

# DAMIEN LAUREAU

## Savennières Le Bel Ouvrage

### THE ESTATE

Of all the regions of the Loire valley that make wines from Chenin Blanc, Savennières is perhaps the most challenging. Partly due to the schistous terroir, but also because growers in the region have had a tendency to produce wines reductively. Until the last decade, most also harvested their grapes with a potential alcohol of 12°, picking them when they were still green in color. All of these practices resulted in backward, stern and fairly austere wines that took at least a decade to reach a point where they began to show their charms. Many growers in the region still follow this very traditional method to produce Savennières, and it is these wines that have largely defined “typicity.” Recently this trend has begun to change. Better farming, in many cases biodynamic or organic, reduced yields, hand harvesting grapes that are golden in color, and using neutral wood barrels for aging, and less sulfur during winemaking. These deliberate steps produce more approachable wines that do not require aging or a rigorous, intellectual understanding of the charms of Chenin grown on schist in order to enjoy them.



Working out of a tiny shed, Damien Laureau is one of Savennières new pioneering winemakers. Fruit extracts and other non-synthetic treatments are used on the vines in place of harsh chemicals, and quite frankly, you can tell it just by looking at the vineyards. They feel alive, with wildlife and indigenous plants sharing the space with Damien’s healthy vines of Chenin Blanc. Damien harvests just when the grapes turn yellow to take advantage of the richness that the sun brings. As a result, the wines are a beautiful balance of richness, concentration, lively acidity, and length.

### THE DETAILS

Bel Ouvrage is made from a blend of three terroirs located in eastern part of Savennières near the village of Épiré. These are grey schist and rhyolite terroirs including one that is adjacent to the Coulée de Serrant. More backward and slower to evolve than Les Genêts, Bel Ouvrage is aged for 12 months in neutral French oak then 11 months in tank before bottling.



#### COUNTRY

France

#### APPELLATION

Savennières

#### ELEVATION

60-65 meters

#### VARIETIES

Chenin Blanc

#### SOIL

Schist, rhyolite, clay

#### VINE AGE

25-50 years old

#### FARMING

Certified organic (ECOCERT)

#### FERMENTATION

Hand harvested and natural yeast fermentation in tank

#### AGING

12 months in 400L French oak barrels, 5-10% new, then 11 months in tank before bottling unfiltered & unfiltered

### FOR THE RECORD

Intense and focused, mainly from schistous soils, giving the wine a dart-like precision. Yields of 28hl/ha; concentration of quince and citrus with just enough flesh to add curves.

– 2015 Le Bel Ouvrage– Decanter – 96 points

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**JON-DAVID  
HEADRICK  
SELECTIONS**