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Domaine Belle Background

Winery: Domaine Belle

Country: France / Rhone

Region: Crozes-Hermitage

Founded: 1769 (wine production) / 1990 (domaine)

Annual Production: 20,000cs

Description: Domaine Belle started producing wine under its own label in 1990, although the property has been under vine since at least 1769. Guided by third-generation vigneron Philippe Belle, the domaine combines a deep understanding of its terroir with modern winemaking techniques and facilities. Domaine Belle is universally acclaimed as one of the stars of Crozes-Hermitage.

Wine Notes – 2018 Domaine Belle Crozes-Hermitage Les Pierrelles (Organic)

Les Pierrelles is Domaine Belle's most accessible cuvee. Made from grapes grown in the alluvial red clay and galets soils of the Pont D'Isere section of Crozes-Hermitage, the wine is meant to be enjoyed young and features a classic Syrah flavor profile of dark fruits and spice with a medium body. This critically acclaimed wine offers an extraordinary quality-to-price ratio.

Robert Parker
WINE ADVOCATE

– 90-93 points (Jan 31, 2020)

Technical Specifications

Varietal Composition:	100% Syrah
Vineyard Region:	Crozes-Hermitage (Pont D'Isere)
Vine Age / Yields:	35 years on average, 40 hl/ha
Production Volume:	5,800cs
Vineyard Characteristics:	Rounded pebbles (galets) on top of alluvial soils, south exposure
Wine-Making / Vinification:	Certified Organic farming, hand-harvested, destemmed grapes Cold-maceration, temperature-controlled fermentation in concrete tanks on skins for 3 weeks (on lees) with native yeast, daily pumpovers and punchdowns 14 mos aging in oak barrels (25% each 3-6 years old), 60ppm SO2
Alcohol / Volume:	14.5%
Residual Sugar:	0.0 g/L
Acidity:	3.1 g/L

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The 2018 Crozes Hermitage les Pierrelles made for a great start to my visit at this standout estate. It's grapey and intense, with hints of cedary wood accenting blueberry and blackberry fruit. It's full-bodied and supple, finishing lush and even a bit warm. It should be a lot of fun to drink as a young wine.

This stellar domaine suffered minimal losses to 2019's hailstorms, which bypassed the family's home village of Larnage. That portion of Crozes-Hermitage benefits from its white clay soils, which impart more power to the wines than the typical alluvial deposits found in much of the appellation. Philippe Belle and his son, Guillaume, also farm small parcels in Hermitage (Péléat for the white, Les Murets for the red) and Saint-Joseph. They generously opened a couple of bottles from 2009 to check in on their evolution. The Hermitage was particularly impressive. "I'm surprised at how much freshness it still shows," said Philippe. Note that reviews of the latest Hermitage offerings were published in December 2019.

90-93 Points