

Domaine Luneau-Papin

Profile

Pierre et Monique Luneau-Papin head this 50-hectare estate in Le Landreau, in the heart of Muscadet country, where small hamlets dot a landscape of vineyards on low hills. Their estate, also known as Domaine Pierre de la Grange, has been in existence since the early 18th century when it was already planted with Melon de Bourgogne, the Muscadet varietal. Pierre and Monique are the eighth generation of winemakers in the family. Pierre is a genial, low-key, distracted professor type. He is technically retired and has passed the torch to his son Pierre-Marie (who is officially heading the estate as of the 2011 vintage), but still very active in everyday aspects of cellar and vine work. His wife Monique, lively, energetic and equally genial, is the business manager.

Muscadet is an area where, unfortunately, a lot of undistinguished bulk wine is produced. Because of the size of their estate, and of the privileged terroir of the villages of Le Landreau, Vallet and La Chapelle Heulin, the Luneau family has opted for producing smaller cuvées from their several plots, which are always vinified separately so as to reflect their terroir's particular character. The soil is mainly micaschist and gneiss, but some plots are a mix of silica, volcanic rocks and schist. The estate has a high proportion of old vines, 40 years old on average, up to 65 years of age.

The harvest is done by hand -also a rarity in the region- to avoid any oxidation before pressing. There is an immediate light *débourbage* (separation of juice from gross lees), then a 4-week fermentation at 68 degrees, followed by 6 months of aging in stainless-steel vats on fine lees. This is the classic Muscadet-sur-lie process, where the wine is kept on its lees, with a fair amount of CO₂ as protection, until bottling in the spring following the harvest. The only modern technique used here is *macération pelliculaire* (maceration of lightly crushed berries before pressing), which varies in proportion according to the cuvées.



Luneau-Papin Soil.