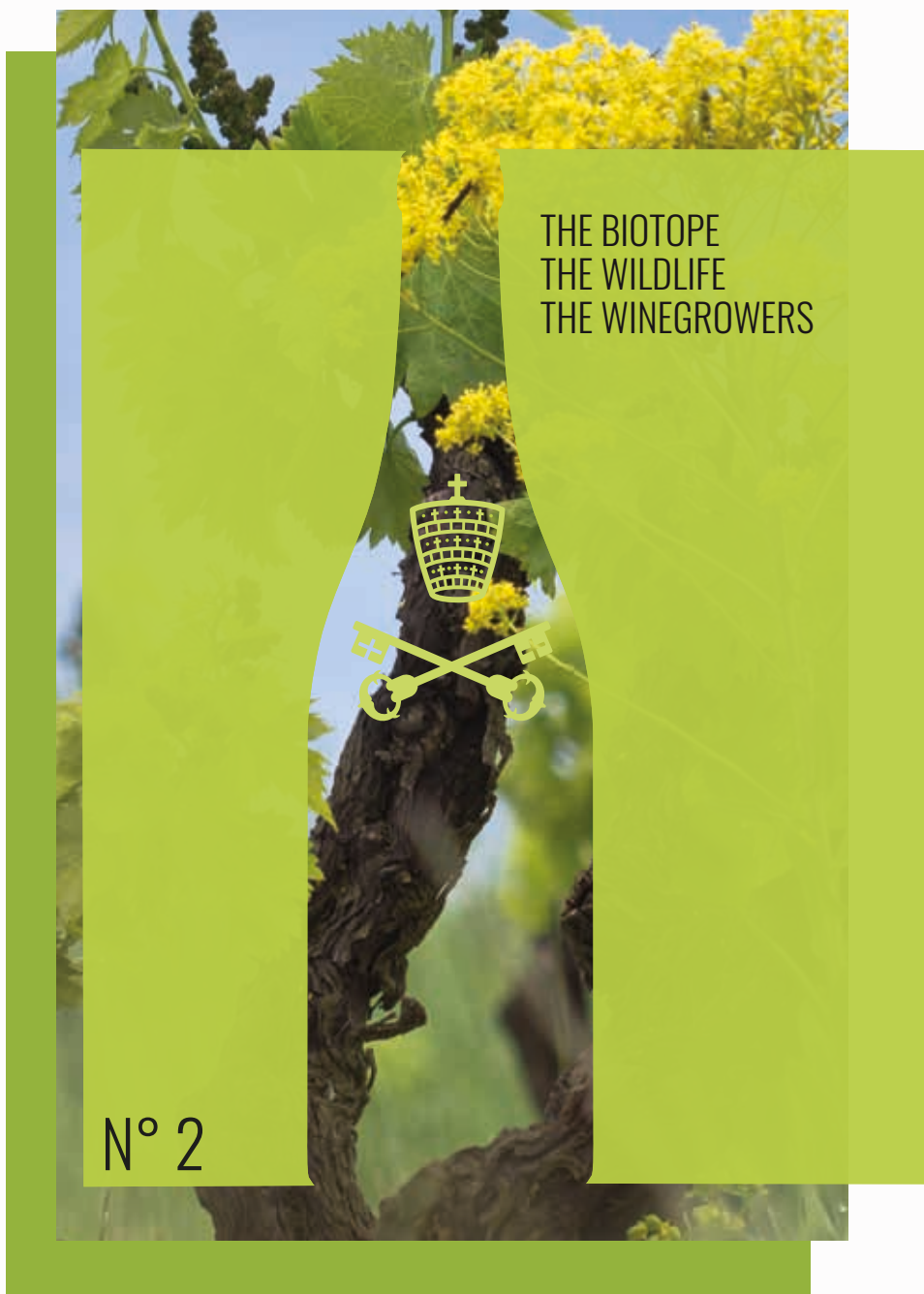


2025 EDITION



THE TRUE WEALTH

CHÂTEAUNEUF DU PAPE

APPELLATION D'ORIGINE CONTRÔLÉE

THE BIOTOPE



01

Since 2019, Châteauneuf-du-Pape wines have been listed nationally as intangible cultural heritage. They come from a wine region with a thousand-year history whose distinctiveness is shaped by a unique ecosystem relying on a subtle equilibrium between a specific biotope and species forming the biocoenosis. Environmental issues therefore have a profound impact within and along the boundaries of this 3,200-hectare area recognized with controlled appellation status.

PRESERVING THE INTEGRITY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

TOWARDS A NATURAL MANAGEMENT OF PEST RISK

THE CHALLENGE

In the aftermath of the Second World War, advances in chemistry provided crop farmers with solutions that allowed them to control growth of weeds and the onset of pests. It has now been established, however, that despite their efficacy,

these substances disrupt the environment. Therefore, the farming industry is striving to reduce the frequency of synthetic chemical treatments – or even forego them entirely – by prioritising other solutions.



THE PLAN

Following in the footsteps of pioneering wineries like Domaine Pierre André, 35% of Châteauneuf-du-Pape's vineyard acreage is now farmed organically or biodynamically, meaning that no synthetic chemical inputs are used. In ten years, acreage has grown by 50%, with conversion supported on a collective basis since 1991. Châteauneuf-du-Pape winegrowers

have also joined forces to prompt changes to the appellation's production specifications by tailoring them to the environmental issues of our era. The aim is to roll out a prevention toolkit and vineyard management practices that show the greatest respect for people and the biodiversity surrounding them across the wine region.

THE STRATEGY

For changes to production specifications, appellation winegrowers have begun a collaborative review process within their producers' organisation in order to make agri-environmental measures aimed at reducing usage of herbicides and pesticides a part of their production conditions.

Concurrently with this, the organisation has been coordinating actions in the vineyards for many years aimed at stemming the spread of Flavescence dorée and the American grapevine leafhopper, which carries the disease. Similarly, the use of collective biological control methods is increasing so that damage to fruit caused by grapevine moths, for instance, can be drastically reduced.

30% OF VINEYARD'S ACREAGE IS ALSO CERTIFIED HVE. COUPLED WITH THE SURGE IN ORGANIC OR BIODYNAMIC VINEYARDS, THIS MEANS THAT TWO THIRDS OF APPELLATION'S ACREAGE ARE SUSTAINABLY ENDORSED.

CURRENT STATE OF PLAY

In 2023, two agri-environmental measures were selected by the winegrowers. One involves a ban on chemical weedkillers, the other on the use of synthetic pesticides to combat grapevine moths. These two provisions should be officially endorsed over the next few months.

Monitoring leafhopper populations and granular surveying of vineyards – over 2,000 hectares a year – to detect and remove vines affected by Flavescence dorée before they become a source of contamination themselves, have curtailed the disease which now mainly occurs around the edges of the appellation area. These collective efforts have also gradually reduced the number of insecticide treatments – both chemical and those derived from natural molecules – to combat leafhoppers.

Biological control methods are becoming more widespread. Mating disruption, which prevents the moths that produce grapevine worms from breeding by regularly releasing pheromones in vineyards – interfering with communication between males and females through sense of smell – now protects 70% of appellation's acreage.

PROTECTING THE UNIQUE VINEYARD SITES

A PROACTIVE GROUP

THE CHALLENGE

The Châteauneuf-du-Pape wine region owes its unique features to its location in the southern Rhone Valley. The structure of the soils, type of terrain, exposure to the wind and amount of sunshine – which combine to create unique terroirs – stem from this location. At the same time, its position in the heart of the Rhone corridor and at the crossroads of several strategic communications routes makes it a region with issues where the development of certain activities can jeopardise the landscape along with the vineyard sites and the environment.

THE PLAN

This is not so much a plan as it is a policy principle which is part and parcel of recognition of a demarcated area for appellation production. Consequently, Châteauneuf-du-Pape's winegrowers have long been committed to protecting their region, whose intrinsic feature is that it cannot be replicated or moved to overcome installations which can undermine its natural attributes. A case in point is the open-air quarry in the Lampourdier hills, located on the western side of the appellation.

CHÂTEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE'S WINEGROWERS SPEARHEADED RECOGNITION OF THE CONCEPT OF ORIGIN IN FRENCH LAW. AFTER A LENGTHY STRUGGLE, RECOGNITION WAS FINALLY SECURED ON JULY 30TH 1935, AND ON MAY 15TH 1936, CHÂTEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE NATURALLY BECAME ONE OF THE FIRST FRENCH WINE REGIONS TO BE RECOGNISED AS AN APPELLATION.

THE STRATEGY

The Lampourdier hills are a wooded limestone dome which used to peak at 110 metres above sea level. Quarried for their rich mineral resources for over fifty years, originally in a small way but more recently on an industrial scale, the hills have now lost their top. It was subsumed into a huge crater 50 metres deep with a footprint covering some fifty hectares. In March 2021, the decision by the Vaucluse prefecture to authorise quarrying on site until 2046, disregarding the opinion of winegrowers and The INAO, led the Châteauneuf-du-Pape and Côtes-du-Rhône producers' organisations to take the matter to court so that the decision could be annulled.

CURRENT STATE OF PLAY

In January 2024, an initial ruling came down in favour of the quarry's operators. Winegrowers nevertheless filed an appeal, pointing to the impact on their appellation vineyards, in addition to the dust and the damage to their image. They took issue in particular with the obvious transformation of the landform, which has a cascade effect on many aspects such as altering the microclimate and changing air flows, hygrometry and sunshine, thereby upsetting biological and agronomic equilibriums in the neighbouring vineyard blocks.

TAKE ACTION



SUPPORT THE FIGHT TO PROTECT LAMPOURDIER HILLS



PREVENTING POLLUTION

2 FILLING AND WASHING AREAS FOR SPRAYING EQUIPMENT

THE CHALLENGE

Filling and washing equipment used for spraying vines entails risks of polluting the ecosystems in the event of a technical incident (overflows during filling for example) or mismanagement of effluents. Plant protection products leaked from spraying implements could affect biodiversity and contaminate both underground and surface water if dispersed into natural environments.

THE PLAN

In order to prevent any risk of pollution, the Châteauneuf-du-Pape community has coordinated building of two collective areas for filling and washing spraying implements. These secure areas, located in the eastern and western parts of the appellation, are designed for winegrowers who do not have private facilities.

AVOIDING POLLUTION OF THE ECOSYSTEMS IS A LONG-STANDING CONCERN. FOR NEARLY THIRTY YEARS, A PROTOCOL HAS BEEN IN PLACE TO MANAGE WATER USED FOR RINSING TANKS.

THE STRATEGY

The two areas were designed to prevent plant protection residues from being transferred to the natural environment and to protect the health of the winegrowers and their staff by providing them with secure facilities which prevent situations that place individuals at risk.

CURRENT STATE OF PLAY

The two filling and washing areas were officially opened in 2021. They handle over 420 operations annually. The effluents are collected by gravity and channelled towards approved treatment solutions. Importantly, rainwater is not mixed with black water – a system of valves directs it to a collection reservoir.





02



THE WILDLIFE

The Châteauneuf-du-Pape appellation is fully aware of the valuable role played by wildlife but also the fragile nature of ecosystems. It has therefore undertaken work to identify the aspects that structure its landscape such as hedges and copses that offer a haven for biodiversity. The plan is part of a long-term approach that aims to make Châteauneuf-du-Pape an exemplary wine region for protection and strengthening of the biocoenosis, a requisite for developing true agro-ecology.

ENHANCING INTERACTIONS BETWEEN LIVING THINGS

3 FLOCKS OF SHEEP IN THE VINEYARDS

THE CHALLENGE

With competition for water resources increasing due to climate change, grass cover and the occurrence of weeds need to be controlled. Also, adding organic matter to the soils can be useful in providing vines with beneficial nutrients.

THE PLAN

For several years, AOC Châteauneuf-du-Pape has made efforts to reconnect with the time-honoured use of agro-pastoral systems. This involves letting animal species that do not damage vines – with a preference for sheep over goats – graze in the vineyards over the winter months until the emergence of the first buds, in order to keep ground cover under control.

MERINO SHEEP ARE SMALL, RUSTIC AND PARTICULARLY WELL-SUITED TO VINEYARD ECOSYSTEMS.

THE STRATEGY

Three local shepherds and livestock breeders are now involved in the project. Their flocks, comprising over 2,000 head of merino sheep, spend the winter months grazing in the vineyards of Châteauneuf-du-Pape every year. And this is only the start. Considering the extent of vineyard acreage, Châteauneuf-du-Pape is open to partnering with other shepherds.

CURRENT STATE OF PLAY

The three flocks currently maintain an average 660 hectares of vines every winter, though the area can vary from one year to the next depending on the weather and the level of grass cover. The presence of sheep enables winegrowers to delay or even forego certain technical soil interventions at the end of winter, and livestock breeders can save their meadows for the lambing season.



WELCOMING BENEFICIAL INSECTS

THE GREAT CHALLENGE OF PLANTING HEDGES

THE CHALLENGE

In the second half of the 20th century, mechanisation of farming led to fewer hedges and less woodland in general across the countryside. Greater awareness of the part they play in creating habitats for local fauna is now prompting them to be reintroduced, particularly as the extent of their benefits is now well-documented. Hedges and woodlands help structure landscapes, limit soil erosion and regulate temperature and water balance in vineyard blocks.

THE PLAN

In 2021, the Châteauneuf-du-Pape producers' organisation, spurred on by young winegrowers, introduced a planting programme for hedgerows throughout the vineyards, mainly to promote the development of beneficial insects. The hedges act as true reservoirs of biodiversity, providing a home for countless species which nest, feed and breed there. As homes for beneficial insects, they combat crop pests naturally and promote pollination.



THE STRATEGY

The program is now collective and open to all of the appellation's winegrowers to facilitate their plans to introduce hedges, but also trees and shrubs. The Cérès Flore nursery, which specialises in producing wild plants, has selected thirty native species that are iconic of the landscapes of Châteauneuf-du-Pape: almond trees, Judas trees, white poplars, sorb trees, hackberry trees, sage-leaved rock-roses, the European smoke tree, bladder senna, rosemary, sweet briar...

CURRENT STATE OF PLAY

In three years, the programme has already enabled a dozen kilometres of hedges to be replanted, equating to some 12,000 trees and shrubs. In the medium term, the producers' organisation aims to introduce indicators to measure the impact of forthcoming projects on biodiversity and their spin-off benefits – hedges make a major contribution to improving water penetration in the soils and limiting erosion.



**PLANTING A TREE
IS ALWAYS A GOOD IDEA.
MORE PLANTS MEAN
MORE INSECTS, MORE
MAMMALS AND MORE
BIRDS. IN THREE YEARS,
CHÂTEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE
WINEGROWERS HAVE
PLANTED 12,000 OF THEM.**

SAFEGUARDING VARIETAL DIVERSITY

A CONSERVATION CENTRE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

THE CHALLENGE

Vine diversity in Châteauneuf-du-Pape is one of its primary assets. In a world where varieties have become standardised, its winegrowers have set their minds on protecting a model based on the genetic diversity of vines. This is all the more important because their vineyards are home to some venerable, 100-year-old vines that have demonstrated both their endurance and their resilience to the climate events of the past century. We can therefore trust in the ability of the plant material stemming from them to show characteristics that will allow them, in turn, to travel down through the decades.

THE PLAN

Through the producers' organisation, substantial surveys have been conducted throughout the appellation's vineyards to catalogue the oldest and most remarkable vines, then take samples for conservation purposes and to produce grafts. The ultimate aim is to establish a conservation centre that will protect the appellation's plant heritage so that it can be passed down to future generations. It will feature all of its iconic grape varieties – 6 white varieties, 3 blush varieties and 9 red varieties – some of which are endemic to the wine region.



THE STRATEGY

The goal here is to preserve the genetic diversity of our plant material and to continue to make it available to our appellation's producers in years to come. This applies to our 18 grape varieties, including those that are the most uncommon currently and may in the future be of interest for the balance in our wines and their aromatic and alcohol potential. In addition to its role in safeguarding our wine region's memory and its rich array of vines, the multi-varietal conservation centre will also provide the basis for more in-depth studies if we subsequently choose to conduct research. In collaboration with the viticulture department at the chamber of agriculture, an inventory was started in 2019, leading to the first identifications and markings of vines deemed to be the most interesting and healthiest specimens. The process was repeated from 2020 to 2022 more intensively so that several hundred individuals could be collected.

CURRENT STATE OF PLAY

The canes from selected vines were collected at the end of 2023. The precious wood, conscientiously identified based on its original vine, underwent tests to confirm it was healthy. Only the sound canes were kept. The select few, known as 'accessions', represent to date 150 remarkable vines from fifty or so vineyard blocks within the appellation area. Grafted by the French Vine & Wine Institute (IFV), they were taken to a nursery in spring 2024. Planted at the beginning of 2025, the young vines will allow for recognised graft nurseries to be established and provide a local supply of plant material from the finest vines in our wine region.





03

THE WINE-GROWERS

Just like their ancestors before them, present-day winegrowers make it their mission to nurture the time-honoured narrative of Châteauneuf-du-Pape. Their duty is also vital for the future. It is their responsibility to explore and reveal all the facets of a wine region with endless subtleties, but they also need to discover the avenues that allow human endeavours to be reconciled with an ecosystem that is known to be fragile.

“WE WORK WITH GRASS RATHER THAN AGAINST IT”

SOPHIE ARMENIER & VINCENT ESTEVENIN, DOMAINE DE MARCOUX

Since 1991, the vineyards of Domaine de Marcoux, which cover 17.5 hectares in the Châteauneuf-du-Pape appellation area, have been farmed organically. The Armenier family, whose roots in Châteauneuf-du-Pape date back at least to the 14th century, stands as a trailblazer.

How did the conversion to organic farming come about?

- Vincent: Through the efforts of my uncle Philippe. He founded the estate in 1980 with vines that belonged to his father, so my grandfather. Very early on, he became interested in organic farming and also biodynamics. He read a lot and had a lot of discussions. In 1990, he converted seven hectares then the entire estate the following year. When my mother and my aunt took over the estate in 1995, they continued along the same lines. As two women in the mid-1990s in a male-dominated world farming vines by applying biodynamic preparations using horn manure, silica and herbal teas – they were quite clearly viewed as witch doctors!

Have mentalities changed since then?

- Vincent: Yes. Take my example. I was born in 1991 and I have never known the estate farmed in any other way than organic. People used to say that vineyards had to be ‘clean’, with no grass showing. Now things have changed. We work with grass rather than against it. And we’re not the only ones. Many winegrowers have changed techniques. In our family, our cousins have switched to practices inspired by biodynamics for instance.

- Sophie: It’s true that my sister and I stood out like a sore thumb in the wine industry, but it was just as true of my brother. He wasn’t totally isolated, however, because he was surrounded by other pioneers like the viticulture advisor François Boucher and winegrowers like Nicolas Joly in the Loire Valley, Anne-Claude Leflaive in Burgundy and Paul Barre in Bordeaux. There were also people in Alsace. In fact, it was mainly other industry members that viewed us as eccentric. Our customers were curious and have always trusted and supported us.



How did your commitment withstand the test of time? Have you had misgivings, or has your commitment become stronger?

- Vincent: The first vintages for my mum and my aunt were challenging because the weather was unforgiving. But they never gave up, and that’s important because the positive or negative impact of a production model can only be viewed over time. We continue our journey by doing our utmost to bring as much life as possible to the soils – we have reduced tillage, we bring in sheep to graze in the winter and we have replanted hedges around the edges of the vineyards. The quest never ends.

PHILIPPE ARMENIER’S NOTEBOOKS, 1990

“This year is definitely the start of a great adventure and a huge change in mindset for us and for the estate. I have introduced...biodynamic winegrowing. This involves providing the soil and the vines with preparations made from ‘dynamised’ compost, minerals and plants so that the soil, the plant and the cosmos can establish a close relationship with each other...”



“BASED ON THE PRINCIPLE OF EDIBLE FOREST GARDEN, I AM AIMING TO CREATE AN ‘EDIBLE VINE GARDEN’”

FLORENT LANÇON, DOMAINE DE LA SOLITUDE

Nestled along the western boundary of the Crau plateau, Solitude valley has provided a home for 33 hectares of mixed vine plantings since the 17th century. Florent Lançon, who graduated with a master's degree in ecology, belongs to the twelfth generation at the helm of the family estate. Today, he strives to incorporate single-crop vine growing into a more complex ecosystem inspired by the forest garden model, which is defined by a mixture of a large number of plant species, most of which are useful to human beings. His intention is to create a system that is both highly productive, and also has the ability to restore biodiversity.



“The winery was certified organic in 2020 and biodynamic in 2023. I believe that a great wine is born in the vineyard and that it tells the story of place. I aim to preserve and improve upon what nature has given us and nature is not one single crop. On the estate, for example, we have beehives. I have also introduced agro-forestry principles, following the example of other Châteauneuf-du-Pape vineyards like Domaine de Beurenard. I began by restoring hedges and am now focusing on a type of mixed farming so that I can enrich the soils and create cooler micro-climates at block level. Based on the principle of forest gardening, I am aiming to create a ‘vine garden’”.



“At the moment, two hectares of vines are combined with other crops. I have planted heritage varieties of olive trees but also rows with different species: citrus plants like yuzu, citrangequat and eremorange, persimmons, aprilums, common junipers and even Sichuan pepper trees. You superimpose the various plant layers with shrubs, medium-sized trees and tall trees, thereby creating natural habitats for local wildlife such as birds and insects which are beneficial for vines”.

“We are experimenting with new combinations between vines and other plants. I like to define myself as a ‘peasant’, not in the etymological sense of someone who lives in a particular place but as a creator of landscapes, working towards the future of farming. Some of these techniques originated in ancient traditions. For example, olive trees were grown between rows of vines up until the great freeze of 1956. We know that the root interactions between vines and olive trees are beneficial. We have less hindsight with citrus fruits but we are experimenting and observing so that we can introduce supportive synergies. We also plan to create a distillery to produce gin and liqueurs from crops in our ‘vine garden’”.

“WE HAVE INVENTED AN UNCOMPROMISING TERROIR-BASED ARCHITECTURE”

CHARLES PERRIN, CHÂTEAU DE BEAUCASTEL

Founded in 1549 north of the village of Courthézon, Château de Beaucastel is one of the oldest properties in Châteauneuf-du-Pape. Its vineyard is a memorial vineyard with mixed plantings of the eighteen appellation grape varieties grown organically since the 1950s and biodynamically since the 1970s with time-honoured respect shown for the natural ecosystems. The philosophy of the Perrin family, who have farmed at Beaucastel since 1909, aims to seek out the truth of terroir deep within its core, based on the belief that this is how it will be able to deliver its purest



“The former winery was built by my grandparents. The facilities had not been renovated since the 1960s. In 2017, my family and I decided to launch an architecture competition. A total 1,300 application forms were sent out and 386 projects were put forward by architects from around the world, including five Pritzker award-winners. Ultimately, we were impressed by the proposal put forward by an Indian studio, Studio Mumbai, coupled with a French studio, Studio Méditerranée. They were the ones that suggested we rebuild the winery using materials from the former winery and resources available on the property”.



“This is a unique building project with a very low carbon footprint. Very few lorries came in and out of the building site. 80% of the materials were sourced on site, from the crushed concrete from the old winery and soil excavated by digging a gigantic 50-metre long and 12-metre deep hole. It’s what you call cast earth or soil cement which involves casting soil as you would cement concrete”.



expression. Such a hypersensitive approach to the essence of place and its component parts culminated in the somewhat crazy idea of rebuilding the former family winery by tapping into the soil of Beaucastel itself. The project, launched in 2018, was designed by Studio Mumbai (India) and Studio Méditerranée (France). It involved an epic seven-year journey, which is the time it took to “arrange terroir vertically”, in the poetic words of Charles Perrin, the fifth-generation Perrin family representative alongside his brothers and cousins at Beaucastel.



“The building work took a long time because there were no precedents. We had to find companies and train craftsmen in the traditional companionship way. We invented an uncompromising terroir-based architecture based on re-use – 80% of waste worldwide is produced by the building industry – along with local supply chains and natural processes”.



“The winery hides huge reservoirs than can store 2,000 m3 of rainwater 12 metres below ground at a natural temperature ranging from 10 to 14°C. Using a system of ventilation shafts, the reservoirs cool the temperature in the winery whilst also supplying our other needs. In a region affected by water stress, we are virtually self-sufficient for our water requirements”.

DISCOVER MORE INITIATIVES
BY OUR WINEGROWERS







CHÂTEAUNEUF DU PAPE
APPELLATION D'ORIGINE CONTRÔLÉE

Join the Gang !



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