

DOMAINE SAINT NICOLAS

Pinot Noir

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

After years of visiting and tasting with Thierry, we've come to love his Pinot Noirs starting with the rosé and running the table all the way to La Grande Pièce. Pinot Noir in the Fief Vendéens is truly unique for two reasons: the maritime climate and the schist soils. You can find one or another of these variables in places like the Ahr, Central Otago or the true Sonoma Coast but never together.

COUNTRY

France

APPELLATION

Fiefs Vendéens

ELEVATION

25 meters

VARIETIES

Pinot Noir

SOIL

Clay, schist, quartz

VINE AGE

15–25 years old

FARMING

Certified biodynamic (DEMETER & BIODYVIN)

FERMENTATION

Hand harvested, hand sorted, destemmed, natural yeast fermentation in tank, 14 day maceration with pigeage

AGING

Aged 10 month in French oak foudres, bottled unfiltered and unfiltered, total sulfites 13mg/L

FOR THE RECORD

2015 Pinot Noir – Wine Advocate – 90

