

Francis Boulard et Fille

Profile

Francis Boulard founded *Francis Boulard et Fille* with his daughter Delphine in 2010. Together, they work close to three hectares in the Vallée de la Marne following organic and biodynamic practices. Prior to this endeavor, Francis worked alongside his brother and sister running the family estate *Raymond Boulard* for close to two decades. His career as a vigneron dates back to the early 70's, a period where chemical viticulture was only starting to gain traction. Like most in his generation, Francis began adopting chemical fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides in his vineyard work. But around 1996, he was faced with a daunting realization.

"As a simple peasant, I always assumed that the products we were putting on our vines would wash away after a couple of rains, that they would naturally go away. No one ever told us that chemical residue would not only permanently affect the vineyard, but actually end up in the wine."

Francis knew something had to change, but wasn't entirely sure what to do. Around this time, a friendly mention of biodynamics by a colleague would introduce him to Rudolph Steiner's philosophies, leading to several years of agricultural experimentation. Determined to attempt this type of viticulture on his land, Francis convinced his siblings to convert 1 hectare, at first to see if it was possible to have healthy vines without using chemicals. This proved a success, so Francis tried something else: intentionally working part of a parcel biodynamically, leaving the rest in conventional chemical viticulture and vinifying both separately. Three years in a row, he felt the wine from biodynamic grapes was more expressive.

Convinced that the entire estate could and should be converted, Francis proposed this to his brother and sister, but the idea was met with heavy resistance. After much reflection, Francis decided that he could work no other way; he claimed his three hectares of vines, broke off from his family and started his own estate. Delphine, who had been working at *Raymond Boulard* for 9 years, decided to follow him and together, they have formed a partnership. The wines are incredibly expressive, a delight to drink and have already garnered a strong reputation for being amongst the best grower-producer Champagnes on the market.