

VOUETTE & SORBÉE

Blanc d'Argile

THE ESTATE

Vouette & Sorbée wasn't necessarily Bertrand Gautherot's plan when he took over his family's vineyards in Buxières-sur-Acre. Initially he was going to farm his parcels conventionally and sell his grapes to large Champagne houses in the north. With an evolving respect for his terroir and concern for his young family, Bertrand set about declaring independence from the outdated echelle system and the negative pressure it places on growers. Inspired by friends Jérôme Prévost and Pierre Larmandier, he converted his vineyards to biodynamics, and he received certification from Demeter in 1998 and released his first Champagne in 2001.



Located in the Côte des Bar, Bertrand's estate is named after two of his lieu-dits: Vouette & Sorbée. Unlike the vineyards in the north of Champagne with their fine chalky soils, the Côte des Bar is more like Chablis – dense, rocky, Kimmeridgian, and Portlandian limestone clay soils. Historically Pinot Noir was the dominant variety in this region, but Bertrand is slowly expanding his Chardonnay and Pinot Blanc holdings. If asked, Bertrand will say that he is a farmer first and foremost, and in addition to vines, he raises chickens and cattle and operates a nearly self-sustaining enclosed ecosystem. Bertrand's range is made entirely from hand-harvested grapes and fermented with indigenous yeasts in French oak barrels. Nothing is chaptalized, filtered, or acidified. There are no cold macerations, and a small amount of SO₂ is added right after the grapes are pressed. Bertrand prefers to make wines as transparent as possible, so he doesn't use liqueur de l'expédition.



THE DETAILS

Mainly from a small parcel of Chardonnay in Briaunes supplemented with scattered plantings of Chardonnay in Bertrand's other lieux-dits. Small in volume now, it will increase when the young vines in Vouette begin to come online. Mineral, nougat, salty and long – basically a Grand Cru Chablis with bubbles.

COUNTRY

France

APPELLATION

Champagne

ELEVATION

200 meters

VARIETIES

Chardonnay

SOIL

Clay, kimmeridgian limestone

VINE AGE

15 years old

FARMING

Certified organic & biodynamic (ECOCERT & DEMETER)

FERMENTATION

Hand harvested, natural yeast fermentation in French oak, minimal SO₂

AGING

18 months on the lees, bottled without dosage

FOR THE RECORD

NV Blanc d'Argile – *Wine Advocate* – 93

NV Blanc d'Argile – *Vinous Media* – 93