

## Two Stunningly Aromatic and Dense Cote Roties from Long Time Fass Producer Billon: \$42.99/93-95 and \$57.99/94-96 Points

### **Les Elotins 2015**

- **Remarkable Nose - Densely Fruited and Mineral**
- **Rich, Ripe, Fresh Palate**
- **At \$42.99 I Challenge You To Find a Better Value in Cote Rotie**

### **Les Roziers 2015**

- **Flat Out Sensational - One of the Top Wines of the Vintage**
- **Remarkable Fruit But Incredibly Well Balanced**
- **A Blockbuster Wine and a Crazy Value at \$57.99**

My visit this past March with Christophe Billon was a continuation of my visit with him last March. It may sound confusing but it makes perfect sense. The 2015 Cote Roties that Christophe made are masterpieces. They eclipse his brilliant 2010s, the first vintage I sold and the first Cote-Rotie I ever sold at Fass Selections. I just drank my last bottle of the 2010 Les Elotins and it was a gorgeous bottle of wine and completely in the zone. They will age much longer but I will admit 2015 just crushes 2010. There is just more of everything in 2015. While 2010 is classic and compact 2015 is classic and compact AND has depths like no

other vintage I've ever come across. This is a bottomless well type of vintage. The depth is astounding and it is presented with stupefying framing acidity so it has that much more impact. The sweet spot is Cote -Rotie I believe as well. My tastings at Barge and Billon were massive highlights of my last trip. Two years ago when I first tasted Billon's wines out of barrels I was stunned how great and drinkable already the young 15's were. One could have bottled them up and drank them that night they were so giving at a young age. I was very excited to taste them a year later this past March to see if they lived up to my initial impression. They did and more! They got better. Deeper, more structured and just plain ridiculous. The depth really showed this March versus the ridiculous levels of baby fat fruit that showed so well 2 years ago. The fruit has still there yet it was buffered by strong structure. Today I've got two of his stunning 2015 Cote Roties. Both are limited. Both are stunning. Both have scored very high scores from Jeb Dunnuck of The Wine Advocate.



Up first is the 2015 Christophe Billon Cote Rotie "Les Elotins" which can be had for \$42.99 per bottle on a 4-pack. Jeb Dunnuck gave it 93-95 points. That's a value if I ever saw one. The wine is jaw dropping. The nose has huge minerals and huge fruit. So much black and red succulent fruits. Deep spice. What a nose. So many levels to the nose. Wafting aromas. As Christophe took each sample from the barrels he was smiling confidently as he knew he had gold. There is also a honeycomb/waffle component that is utterly compelling. The palate is just an experience. So rich and so ripe yet buffered by the most insane acid and freshness. You cannot believe how fresh, dark and big this is. But, above all, Cote Rotie is a wine of finesse and this has it in spades. The fruit is of the tiny berry style and just explodes in ones mouth. Stunning. So complex. So long and so much structure. This is a 20 year wine. It is 97% Syrah and 3% Viognier. Some is from Le Goutay, and also notable Combard where Gilles Barge makes a cuvée as well. This is all Cote Brune and as a result the wines are more structured and intense and also will age beautifully, but also needs that time. Below is JLL's review as for some reason the review on the Wine Advocate site is for the La Brocarde. This is limited. Below that is JLL's 4 1/2 star review. I love when they both agree.

2015 \*\*\*\* (\*), (casks) full, dark red. The bouquet gives a perfumed, violets air above its black berry fruit, is a full, harmonious start. The palate bears savoury content, with a juicy welling up on the second half, with enjoyable blackberry fruit at its centre. The finish is also well juiced, with fine tannin present. This is an accurate vintage 2015, sensuous Rôtie, with good detail and an unforced style. 13.5°. 6,000 b. €21. From mid-2018. 2032-34 Oct 2016 Previously Apr 2016 \*\*\*\* two parts tasted 1) 2-year 228-litre cask, southern zone from own vineyards on Le Goutay, Combard, 60% of the wine \*\*\*(\*) shiny dark red robe. The nose has an elegant roundness, gives a raspberry, coulis style aroma, has a gentle depth. The palate gives a precise run of red berry fruit, clear tannins adding late breeze; there is a show of oak, too. This builds depth on the finish, is a crystalline wine. From 2020. 2032-33 2) 2 year 228-litre cask, rented vineyards on Les Moutonnes & Côte Baudin, 40% of the wine \*\*\*\* shiny dark red. The nose is beau, gives raspberry with a comfortable depth. It is charming, fine, shows light perfume. The palate holds joli, suave fruit, no hurry about it. It runs with freshness, cool tannins present. It goes long, with detail above all. This is notably fine, a wine that will require patience, has a beau Burgundian manner. From 2021. 2033-34 Apr 2016, JLL

Up next I've got something super special. I love it when something like this converges. The debut of a new lieu-dit (single vineyard) bottling in an all time vintage. It's rare but that is what has happened with the 2015 Christophe Billon Cote-Rotie "Les Rozier" (\$57.99 a 3-pack) which Christophe calls his "La Landonne" due to its intense Cote Brune-like structure. It is flat out sensational and one of the top Cote Roties of the vintage. It got five stars from John Livingston Learmouth and 94-96 pts from Jeb Dunnuck. So nice when my two favorite Rhone critics converge. This wine almost drinks you. It is a wine that has to be cellared. Like a Pommard Rugiens or Musigny or Vosne-Romanee "Les Petit Monts" in that it is hard to drink young but when it is aged it will blow your mind. It is a massive wine. The nose has a honey quality that blew my mind tasting it out of barrel. Ridiculous. The palate is textured like velvet but there are big tannins for now and ridiculously intense blackberry fruit. So fresh but the tannins are huge now. The fruit is so sweet and so sappy. Just takes over your mouth. This is a behemoth with so much potential. The texture is just insane. I say this needs 5-7 years and then will become a bit more civilized

and when it does, watch out, it will stay everything in its path. Below is the Jeb Dunnuck review and the John Livingston Learmouth review.

"Moving to the reds, the 2015 Côte Rôtie Côte Rozier is a serious, masculine, structured effort that's not going to be for those looking for instant gratification. Gunpowder, crushed rocks, smoked black fruits and background meatiness all give way to a concentrated, tannic red that's going to require 5-7 years of bottle age. This vintage includes 2% Viognier, was partially destemmed and will see over two years in 50% new barrels." 94-96 Jeb Dunnuck, the Wine Advocate

2015 \*\*\*\*\* (cask) dark colour, all the way up. The bouquet is a plunge of dark fruit, without having properly emerged yet. There is an inky note to it, dark berry fruit at its centre. The palate drives along with a determined run of sleek, firm black fruits, carries dark, handsome tannins that really enhance it in the later stages. This is top grade Rôtie, for a long future ahead, and a most winning glass in time. The fruit quality is very high, very refined. This is a triumph. 13.5°. 2,000 b . . From mid-2019. 2034-37 Oct 2016, JLL

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