Domaine le Briseau

Domaine le Briseau & Nana, Vins et Cie. in Jasnières/Coteaux du Loir.

Jules Dressner with Natalie Gaubicher and Christian Chaussard. Photo by David Sink.

Profile

Christian Chaussard, like the proverbial cat, has had several lives already. For years, he worked in public works, before learning viticulture and oenology, then teaching those in a professional school while running his estate in Vouvray. A series of climactic hardships forced him to abandon his estate, so he also quit teaching and decided to be a winemaker in the "new world."

Before accomplishing that goal, he met Nathalie Gaubicher, a Swiss actress with a oenologist and sommelier diploma, and they set out to find vines somewhere in France. Their search took them all around the country and to all wine regions. In 2002, they settled in the Jasnières/Coteaux-du-Loir area in northern Touraine. The area is 155 miles south-west of Paris between the cities of Le Mans and Tours, 28 miles north of Vouvray. The entirety of Jasnières covers 80 hectares of vines, and Coteaux-du-Loir about 200 hectares. The soils are largely all clay and silica over a subsoil of limestone and Domaine le Briseau was started with 4 hectares of vines planted mainly with Chenin Blanc and Pineau d'Aunis.

In 2005, Christian and Nathalie started a small négoce called Nana, Vins & Cie, for which they buy grapes on the vines and harvest them with their team. These grapes are vinified the same way as the estate's grapes, in order to produce totally natural wines.

By 2007, the estate had grown to 11 hectares. All vineyard work is done according to the principles of organic viticulture (with the certification of Qualité France): no pesticides, insecticides or chemical fertilizers are used; nettle and horsetail decoctions are sprayed on the foliage; copper is used in modest quantity (less than 5kg/HA); the vines are plowed and grass allowed to grow in the rows. In 2006, the estate started its conversion to biodynamic principles.

Wines

Apart from biodynamic viticulture, the following harvesting and cellar practices are followed:

-The harvest is done by hand in 10kg boxes.

-The white grapes are pressed lightly and slowly.

-Débourbage (first racking to separate solid matter from juice) takes place after 24 hours, then the must goes into barrels for the alcoholic fermentation (none of the barrels are new, but rather 4 to 8 years old.) Malolactic fermentation usually follows and is not stopped by any means.

-Nothing is added: there is no chaptalization, no selected yeasts, no sulfur, no enzymes, no de-acidification, no fining.

-There is one racking to get rid of the wine's gross lees, and then aging for several months, according to each cuvée.

-There is a light filtration and addition of 2g/HL of sulfur at the time of bottling.

-The red grapes are tread by foot before going into maceration vats.

-Maceration occurs under the protection of CO_2, in a semi-liquid stage (semi-carbonic maceration) and lasts 1 to 3 weeks. The musts are then pressed and go into barrels for their alcoholic and malolactic fermentations. Again, nothing is added to the wines and the same principles are used at bottling.

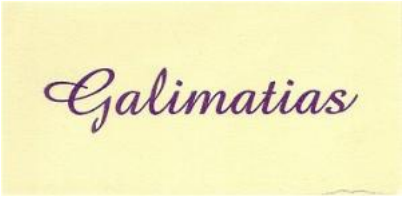
Wines of Domaine le Briseau:

Les Blandelières: Coteaux-du-Loir AOC, full south exposure, shallow soil of gravelly clay, 5 to 40-year-old Chenin vines.

Le Briseau: Coteaux-du-Loir AOC, shallow soil of gray clay over perrons (silex blocks weighing several tons), 15 to 30-year-old Chenin vines.

Les Mortiers: Coteaux-du-Loir AOC, limestone plateau with gravelly clay, 25 to 30-year-old Pineau d'Aunis, 15-year-old Côt and 15-year-old Gamay.

Patapon: Coteaux-du-Loir AOC, a blend of several plots, all Pineau d'Aunis of varying ages.



Galimatias: VdT, south exposure, gravelly clay with large surface silex stones, 15-year-old Chardonnay.

Clos des Longues Vignes: Jasnières AOC, south exposure on mid-slope, shallow soil of red clay with silex, 10 to 15-year-old Chenin.

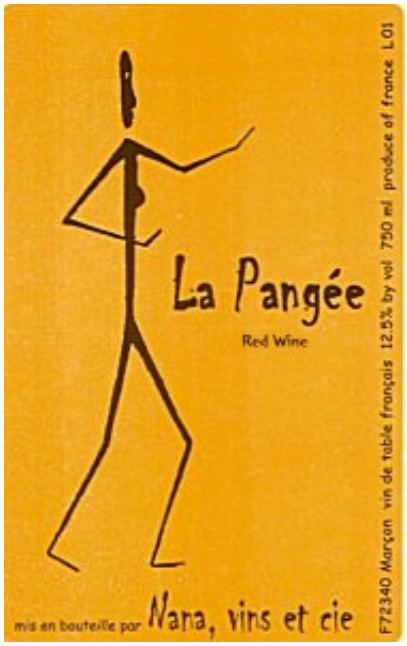
Kharaktêr: Jasnières AOC, east and west exposure on high slope above Clos des Longues Vignes, shallow soil of eroded, coarse clay, 50-year-old Chenin.

St-Jacques:(NOT PICTURED) Jasnières AOC, south exposure, deep soil of red clay with coarse stones, 10 to 15-year-old Chenin.

La Gaudriole: Coteaux-du-Loir AOC, deep soil of water-retaining clay and limestone on a plateau, 15 to 50-year-old Chenin; pétillant naturel with residual sugar.

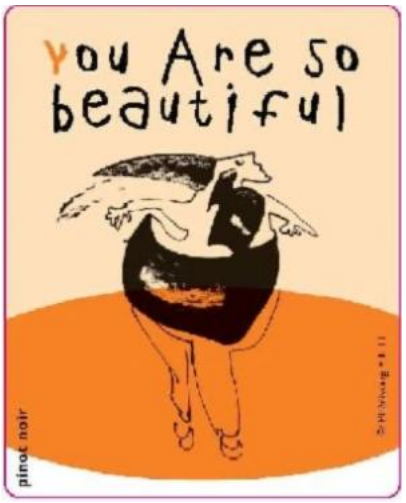
Les Longues Vignes: Coteaux-du-Loir, medium deep soil of red clay and silex, 10 to 40-year-old Pineau d'Aunis.

Nana, Vins & Cie Wines

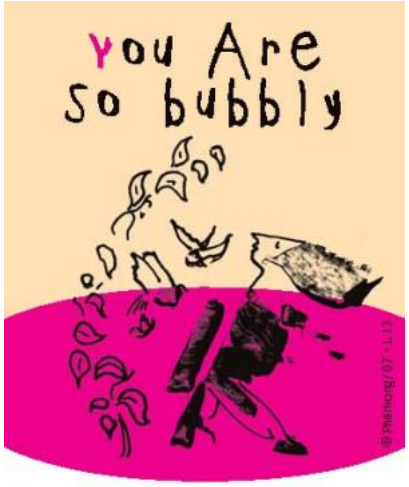


La Pangée: VdT from Coteaux-du-Loir area, 50% Gamay and 50% Pineau d'Aunis

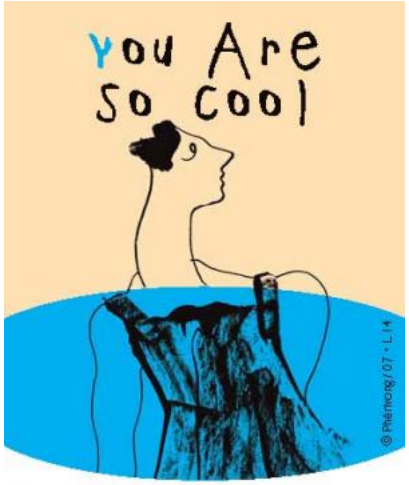
You Are So Nice!: VdT, blend of Gamay and Côt.

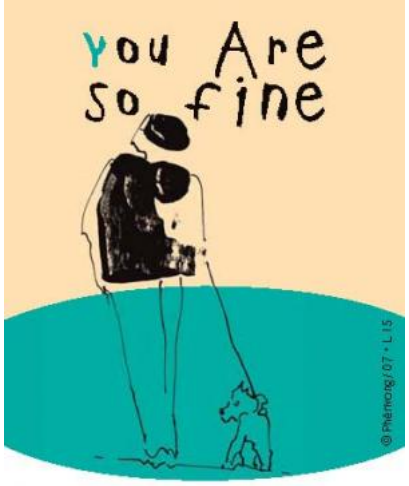


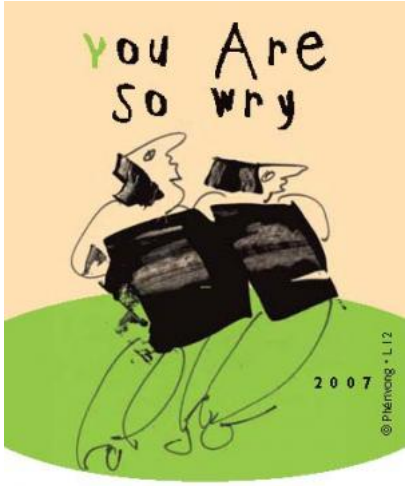
You Are So Beautiful!: VdT, 2009 is 100% Pinot Noir from the Touraine.



You Are So Bubbly: VdT Petillant Naturel, 2008 is Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Carignan from the Ardeche.



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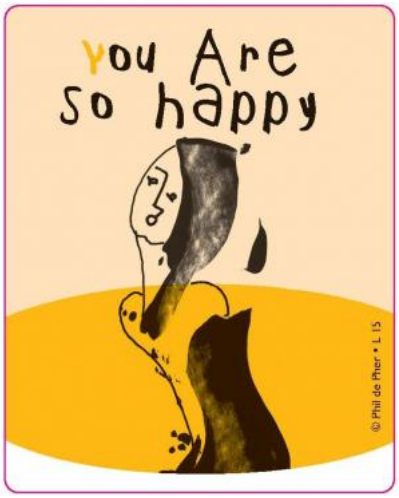
You Are
So happy
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