

DOMAINE DE LA NOBLAIE

Chinon Blanc Chante le Vent

THE ESTATE

A trip to Domaine de la Noblaie is like stepping back in time. For starters, the Crusaders used to live in their back yard. It is still called “The Place of the White Coats” to this day as this parcel of vines was once home to a taxing station used to finance the crusades. The house was started sometime in the 15th or 16th century. They still use a chalk vat that was dug around the 16th or 17th centuries.

Today, the domaine is home base for four generations with Jérôme Billard, the son of François and Madeleine Billard, who leads the property now. Jérôme was fortunate to earn an internship at Chateau Petrus in Bordeaux while still in school and then to earn a spot at Dominus in California. I met Jérôme in Chinon just days after his return to Chinon from California in 2003 and saw enormous potential. He has certainly lived up to that and more.



Noblaie sits at one of the highest points of the Chinon appellation and is essentially two long, sloping hillsides covering 24 hectares. The soil is mostly limestone (some of it quite deep) covered with clay and limestone shards. The property is certified organic by Ecocert and has been working this way since about 2005. All harvests are carried out by hand (rare in Chinon) and in multiple passes through the vines. Unlike many other properties that hand harvest, Noblaie has the same team year after year and the vineyard and winery triage is quite severe. The point is not to produce green or vegetal Cabernet Franc but to find that perfect razor’s edge maturity that privileges the earthiness and spiciness of the varietal while showing off the fruit and elegance at the same time.

THE DETAILS

White Chinon is about as rare as it gets. With only 2% of the AOC planted to Chenin Blanc, it is made by only a handful of estates, and only a small amount is allocated to the United States. Jerome Billard’s version resembles a top-flight Montlouis with beautiful freshness and mineral complexity. A waxy, floral masterpiece from 50-year-old vines grown on tuffeau soils then harvested by hand, pressed, and fermented by indigenous yeast in tank.

COUNTRY

France

APPELLATION

Chinon

ELEVATION

50-65 meters

VARIETIES

Chenin Blanc

SOIL

Tuffeau, clay

VINE AGE

50 years old

FARMING

Certified organic (ECOCERT)

FERMENTATION

Hand harvested in three passes, gentle pressing and natural yeast fermentation in tank

AGING

Aged 6 months in tank

FOR THE RECORD

2019 Chinon Chante le Vent – *Wine Advocate* – 92

2018 Chinon Chante le Vent – *Vinous Media* – 91

2017 Chinon Chante le Vent – *Vinous Media* – 92

