

Clos du Tue-Boeuf

Profile

Since the Middle Ages, there have been records about the lieu-dit "le Tue-Boeuf" and its excellent wines which were enjoyed by the local nobility and the kings of France. The family name Puzelat is mentioned in 15th century documents.

History, though, is not the story here. It's about two brothers, Jean-Marie and Thierry Puzelat, who tend their 10-hectare family estate in Les Montils (part of the Cheverny AOC) and rent 6 hectares in a village nearby to produce AOC Touraine. The region, near the hunting grounds of Sologne, has always used a wide variety of grapes. Since the 60's, the Puzelats' father had been making his own selections of vines to replant, leaving his sons with vines of Sauvignon Blanc, Chenin Blanc, Chardonnay, Pinot Gris, Menu Pineau (or Arbois), Pinot Noir, Gamay, Cabernet Franc and Côt (or Malbec).

Jean-Marie was joined on the estate by his younger brother Thierry in the early 90's and they began converting their vines to organic viticulture. When the Cheverny AOC was created with the 1993 vintage, some varieties became outlawed from the blends, and the brothers started a yearly struggle to get their wines accepted under the new appellation. Now, when a wine is rejected, they sell it under a Vin de Pays or Vin de France label; their customers know and trust their work and methods, so quality is never put into question.

A visit to their cellar feels like a *tour de France* of varieties, each wine with its distinct personality, lovely label and wonderful name. Some cuvées are so small that there is never enough to go around. Of the wines which have made it to these shores, there are several from Touraine: *Le Buisson Pouilleux*, a Sauvignon Blanc from old vines - bright, very mineral, with notes of verbena and honeysuckle; *Le Brin de Chèvre*, from Menu Pineau grapes - floral, light and citrusy; *La Guerre*, a sturdy red made with Gamay and Côt (Malbec) - spicy, peppery and requiring some bottle age and a red Cheverny *La Caillère*, Pinot Noir with Gamay - juicy, fruity and round.

CHEVERNY:

Size: 5,5 hectares of red, 2 hectares of white

Soils: clay and flint on limestone, gravelly siliceous clay

Grapes: Pinot Noir, Gamay, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc

Vines: between 10 and 30 years old.

Yields: 40 hl/ha

TOURAINES:

Size: 2,5 hectares of red, 4 hectares of white

Soils: Clay and flint, sand and gravel

Grapes: Gamay, Cabernet Franc, Côt, Sauvignon Blanc, Chenin Blanc, Menu Pineau

Yields: 45-50 hl/ha

VIN DE FRANCE:

Size: 2,5 hectares

Soil: Clay and flint on limestone

Grapes: Pinot Gris, Chardonnay

Vines: 25 to 35 years old.

Yields: 35 hl/ha