

Hubert Laferrère/ Domaine Saint-Denis

Profile

Located in the heart of the Mâconnais, Hubert Laferrère is the only independent vigneron in the village of Lugny. This is far from insignificant: Lugny happens to be home to the second biggest cave coopérative in France. Amongst an ocean of Chardonnay vineyards farmed conventionally for the coop, Hubert has taken the opposite approach.

Laferrère is extremely conscientious and dedicated to the viticultural work applied to his 5.5 hectares of land. Over the years, he has focused increasingly on bio-diversity in the vineyards. He has stopped plowing entirely, favoring superficial work of the soils, occasionally with his horse but also with a rouleau FACA, a device that crushes grass softly, creating a natural cover crop in every other row each year. Hubert grafts all his new plants in place with a diverse amount of clones, many in massale. Very few treatments are applied in the vines, and only when deemed necessary.

For the whites, the grapes are hand-harvested, then direct-pressed and racked to enamel-lined tanks, where the juice ferments off its native yeasts. The wines stay on the lees all winter, where frequent battonages occur. With the exception of an emergency, sulfur is only added bottling, a tiny dose of 15-20 mg/L. The reds, more of a rarity for Hubert, see a short, six day maceration and age in old Burgundian barrels.

Six kilometers from our house in Saint-Gengoux-de-Scissé, Hubert's sign greets us every time we enter Lugny to shop at its excellent farmer's market and butcher. It is not infrequent for us to bump into him there: importing his wines to the States is a lovely way to bridge the gap between our two homes.