

Georges Descombes

Profile

Located in Vermont, a tiny hamlet in Villié-Morgon, Georges Descombes is the unofficial fifth member of the iconic "Gang of Four": Marcel Lapierre, Jean Foillard, Jean-Paul Thévenet and Guy Breton. In his teens, Georges worked with his vigneron father in the vines as well as a local bottling company. Hopping around from cellar to cellar gave him a chance to try a large amount of different estates, and the first time he tasted a Lapierre wine, young Georges was blown away by its purity and elegance. Then and there, he decided he would try to make wines like Marcel's.

Georges took over the estate in 1988, and immediately started shifting viticultural and oenological practices forward. Though his father had always worked traditionally in the vineyards and cellar, Georges decided to push things further by practicing organic viticulture (certified by Ecocert) and eliminating all entrants or manipulation during vinification. A minuscule dose of sulfur -less than a hundredth of what an organically certified vigneron is legally allowed to use- is added at bottling to help preserve the wines.

In total, Georges owns about 15,5 hectares of land spread over 5 AOC's : 7,5 hectares in Morgon, 3,5 hectares in Brouilly, 2 hectares in Regnié, 0,5 hectare in Chiroubles and 2 hectares of Beaujolais Villages. Grapes are hand-harvested, then stored in a temperature controlled container before being placed in 60 hl cement tanks. A traditional, semi-carbonic maceration occurs, and the wine ferments from its ambient yeasts. For each Cru, Georges produces old vine cuvées which are vinified separately, then aged in barrel six months before bottling.

Georges is a firm believer that his wines benefit from time in bottle, and always releases them up to a year later than most of his colleagues.