

DOMAINE SAINT NICOLAS

Le Poiré

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

An obscure variety in its place of origin north of Toulouse in Fronton, Négrette is a difficult grape to cultivate but it takes well to high-acid soils like schist. In warmer climates it can be blowsy and fruity but in the maritime climate of the Fief Vendéens it is fresh and savory – like a hypothetical cross between Gamay and Cot.

COUNTRY

France

APPELLATION

Fiefs Vendéens

ELEVATION

25 meters

VARIETIES

Négrette

SOIL

Schist, granite, clay

VINE AGE

20 years old

FARMING

Certified biodynamic (DEMETER & BIODYVIN)

FERMENTATION

Hand harvested, hand sorted, destemmed, natural yeast fermentation in vat, 21 day maceration with pigeage

AGING

Aged 15 months in French oak demi-muids, bottled unfiltered, total sulfites 15mg/L

FOR THE RECORD

2012 Le Poiré – Wine Advocate – 92

2011 Le Poiré – Wine Advocate – 90

2010 Le Poiré – Wine Advocate – 91

