

DOMAINE DE LA NOBLAIE

Chinon Le Temps des Cerises

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

Les Temps des Cerises, or as we like to call it, “Cherry Time!” is the cuvée formerly known as just “Chinon”. It is Jérôme’s calling card and represents a cuvée blended from vines averaging 30 years old on a variety of tuffeau soils – sandy, clay and rockier limestone. Bright, forthright and varietally pure Cabernet Franc, it is fermented and aged in tank to preserve its charm and vigor.

COUNTRY

France

APPELLATION

Chinon

ELEVATION

50-65 meters

VARIETIES

Cabernet Franc

SOIL

Tuffeau, clay, sand limestone

VINE AGE

30 years old

FARMING

Certified organic (ECOCERT)

FERMENTATION

Hand harvested, natural yeast fermentation in tank

AGING

Aged 5 months in tank, no SO2 until bottling

FOR THE RECORD

Classic fresh and savory Chinon nose, delivering lots of black pepper, tomato and olive. On the palate, thought, it’s plush and fruity, with fleshy plum and ripe cherry, balanced by chalk and more black pepper..

– 2019 Le Temps des Cerises – Vinous Media – 90 points

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**JON-DAVID
HEADRICK
SELECTIONS**