

**Forbes**

# The Best Provence Red Wines Ever

Nick Passmore - July 19, 2017



I have just drunk the best Provence red wine ever, from Chateau de Chausse. No, you heard correctly, best Provence red wine, not rosé.

This is due, primarily, to the foresight, or good luck, of a non-wine man, Charles Cohen. Merci indeed, M. Charles!

And that really means the best Provencal wine of any color because, however good a rosé, and whatever pretensions producers employ, it is, ultimately, a simple wine. Red wine, on the other hand, good red wine, is serious stuff.

Okay, a couple of things need to be explained before we move forward to the wines themselves. Firstly, when I say “best Provence red” I’m excluding the wines of Bandol, a kingdom unto itself that is geographically part of Provence, but completely removed from the Provence winemaking establishment.

Having set aside the splendid Bandols, we’re left with the fact that only about 10% of Provence’s production is red. Moreover, I’ve never drunk any red that is noteworthy. Generally unimpressive it is, so when I want a red while dining in Aix, for example, I’ll order something from further north, Gigondas or Luberon perhaps.

But Cohen’s wines are different, and have changed my whole take on Provence reds.

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He is a New Yorker, first a successful property developer, more recently a movie distributor. He and his wife Clo have been fans of wine for years, and love Provence too, so when Chateau de Chausse came on the market last year, they snapped it up, though I'm not sure how aware they were of the unique assets they have acquired.

Yes, the house is pretty and situated in a bucolic Provence location just a few K's west of Saint Tropez, but so what? That is special, lovely, but not unique.

"I'm not sure whether he realized the assets he acquired, the unique assets: wonderful old vines, some more than 25 years old, planted on perfect soil."



This is, perhaps, the greatest asset of the whole purchase: Laurence Berlemont, the consulting oenologist who worked for the previous owners and is staying on with the Cohens.

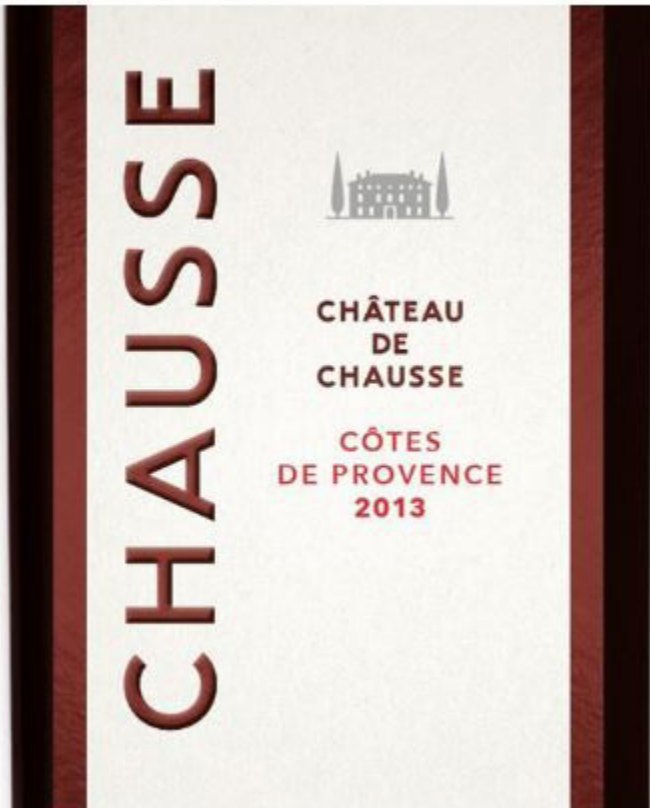
"Chausse really has a great terroir of schistes which make great reds. Very powerful and strongly body. We go along this potential with very précises technics as harvesting and sorting by hand the grapes, ferment a part in woods to make the tannins softer, a quite long aging (we sell them after 3 or 4 years only) before bottling."

Ideal terroir, super old vines, and inspired winemaker like this? That's how you get the best red wines in Provence.

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### **Chateau de Chausse Côtes de Provence Red 2007**

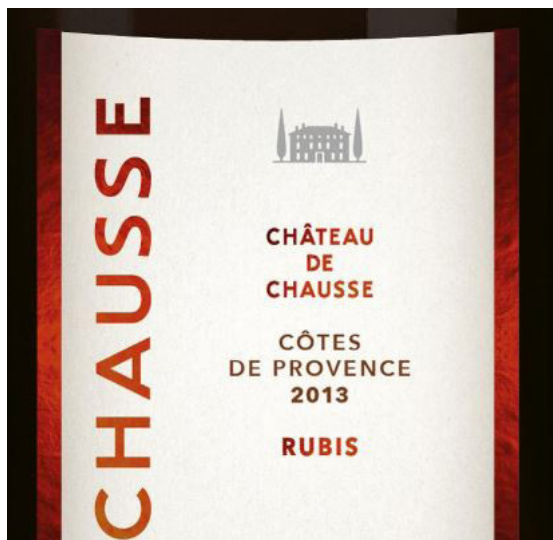
60% Syrah, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon

Shows a gloriously captivating nose promising a complexity of dark fruit, chocolate, hints of herbs de Provence (that's the Syrah), a minerally elegance (that's the Cab) all rolled into plush, pillowy luxury. Already 9 years old, and still just moving through adolescence.

### **Chateau de Chausse Côtes de Provence Red 2013**

50% Syrah, 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, \$33

The current release of the 2007 above, a baby version. Some enthusiastic criminals will drink it now, but they'll be an astounding waste. Unlike the 2007, which offers a gorgeous nose that it doesn't, yet, deliver on the palate, the 2013 remains closed across the board. Put it away for at least 10 years and you'll be gloriously rewarded.



### **Chateau de Chausse AOP "Rubis" Red 2013**

Côtes de Provence, 90% Syrah, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon, \$112

A meaty, earthy, mushroomy nose, a sun baked nose of dark chocolate and freshly roasted coffee but many years away from delivering the potential magnificence of the 26 year old vines.