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Sélections Laurence Feraud Côtes-du-Rhône, 2009

Hoke Harden, French Wine Examiner - 02/19/12

As the Rhône has become more prominent and popular with wine drinkers in the U.S., it has become a bit more difficult to find the more affordable ones with the same level of quality as before. Not impossible, mind you, just more difficult.

The savvy wine shopper has to be aware of the pedigree of the wine or the reputation of the winemaker. That's where Sélections Laurence Feraud comes in to the picture.

Laurence Feraud is half, or perhaps a little more than half, of the winemaking team at Domaine Pegau (her father Paul is the other half), where they make some of the more sought-after Chateauneuf-du-Pape in the market.

Pegau now inhabits that special marketing niche of "collectors wine", festooned with both points and dollar signs. While it is more than worthy of all the praise heaped upon it, it might be a little out of reach of the casual drinker down in the 99%, so to speak.

Again, that's where Sélections Laurence Feraud comes in. Laurence has good connections in the Rhone, so she's able to find some of the best fruit from each harvest for her personal projects. Laurence is also very fond of the original wine that put the Rhone on the world map: Côtes-du-Rhône.

Côtes-du-Rhône is what most of the people in the Rhone drink on a daily basis. It also constitutes a great deal of what is exported, around France, Europe, and the world, and what is served to represent the Rhone, usually as a "house wine."

While much of that may range from execrable to average, the Feraud Côtes-du-Rhône is significantly more than that. It is a classy blend of 80% Grenache and 20% Syrah, so it's bright and fresh on top, a little plump in the middle, and structured enough to be appealing, with cherry fruit graduating to deeper plum and red berries with a little touch of sun-kissed earthiness that every Rhone should have.

That's a handsome description for a versatile wine in the \$11–15 price range around the country. So grab yourself a bottle of Laurence Feraud Côtes-du-Rhône, 2009, and you'll get a good vintage of tasty, well made wine from one of the better winemakers in the Rhone Valley. Everyone loves a bargain, right?



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