With regards to the 2010 Châteauneuf du Pape Arcane Le Pape, I had to have Xavier explain how he made it about three times before I understood. The wine is 100% Grenache, from 15 different parcels, that was put into a barrel, then the entire barrel was put into a concrete tank, which was then filled with wine. This is a take on the underwater aging process that some people experiment with, and the result is that there’s no exposure to oxygen whatsoever, and the wine was kept like this for five years, with no racking or topping (since there’s no evaporation, it never needed to be topped). Inky purple in color, with a sensational, youthful bouquet of crushed flowers, blueberries, blackberries, cured meats and spice, it hits the palate with incredible richness, a thick, unctuous mid-palate and ripe, yet present tannin. It’s a singular, exotic beauty that I wish every reader could taste! I’ve not a clue how it will age, given its crazy élevage, yet I suspect it will benefit from short-term cellaring and keep for two to three decades! Hats off to the team here for having the guts to pull something like this off!

95/100 DUNNUCK

A 100% Grenache sourced from numerous terroirs in the appellation, the 2010 Châteauneuf-du-Pape Arcane Le Pape offers a lovely bouquet of blackberries, saddle leather, garrigue, and forest floor. Medium to full-bodied, elegant and silky, it’s still tight and backward on the palate, with good acidity, building tannin, and a great finish. It’s going to hit prime time in 2-3 years and keep for a decade.

96/100 SUCKLING

Some age here. This has a very rich, ripe and complex feel with a sleek, supple stream of such deeply fleshy, ripe dark-plum and berry flavors. The tannins are so regal. Wow! Drink or hold.