

DOMAINE SAINT NICOLAS

La Grande Pièce

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

La Grande Pièce takes its name from the large, 600L French oak demi-muids in which it is aged. It is sourced from Thierry's oldest vines of Pinot Noir that average 30 years old and are planted on red clay and pink schist soils. These plots share the same southwestern exposure as those used for Cuvée Jacques, resulting in a wine of remarkable concentration from yields of only 15hl/ha on average.

COUNTRY

France

APPELLATION

Fiefs Vendéens

ELEVATION

25 meters

VARIETIES

Pinot Noir

SOIL

Red clay & pink schist

VINE AGE

30 years old

FARMING

Certified biodynamic (DEMETER & BIODYVIN)

FERMENTATION

Hand harvested, hand sorted, 80% destemmed, natural yeast fermentation in vat, 28 day maceration with pigeage

AGING

Aged 18 month in new French oak demi-muids, bottled unfiltered, total sulfites 38mg/L

FOR THE RECORD

2010 La Grande Pièce – *Wine Advocate* – 92

2009 La Grande Pièce – *Wine Advocate* – 93+