

Puzelat-Bonhomme

Profile

Thierry Puzelat is the younger of the two brothers who run Clos du Tue Boeuf, their family estate in Les Montils. In the 90's, the estate had to contend with several difficult years of tiny crops, caused by late frost, mildew, hail or general bad weather, and revenues were tight. Thierry would have liked to expand the estate, by renting or buying more vineyards. Jean-Marie, in his late forties, did not want to add more vineyard and cellar work to his already heavy schedule. So Thierry started a *négociant* business, set up a winery in the village of Monthou-sur-Bièvre, and sourced excellent vineyards and vinetenders to buy their grapes.

True to his conviction that good wine is made from healthy grapes, he has selected vine growers who farm their plots organically, in *bio-dynamie* for some. He now offers a range of local wines, both from Touraine and Cheverny.

One of his most reliable sources is an estate tended in *bio-dynamie* by a neighbor and friend of the owners of Clos Roche Blanche in the hamlet of La Tesnière in Touraine. From vines growing on a soil of clay with silex over hard limestone, Puzelat buys Chenin blanc, Menu Pineau and Pineau d'Aunis grapes at harvest time. Menu Pineau, also called Arbois, is an old Loire varietal that survives in some areas, but is rarely vinified on its own. Puzelat is very familiar with it since the Clos du Tue Boeuf grows some (Touraine Brin de Chèvre), and he likes the grape for its originality, its mineral and spicy character with apple and apricot pit aromas.

Pineau d'Aunis, sometimes called Pineau rouge, is another obscure, ancient varietal that survives in Touraine, most of the time used in blends with Cabernet franc to produce rosé. Even when vinified as a red wine, as is the case here, it is very light in color, body and alcohol and is deliciously refreshing, spicy, lively and aromatic.