

DOMAINE SAINT NICOLAS

Haut des Clous

THE ESTATE

For Thierry Michon, the gregarious force behind one of the Loire's best-kept secrets, Domaine Saint Nicolas, it's all about the soil. Working on schist and silex a stone's throw away from the Atlantic, Thierry is the prophet of biodynamics in this tiny viticultural area. His vineyards never see a non-organic product. He has slowly purchased buffer zones all around his property to prevent chemical products from other winemakers from seeping into his parcels. For him, biodynamics isn't a pragmatic consideration, it's a religion.

Domaine Saint Nicolas sits at the extreme southern end of the Loire delta, just south of Muscadet, but there is no Melon de Bourgogne planted here. Instead, Thierry works old vines of Chenin Blanc, Chardonnay, Grolleau Gris, Gamay, Pinot Noir, Negrette, and Cabernet Franc. If you think working 40 hectares biodynamically (certified by BIODYVIN & DEMETER) is easy, you're crazy. Working by horse and tractor, Thierry usually answers his cell phone from the vineyard, often as late as 10:00 at night. You will not find a more dedicated vigneron in France.



Harvest is, of course, by hand. The whites pass through a sorting table and are then gently pressed and allowed to ferment in large wooden vats or stainless steel tanks. The reds are sorted and then crushed by foot in foudre. The whites and rosés are released as early as March of the year after harvest while many of the reds are aged for up to 18 months in large oak vats, foudres, or demi-muids.



THE DETAILS

All lovers of Chenin Blanc should be on the lookout for Le Haut des Clous from Domaine Saint Nicolas. A charming wine in its youth it also has a tremendous capacity to age effortlessly. If tasted blind it might remind you of Savennières but there is a distinct salty minerality and a sappy quality that is a unique signature of Chenin grown on schist and clay soils so close to the Atlantic. Bottled unfinned and unfiltered.

COUNTRY

France

APPELLATION

Fiefs Vendéens

ELEVATION

25 meters

VARIETIES

Chenin Blanc, Chardonnay

SOIL

Clay, schist, quartz

VINE AGE

25 years old

FARMING

Certified biodynamic (DEMETER & BIODYVIN)

FERMENTATION

Hand harvested, pneumatic pressing, natural yeast fermentation in oak vats

AGING

Aged 10 months in Stockinger foudres, bottled unfinned and unfiltered with total sulfites of 43mg/L.

FOR THE RECORD

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