

Olivier Lemasson - Les Vins Contés

Profile

Olivier Lemasson is a sommelier who encountered natural wines when he worked for the retailer Eric Macé in Rennes, Brittany. Lemasson became passionate about these odd wines, and trained at Marcel Lapierre's winery in Morgon, Beaujolais, first by picking grapes four years in a row, then by working for a whole year in his vines and cellar. After a brief stint as a retailer at Square Trousseau in Paris, Lemasson's passion definitely took over, and he settled as a winemaker in Touraine.

The story of les Vins Contés is that of a retailer meeting a winemaker. In 2002, [Hervé Villemade](#) was looking to start a négociant business (i.e. buy grapes from other growers to vinify them). He picked Lemasson to be his partner, and les Vins Contés drew from their complementary talents. In 2006, they amiably parted ways so that Villemade could concentrate on his own estate again. Undeterred, Lemasson continued on with Vins Contés.

For many years the project was 100% purchased fruit; Olivier would source old vineyards worked organically, often seeking the obscure grapes of Touraine like Menu Pineau and Pineau d'Aunis. Eventually he was able to start renting two hectares of vines, and in 2016 was finally able to purchase his own land, nine hectares of vines he had previously been buying grapes from.

The wines are all made in an intentional "vin de soif" style; the whites are direct-pressed, vibrant and bright while the reds are for the most part short macerations and meant to be drunk fruity and young. Two cuvées, *Gamasutra* (from 100+ Gamay vines) and *Cheville de Fer* (from 100+ Côt vines), are made to age, though both are often easy-drinking on release.

Sick of having to fight with the AOC board for the Touraine appellation, Lemasson decided to intentionally de-classify all of his wines to Vin de France in 2012. Depending on the vintage, Olivier will either bottle the wines sulfur free or add a minuscule dose at bottling.