

Elodie Balme

Profile

Elodie Balme's beginnings in wine started with sales. But it didn't last very long, and at 19 she quit her job to study viticulture and oenology. As part of her curriculum, she was placed part-time with [Marcel Richaud](#), one of the pioneers of biodynamics in the Southern Rhône. The two quickly became friends, and Marcel's approach to viticulture and winemaking resounded deeply with Elodie. With her mentor Marcel's encouragement, she founded Domaine Elodie Balme at just 23 years old.

2006 was Elodie's first vintage, produced with four hectares of vines belonging to her father Bernard. Bernard has been a viticulturist his whole life: starting with approximately four inherited hectares, he progressively acquired new parcels over time (funded by a parallel pépiniériste gig), and today he finds himself with 28 h. Bernard and Elodie are partners, and work the entirety of the estate together. She vinifies 14 hectares, with the rest of the grapes sold to the cave cooperative.

Bernard has always worked conventionally in the vineyard, but much has changed with Elodie's involvement. She's eliminated pesticides and herbicides in the majority of the 14 hectares she vinifies, and uses organic fertilizers (some of her harder to work parcels are still being worked chemically with one herbicide and pesticide treatment a year). Equally important, in the last two years Bernard has ceased using any systemic products on all 28 h, shifting to contact treatments of copper and sulfur. Elodie is convinced her estate will one day be worked organically, a process she is getting closer to each year.

In the cellar, a *pied de cuve* starts the spontaneous fermentation. The wines are vinified and aged in concrete. No sulfur is added during the fermentation and aging of the wine, but Elodie adds a small dose after blending tanks, as well as a tiny dose at bottling.