

François Pinon

Profile

The wines of François Pinon are considered among the finest of Vouvray. François, a former child psychologist, took over the estate from his father in 1987, and has steadily made a name for the estate over the past 10 years. He is a serious winemaker whose main focus is "to keep the typicity of both the appellation and the vintage" in all his wines.

The vineyards are in the corniche of the Vallée de Cousse. The soil is clay and silica on a base of limestone (tuffeau) with flint (silex) and the area is rated among the top sites in the appellation for Vouvrays of distinction and long life. Pinon follows a discipline of plowing the vineyards, not using chemical fertilizers and pesticides and, of course, he harvests by hand and uses no cultured yeasts. All new plantings are done by selection and no nursery clones are used; the vines are an average of 25 years old. He is slowly moving towards organic certification with confidence that these methods produce the finest fruit.



The alcoholic fermentation occurs in wood barrels. Then the wines are aged in stainless-steel or *foudres* (big casks, about twice the size of bar-rique Bordelaise) to obtain a balance between fruit and reduction. There is one racking to remove the heavy lees and the wine remains on its fine lees until bottling, which takes place a full year after the harvest to "finish" the wine. Rather than use a large dose of SO₂, Pinon prefers to filter his wines to insure their stability and aging potential.

The Cuvée Tradition is what is termed a *vin tendre*; the sweetness is between a sec and demi-sec. It has a delicate sweetness in the attack that gives over to a pleasant citrus finish with resonance and length. It has flavors reminiscent of apples and quince with a slightly spicy accent. This wine will continue to develop with age, but is affable and charming when drunk young.

When the weather in September and October creates the right conditions for noble rot and/or *passerillage* (sun or wind-dried grapes), Pinon makes a whole range of Vouvrays: sec, demi-sec, *moëlleux*, and, more rarely, a *grain par grain* selection that results in a *liquoreux*.