

Julien Frémont

Profile

Julien Frémont works in a breathtakingly beautiful farm in the Pays d'Auge, Calvados. This is Camembert and Livarot country, and of course cider and Calvados, a place where cows and apple trees have defined the landscape for more time than can be remembered. It is green, lush, softly hilly, the soil rich clay with silex, and the climate humid and mild.

Frémont says that he would gladly do without his cows, about 80 when you count the youngsters born each year, and just deal with apple trees and apples, and the cider he makes from them. But he knows that cows and trees take care of each other, that his trees would not grow and age the way they do, or his apples taste the same, without the cows.

The farm has 45HA of grazing fields, 12HA of which are planted with apple trees. The cows mow the grass, prune the trees in summer and eat the fallen apples, until it's time for the harvest from late September until November. The apples are picked by hand in large baskets, then put into 50KG bags. The trees are a mix of old local varieties of acidic, late ripening apples.

The apples are washed and sorted, then pressed in the press Frémont ancestors built in 1765. Some juice is immediately bottled for apple juice, and the must for cider is put in large vats where fermentation starts. It is essential for fermentation to go slowly, mainly thanks to natural early winter cold, and racking. When the alcohol reaches about 4.5%, the must is bottled so that the secondary fermentation, creating the fizz, can start. This bottling is called Brut par nature.

A selection of apples comes from a particular orchard of old trees. Those are kept in the well-ventilated attic for several months, and passerillage occurs, where the apples dry out and the sugar levels concentrate. When these are pressed and fermented, they make a special bottling called Greniers (attics).