## **THE ART OF LA NERTHE**

The actual Château of La Nerthe was begun in 1694, with two towers and a chapel, and completed between 1736 and 1784. Restored in 1985, it is one of the most beautiful estates of the region. The terroir of La Nerthe is exceptional, and the entire process of wine making – from planting to bottling – is to enhance the potential of this terroir. Mature vines in perfect health with strictly controlled yield all reveal the true character of the land.

### **I) The vineyard**

La Nerthe's vineyard covers 225 acres (90 hectares) on a single terroir, whose soil is among the rockiest in the region. There are 160 acres (65 hectares) surrounding the château, and 65 acres (25 hectares), purchased in 1991, slightly to the north. Planting is divided into the following proportions:

Red grape varieties:

❖ Grenache	62 %
❖ Syrah	18 %
❖ Mourvèdre	15 %
❖ Cinsault	4 %
❖ Counoise, Muscardin, Vaccarèse and Picpoul	1 %

White grape varieties

❖ Clairette	28 %
❖ Bourboulenc	24 %
❖ White Grenache	16 %
❖ Roussanne	32 %

The typical yield is 2 to 2.5 tons per acre (25-30 hl/hectare), with a goal of one bottle per vine. Old vines are important for the richness of a wine because they produce fewer grapes, with an earlier maturity and a more regular quality. At La Nerthe, the average age of the vines is 40 years old.

The following practices help ensure success:

**Pruning:** The vine is pruned to 4-5 spurs of 2 buds each, except for Mourvèdre, which is pruned to 6 spurs with one bud. Syrah and white varieties are pruned to 6 spurs of 2 buds.

**De-budding:** All excess shoots are removed in the spring to ensure the long life of the roots, early ripening and healthy leaves. Vines are tied to wires along the rows for better ventilation, protection from disease, and defense against the Mistral. This practice gives the vines an appearance that has been dubbed Nerthitude.

**Thinning:** When the berries begin to color, some are removed so the remaining clusters can ripen better and faster.

**Care of the vineyard :** Dead or diseased rootstocks are systematically replaced. During replanting, parcels of land where rainwater tends to collect are equipped with drains. When land needs to be replanted because of age or disease, vines are removed and replaced, but otherwise they are preserved because older vines produce better quality wine, even if their yield is lower.

As much as possible, La Nerthe uses natural fertilizers. Since grapes ripen best when there is less greenery, nitrogen is not added to the soil, since the small amount present in rainwater is amply sufficient. Much plowing is required to aerate the soil and roots, to allow rain water to drain, and to eliminate weeds. Since 2000, the vineyard is certificated in organic growing ( Ecocert), no pesticides are used.

## **II ) Harvests :**

Grapes from different parts of the domain are analyzed throughout the season to monitor their progress and test for acidity, sugar content, PH balance, and phenol. This allows vintners to improve the color and tannins, adjust the harvest date, and choose the appropriate type of fermentation. The harvest is done entirely by hand, by a hundred grape pickers, based on the health of each different parcel of land. The pickers do a preliminary sorting as they harvest.



## **III ) The cellars :**

The harvest arrives on a conveyor belt to be sorted and destemmed. The juice then flows naturally, by gravity, to a pneumatic press in the cellar, one storey below. This cellar is equipped for a wide range of processes. Pumping-over or “pigeage” of crushed grapes in 6000-gallon (220 hl) stainless steel tanks; fermentation of uncrushed grapes; fermentation in wooden vats, and since 1994, wooden tanks with pneumatic «pigeage». Most of the equipment is new since 1986. All together, it can hold more than 90 000 gallons (3400 hl), which is amply sufficient for the annual production, and allows La Nerthe to keep grapes in the tanks for as long as necessary.



The aging cellar has a long history. The oldest part, carved into the rock, dates back to 1560. It contains some of the barrels and an impressive collection of bottles from every old vintage. It also houses the stone vats, whose four-foot-thick (1 m 20) walls are coated with resin to keep them clean and impermeable. Another part of the cellar, with an 18<sup>th</sup> century vaulted ceiling, contains casks and barrels. A third section, built in 1986, houses additional barrels.

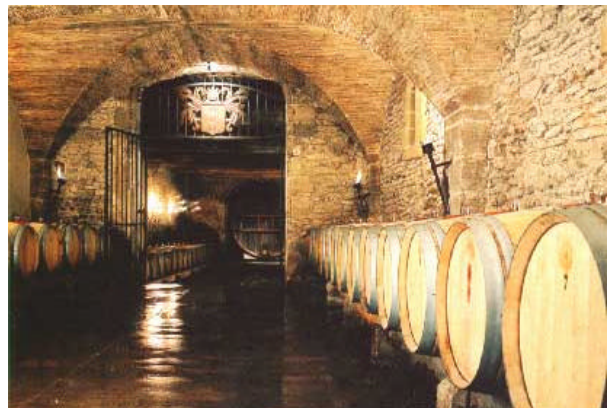
The cellar where wine bottles are stocked is not at the Château. But buried deep in the ground, on a slope, at the edge of a wood. It can hold almost two million bottles.

#### **IV ) Wine-making :**

Vinification results from decision of responsible for technical of La Nerthe and laboratory's Noël Rabot analyses. As soon as the harvest arrives in the cellar, it is sorted on a table or conveyer belt to eliminate unripe or rotten grapes. The rest then goes forward to the next steps. Whites wines, the grapes may undergo a light maceration to give mellowness and aroma to the juice, or they may be sent directly to the press. Pressing, or foulage, is done in a pneumatic press with moderate pressure. The solids from the must are allowed to settle in the tank. Then the juice is barrel fermented with the yeast of the terroir. The native yeasts of La Nerthe are considered to be a crucial part of the terroir. Grapes from certain parts of the domain, notably Roussanne and old Clairettes, are vinified in barrels and then aged in the same barrels. Others are vinified and aged in vats. To preserve their balance and freshness, the white wines do not undergo malolactic, or secondary, fermentation.



Reds wines have their own special processes. Except for the Cuvées, the entire harvest is destemmed since the skins have more tannin than the stems. The next steps are adapted to the specific traits of the grapes. Maceration can take place through crushing, pumping, «pigeage»; it can be done with uncrushed grapes, and can be done either in stainless steel or wooden tanks.



Fermentation takes place at about 80 degrees Fahrenheit (28°C) with a peak of about 90 degrees (30-35°C) towards the end. Heat opens the skin cells of the grapes, releasing tannins, anhtocyanin and the first hints of their aromas. From the beginning, frequent

tastings are done to follow the progress of the vintage. These help determine when the wine has extracted the best of the grapes and when to end the vatting.

The free-run juice is transferred from the tank, ideally by gravity, toward containers where malolactic fermentation takes place. For some wines, this means 16<sup>th</sup> century stone vats coated with epoxy resin. Insulated by four feet (1m20) of stone, the wine undergoes malolactic fermentation at lukewarm temperatures to encourage the initial aging of its tannins. For other wines, malolactic fermentation takes place in casks or barrels. The press juice is kept separate and does not contribute to the cuvée of Château La Nerthe, which contains only free run juice.

### **V) Aging the wine :**

White wines which have been vinified in barrels are aged in the same barrels, to result in the best blending with the wood. Generally they are aged for about twelve months. Red wines have five different possibilities of aging, depending on their type. Wines composed mainly of Grenache and Cinsault, with mellow tannins and fruity flavor, are aged in stone, in stainless steel or wooden vats, or in casks. Wines that are rich in tannins are aged in barrels for a year, which is the natural cycle of aging.

During the winter, following the harvest, the wine eliminates its unstable elements and becomes clear. In the spring and summer, the slight increase in the cellar's temperature helps release the tannins. The barrels are sealed with silicone plugs, which are more hermetic than wood or glass and reduce the evaporation of sulfur dioxide; this in turn reduces the amount of So<sub>2</sub> which must be added and the final amount present in the finished wine. Silicone plugs also keep the barrels from overflowing when atmospheric pressure drops, so the outside surfaces stay cleaner.



### **VI) Blending :**

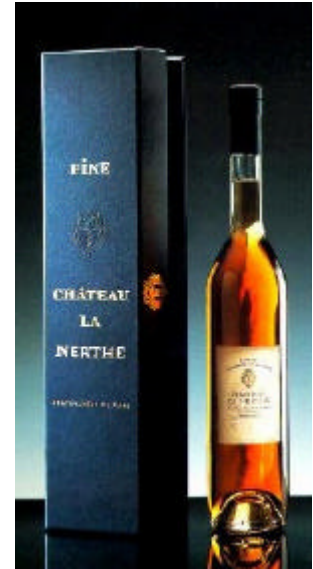
After the wine is aged, all the samples are tasted to determine which vintages will bear the Château La Nerthe label, which ones will be Clos de la Granierie, the second wine produced at La Nerthe. When quality warrants, part of the vintage is devoted to two exceptional cuvées: the Cuvée des Cadettes and the Clos de Beauvenir. The name Cuvée des Cadettes, first given by Commander Joseph Ducos to one of his vintages, in honor of a parcel of the La Nerthe property, was revived a century later, in 1986, for exceptional vintages. The word Beauvenir has an even longer history, dating back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century name of La Nerthe. These two vintages are made of rich and concentrated wines, with high-aging potential, superior mellowness and tannins, all of which have been

enhanced by the wood. They represent the truly great vintages and exceptional barrels, harvested on very special terroirs. White and red wine are 'terrio's wines'. They are the traditionals cuvée of La Nerthe. "Clos de Beauvenir" and "Cuvée des Cadettes" are specials cuvées cominf from exceptionals parcels, produced only on good year.

### **VII ) Brandy :**

La Nerthe has also revived the lost tradition of the Appellation Eau de Vie de Vin des Côtes du Rhône. The Château makes brandy by distilling wines. This Fine de Châteauneuf-du-Pape (pronounced FEEN) carries the prestigious Châteauneuf-du-Pape A.O.C (The fine is not to be confused with another kind of brandy, called marc, which comes from distilling the residues of pressing.)

Distillation is divided into three phases. In a second distillation, the first and last of the steam, known as the head and the tail, are discarded, and only the middle distillate, called the heart, is kept. This is the best part, with an alcohol content of 60 % of volume. It is then aged for a minimum of five years in oak barrels. The fraction that evaporates, which is known as "the angels' share", or "la part des anges" made naturally by the rising in the barrels. Contact with the wood yields a superb light oak color and a complex palette of aromas that included raisins, hazelnuts, rum and Port. The result is a harmonious balance with hints of oak, spices and butter.



### **VIII ) Bottling and storage :**

At the favorable time, the entire vintage is bottled at once, to ensure the same taste throughout the vintage. (Otherwise, some wines would continue to evolve while waiting to be bottled). Bottling takes place at the château under vacuum conditions. At first, bottles are left standing while the corks expand, then they are stocked horizontally in the underground cellar.

