

Jean Thévenet/Domaine de Bongran

Profile

In today's context, it's hard to imagine terms like "organic viticulture", "minimal intervention winemaking" and "natural wine" didn't always exist. Jean Thévenet, along with the likes of Marcel Lapierre and Pierre Overnoy, are largely credited with the development of these work philosophies throughout France in the early 80's.

The estate of *Bongran* consists of 4,5 h grown on clay with white marl subsoils. Jean's father originally owned a few ares in the area; after realizing the terroir's potential, he started buying surrounding plots from his neighbors in exchange for flatland, which has long been converted to housing. A single bottling of Viré-Clessé is produced, and is undoubtedly one of the most unique expressions of Chardonnay being made today. The wine's natural fermentation usually takes close to two years, at which time it is bottled and held in the Thévenet's cellar, to be released at their discretion (2006 is the currently available vintage). Grapes here mature much later than the norm, and produce a wine that is naturally high in alcohol, rich in body, bright in minerality, acidity and invariably has traces of residual sugar. This creates incredible food pairings possibilities with richer dishes and cheeses. The wines also age incredibly.