C/2024/6290

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Publication of a communication of approval of a standard amendment to a product specification for a name in the wine sector, as referred to in Article 17(2) and (3) of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/33

(C/2024/6290)

This communication is published in accordance with Article 17(5) of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/33 [1].

COMMUNICATING THE APPROVAL OF A STANDARD AMENDMENT

'Côte Rôtie'

PDO-FR-A0199-AM01

Date of communication: 25.7.2024

DESCRIPTION OF AND REASONS FOR THE APPROVED AMENDMENT

1. Geographical area and area in immediate proximity

In Chapter I of the product specification for the 'Côte Rôtie' designation, Section IV 'Areas and places in which the various operations are conducted', point 1 'Geographical area' and point 3 'Area in immediate proximity' have, without further change, been supplemented with a reference to the Official Geographic Code of 1 January 2023.

This editorial amendment allows the geographical area to be identified with reference to the 2023 version of the Official Geographic Code, which is updated by the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE) and gives legal certainty to the definition of the geographical area.

The same reference has been added to the single document, under the headings 'Geographical area' and 'Additional conditions – area in immediate proximity'.

2. Labelling

Chapter I of the product specification for the 'Côte Rôtie' designation has been supplemented in Section XII 'Presentation and labelling rules', point 2 'Special provisions'. It now includes the labelling rules referencing the broader geographical unit 'Vignobles de la Vallée du Rhône', according to the conditions set out in the agreement signed between the protection and management bodies concerned. This information must appear in the same visual field as all the mandatory details and must be printed in characters of the same graphic design and colour as those of the designation, provided that it is no bigger than two thirds of the size of the designation.

This amendment has been added to the single document in the section on 'Additional conditions – Labelling'.

3. Declaration requirements

Chapter II of the product specification for the 'Côte Rôtie' designation has been updated, with the obligations on operators to make declarations to the protection and management body having been made compatible with the inspection plan for the designation.

This update does not affect the single document.

4. Reference to the inspection body

Chapter III, Section II of the product specification, 'Reference to the inspection body' has been updated to specify that checks on compliance with the product specification must be carried out on the basis of an approved inspection plan and by a third-party body offering guarantees of competence, impartiality and independence delegated by the INAO.

[1] OJ L 9, 11.1.2019, p. 2.

This update does not affect the single document.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

1. **Name(s)**

Côte Rôtie

2. **Type of geographical indication**

PDO – protected designation of origin

3. **Categories of grapevine products**

1. Wine

3.1. *Code for Combined Nomenclature*

— 22 - BEVERAGES, SPIRITS AND VINEGAR

2204 – wine of fresh grapes, including fortified wines; grape must, other than that of heading 2009

4. **Description of the wine(s)**

BRIEF WRITTEN DESCRIPTION

The 'Côte Rôtie' designation of origin can only be used for still red wines. The wines have a minimum natural alcoholic strength by volume of 10,5 %. At the packing stage, the wines have a malic acid content not exceeding 0,4 grams per litre. The wines' fermentable sugar (glucose and fructose) content at the packing stage must not exceed:

— 3 grams per litre for wines whose natural alcoholic strength by volume is less than or equal to 13,5 %;

— 4 grams per litre for wines whose natural alcoholic strength by volume is greater than 13,5 %.

— After enrichment, the wines' total alcoholic strength by volume must not exceed 13 %.

— Their total acidity, volatile acidity where not specified and total sulphur dioxide content are those laid down in EU legislation.

The controlled designation of origin 'Côte Rôtie' only applies to red wines. Their dark, almost black colour, characteristic of the Syrah N variety, over time takes on shades of garnet. Their aroma combines complexity and elegance with notes of black fruit and spices, and sometimes of violet, when the Viognier B variety is present in the blend. When aged, the aroma develops slightly smoky notes (toast, coffee, cocoa, etc.) and baked or candied fruits. The structure in the mouth is characterised by silky tannins, combined with a more pronounced roundness when the Viognier B variety is used, which is vinified, according to convention, by blending the grapes up to a small percentage. The velvety nature of the tannins also favours the use of traditional winemaking methods involving the vatting of whole bunches of grapes, slightly crushed with a submerged cap.

General analytical characteristics

— Maximum total alcoholic strength (in % volume) —

— Minimum actual alcoholic strength (in % volume)

— Minimum total acidity —

— Maximum volatile acidity (in milliequivalents per litre) —

— Maximum total sulphur dioxide (in milligrams per litre) —

5. **Winemaking practices**

5.1. *Specific oenological practices*

1. Cultivation method

— The minimum planting density of the vines is 6 000 plants per hectare;

— The area available for each vine must not exceed 1.70 square metres. This surface area is obtained by multiplying the spacing between the rows by the spacing between the plants.

— The spacing between rows must not exceed 2 metres.

The vines are pruned with a maximum of ten buds per plant, using the following techniques:

— spur pruning (gobelet, with a maximum of 5 spurs per plant, cordon de Royat with 1 or 2 arms);

— single Guyot.

During the year of training, the maximum of 10 buds per plant is understood as being after debudding, which takes place no later than 1 July.

The wines are made from grapes harvested manually. The grape bunches are transported whole to the winemaking location.

2. Specific oenological practice

The use of wood chips is forbidden.

In addition to the above provision, the oenological practices concerning these wines must meet the requirements laid down at EU level and in the Rural and Maritime Fishing Code.

5.2. *Maximum yields*

1. 46 hectolitres per hectare

6. **Demarcated geographical area**

The grapes are harvested and the wines produced and matured in the following municipalities of the department of Rhône, based on the 2023 Official Geographic Code: Ampuis, Saint-Cyr-sur-le-Rhône and Tupin-et-Semons.

7. **Wine grape variety(ies)**

Viognier B

8. **Description of the link(s)**

Description of the natural factors relevant to the link

Located at the extreme northern end of the large wine growing region bearing the controlled designation of origin ‘Côtes du Rhône’, the controlled designation of origin ‘Côte Rôtie’ is also the northernmost outpost of the Syrah N variety.

In the system of Rhône valley controlled designations of origin, ‘Côte Rôtie’ belongs to the ‘Crus des Côtes du Rhône’ class of wines.

Located around 40 kilometres south of Lyon, along the eastern border of the Massif Central, the vineyards are located on very steep slopes above the right bank of the Rhône, facing the southern part of the town of Vienne. This impressive topography makes for a varied landscape where human influence is key, as people seek to use it in an optimum way.

The geographical area is restricted to 3 municipalities in the department of Rhône: Ampuis, Saint-Cyr-sur-le-Rhône and Tupin-et-Semons.

In the 'Côte Blonde' valley and in similar locations where the parcels have light coloured soils, the erosion of the substrate gives rise to highly delicate, unstable clay or 'Arzel' sands that cannot be cultivated unless retained by dry stone walls known locally as 'cheys'.

In the 'Côte Brune' valley, or in areas where the parcels have similar soils characterised by a darker colour, the more clay-like soil allows for greater stability. The hillside is then constructed in narrow terraces or 'chaillées', which form a kind of staircase, with the vines grown on the relatively flat terraces.

The climate, referred to as 'Lyonnais', is semi-continental, despite this being the most northerly part of the Rhône valley to benefit from the influence of the Mediterranean. A north wind, known locally as the 'Bise', blows often. The general south-easterly orientation of the vineyards gives them a relatively sheltered and sunny aspect.

Description of the human factors relevant to the link

'Côte Rôtie' vines are probably among the oldest in the Rhône valley. There is ample evidence of their antiquity, particularly at the archaeological site of Saint-Roman-en-Gal adjoining the 'Côte Rôtie' vineyards and renowned for its many mosaics uncovered in the remnants of Roman villas.

Among these pictorial works, one depicts a scene of grape harvesting and crushing and the sealing of a jar (mosaic depicting the agricultural calendar, early third century, Museum of Saint Germain-en-Laye – Provenance: Saint-Romain-en-Gal). At that time, the wine jars were sealed using a resinous material and referred to as 'picatum'. The wines themselves were known under the name of 'Allobrogica'. (A. Ferdière – *Les campagnes en gaule romaine* [Rural areas in Roman Gaul] – page 87, Volume 2).

The initial development of the vineyards in this region was therefore probably linked to the Pax Romana, which enabled the Allobroges, whose territory covered part of the right bank of the Rhône, opposite Vienne, to acquire Roman citizenship and, by the same token, to obtain the right to plant vines. Allobrogica was very popular at the beginning of the Antonine century (second century AD).

In the Middle Ages it was difficult to transport these wines from the Rhône valley to northern France because of the exorbitant duties charged by the Rhône valley cities which had to be traversed on the way, in particular Lyon and Mâcon. (R. Dion – *Histoire de la vigne et du vin en France* [History of the vine and winemaking in France]).

In order to overcome this obstacle, the 17th century saw the development of trade routes for Rhône valley wines towards Paris via the Loire. Near Condrieu, the Rhône Valley is separated from the Loire valley by only around 40 kilometres, which can be crossed by a pass through the Pilat massif. Further north, the Briare and Loing canals connect the Loire with the Seine, in order to reach Paris.

'Côte Rôtie' prospered in this period, but, as of the 19th century, one difficulty followed another. First of all, phylloxera destroyed a large proportion of the vineyards, as highlighted in the writings of a resident of Alsace travelling along the Rhône Valley in 1893: 'Previously renowned vineyards are almost destroyed; all that remains are some plants on the slopes of the Côte Rôtie, Ampuis and Condrieu' (Jean Felbert, *Histoire d'une famille alsacienne* [History of an Alsatian family] – A. Picard et Raan).

Then the First World War and the industrialisation of the Rhône Valley drastically reduced the workforce available to work the steep slopes, where there is very little room for horse and cart or mechanical equipment.

Thus, over the twentieth century, the vineyards almost disappeared. It was not until the 1960s that the rebirth of the 'Côte Rôtie' vineyards began.

By 2010, the vineyards once again covered the area they occupied historically before the phylloxera crisis.

The Roret encyclopaedia (1921) suggests that, at the beginning of the twentieth century, wines from the municipality of Ampuis alone (and those from Verinay or Verenay, later incorporated into Ampuis) were eligible to take name 'Côte Rôtie'.

Nevertheless, the municipalities of Ampuis and Tupin-Semons were initially included in the geographical area of the controlled designation of origin 'Côtes du Rhône' on 19 November 1937; it was not until the Decree of 18 October 1940 that the controlled designation of origin 'Côte Rôtie' was recognised for these two municipalities.

The amending decree of 21 December 1966 extended the geographical area to include the neighbouring municipality of Saint-Cyr-sur-le-Rhône.

Most of the vine population belongs to the Syrah N, 'sérine' or 'seriné' variety, an emblematic variety of this winegrowing area. Back in 1921, the Roret encyclopaedia stated that 'seriné noir, corbeille noire and damas noir dominate in the famous winegrowing area of Côte Rôtie'. DNA tests (JM. Boursicot - INRA, Montpellier) have since proven that the Syrah N variety originated in the Rhône region, from the varieties Mondeuse B and Dureza N.

The proximity of the vineyards of the 'Condrieu' controlled designation of origin, with the same set of circumstances regarding the Viognier B variety, also partly explains the practices which have, since time immemorial, allowed the latter to be planted in the 'Côte Rôtie' vineyards.

'Côte Rôtie' white wines were also produced at the beginning of the 17th century, although this product was quickly abandoned, given the proximity of the prestigious controlled designations of origin 'Condrieu' and 'Château-Grillet'.

The historical presence of the Viognier B variety in the vine population is indicative of this production.

The most widely accepted assumption as to the origin of the name of this winegrowing area is that it refers to summers when the slopes are 'scorched' (rôtis) by the sun.

The oldest written record of the use of the name 'Côte Rôtie' dates back to at least 1698 ('A journey to Paris in the year 1698' by Martin Lister - French edition translated and published in 1873).

The reputation of 'Côte Rôtie' vineyards is essentially built around the reputation of two small valleys. The Roret encyclopaedia (1921) states, with regard to wines from the district of Lyon: 'The best-regarded red wines are harvested in the municipality of Ampuis, divided into two parts known as the Côte Brune and the Côte Blonde'.

Similarly, L. Larmat's *Atlas de la France vinicole* [Atlas of vineyards in France] contains a map of the winegrowing area which, in addition to the registered place names, includes the names 'Côte Blonde' and 'Côte Brune' separated by the Fontgent stream.

Of the many legends surrounding the origin of the reputation of these two 'Côtes', one is very poetic. They were allegedly named by a nobleman from Ampuis who had two daughters, one brown-haired and the other blonde. Another, more scientific explanation explains the difference in terms of the geological origin of the substrate in which the vines grow.

'Côte Blonde' has a substrate mainly composed of gneiss. Over time, these rocks gave rise to siliceous light coloured soils, often recalcified by loess deposits from the plateau.

'Côte Brune', on the other hand, sits on a substrate of mica schists on which, over time, less siliceous/more clay-like soils have developed, richer in iron and with a darker colour. Parcels planted with a mix of Syrah N and Viognier B varieties are found more often on 'Côte Blonde' than on 'Côte Brune'.

In 2009, the area under production covered around 250 hectares, with an average annual production of around 10 000 hectolitres divided between around one hundred producers, including around sixty individual wineries. The controlled designation of origin 'Côte Rôtie' only applies to red wines.

Their dark, almost black colour, characteristic of the Syrah N variety, over time takes on shades of garnet.

Their aroma combines complexity and elegance with notes of black fruit and spices, and sometimes of violet, when the Viognier B variety is present in the blend.

When aged, the aroma develops slightly smoky notes (toast, coffee, cocoa, etc.) and baked or candied fruits.

The structure in the mouth is characterised by silky tannins, combined with a more pronounced roundness when the Viognier B variety is used, which is vinified, according to convention, by blending the grapes up to a small percentage. The velvety nature of the tannins also favours the use of traditional winemaking methods involving the barrel fermentation of whole bunches of grapes, slightly crushed with a submerged cap. On the right bank of the Rhône, the combination of a mesoclimate known as 'Lyonnais', a topographical situation with very steep slopes above the Rhône river, and geological and soil conditions of metamorphic origin which require permanent human intervention for the harmonious development of terraces and walls, provides Syrah N, the most important variety of the "Côte Rôtie" controlled designation of origin, and the Viognier B variety with optimum conditions for development and maturity and enables the production of an original red wine combining robustness and elegance.

These two varieties, planted at the limit of their growing range, can express their potential if grown on carefully demarcated plots on slopes with optimum orientation, protected from the adverse effects of cold winds.

The antiquity of this pre-Roman winegrowing area is matched only by its reputation, known under the designation of "Côte Rôtie" since at least the 17th century.

The transmission of winegrowing practices using stakes and the preservation of fragile loess-gneiss, mica schist and migmatite soils by building terraces or stone walls has meant that this winegrowing area has, since antiquity, kept its specific nature. That, together with the associated landscape, contributes to its legendary renown, based in particular on the duality of "Côte Brune" and "Côte Blonde", linked to contrasts in the soils, winemaking practices and structure of the wines.

The tradition of harvesting grapes by hand, still upheld by "Côte Rôtie" winegrowers, helps preserve the originality and characteristics of these hillside vineyards.

The exposure of these scorched slopes to the sun probably explains the origins of the designation "Côte Rôtie".

In addition to references in the literature of many authors of antiquity, including the doctor Celsus, the naturalist Pliny the Elder, the historian Plutarch, the agronomist Columella and the poet Martial, who mention Allobrogica, a wine from Vienne produced in the Allobroges, one of the oldest documents relating to the established reputation of Ampuis wines dates back to 1592. This was when the inhabitants of the municipality received Laurent de Maugiron accompanied by the Duke of Mayenne, to whom they "presented their renowned wine" (*Histoire et généalogie de la famille de Maugiron, en Viennois* [History and genealogy of the Maugiron family, in the Vienne region], 1257-1767, by H. de Terrebasse Ed. 1905).

The reputation of "Côte Rôtie" wines is summarised in a 1781 edition of the *Histoire naturelle de la province du Dauphiné* [Natural History of the Province of Dauphiné] (preface – volume 1 – Faujas de Saint-Fonds): "Côte Rôtie" wines (and those of the Hermitage) have long enjoyed a strong reputation, well deserved because of the specific details of the grape varieties and the exposure and growing practices of the vineyards producing them.'

Later in the same work, two passages praise the reputation of this wine described by the first alderman of Vienne (February 1780) as the best of the Vienne wines and the equal of the greatest of French wines.

This reputation is often inextricably linked to that of the other wines of the northern Côtes du Rhône, as demonstrated by this extract from the *Traité théorique et pratique sur la culture de la vigne* [Theoretical and practical treatise on vine cultivation] (Volume 1 – Chaptal, Parmentier, Dussieux -1801): 'The famous wines of Hermitage, Côte Rôtie and Condrieu are produced on the slopes bordering the Rhône.'

The reputation of this wine is constantly growing, on the strength of its quality and finesse and above all the landscape, a spectacular winegrowing area recognised as a controlled designation of origin since 1940. It also comes to the fore across the entire 'wine country' through the annual Ampuis wines market held since 1928.

9. **Essential further conditions (packaging, labelling, other requirements)**

Legal framework:

National legislation

Type of further condition:

Derogation concerning production in the demarcated geographical area

Description of the condition:

The area in immediate proximity, defined by derogation for the production and development of the wines, comprises the territory of the following municipalities, on the basis of the 2023 Official Geographic Code:

— Department of Ardèche: Andance, Ardoix, Arras-sur-Rhône, Champagne, Charnas, Châteaubourg, Félines, Glun, Guilherand-Granges, Lemps, Limony, Mauves, Ozon, Peyraud, Saint-Désirat, Saint-Etienne-de-Valoux, Saint-Jean-de-Muzols, Sarras, Sécheras, Serrières, Talencieux, Tournon-sur-Rhône and Vion;

— Department of Drôme: Beaumles Monteux, Chanos-Curson, Crozes-Hermitz, Erôme, Gervans, Larnage, Mercurol-Veaunes for the territory of the municipality of Mercurol, Pont-de-l'Isère, La Roche-de-Glun, Serves-sur-Rhône and Tain-l'Hermitz;

— Department of Isère: Chonas-l'Amballan, Les Côtes-d'Arey, Les Roches-de-Condrieu, Reventin-Vaugris, Saint-Clair-du-Rhône, Seyssuel and Vienne;

— Department of Loire: Chavanay, Malleval, Saint-Michel-sur-Rhône, Saint-Pierre-de-Bœuf and Vérin;

— Department of Rhône: Condrieu, Les Haie, Loire-sur-Rhône, Longes, Sainte-Colombe and Saint-Romain-en-Gal.

Legal framework:

National legislation

Type of further condition:

Additional provisions relating to labelling

Description of the condition:

a) Wines bearing the registered designation of origin may display the name of a smaller geographical unit on their labels, provided that:

   — it is a registered location;

   — it appears on the harvest declaration.

b) Wines bearing the registered designation of origin may indicate the broader geographical unit 'Cru des Côtes du Rhône' or 'Vignobles de la Vallée du Rhône' on their labels. The rules governing the use of the broader geographical unit 'Vignobles de la Vallée du Rhône' are set out in the agreement signed between the protection and management bodies concerned. This information must appear in the same visual field as all the mandatory details and must be printed in characters of the same graphic design and colour as those of the designation, provided that it is no bigger than two thirds of the size of the designation.

Link to the product specification

https://info.agriculture.gouv.fr/gedei/site/bo-agri/document_administratif-dceb7462-aee6-4db6-a6f7-a7d5cb91349e