



DOMAINE YANNICK AMIRAULT

Bâtard-Princesse

Domaine Amirault was founded in 1977 by Yannick with only 3.9 hectares of vines he inherited from his grandfather, Eugène Amirault. Since that time he and his son Benoît, who joined the family business in 2003, have expanded their holding to 20 hectares of vineyards in both Bourgueil and Saint-Nicolas de Bourgueil. An early skeptic of industrial farming practices, Yannick had gradually weaned his vineyards off synthetic inputs, completing this process in 1997. Work in the vineyard and cellar follows the lunar calendar and the estate received organic certification in 2009. While these practices may seem fashionable, they are simply a return to the way Eugène Amirault made wine for his family.

Under Benoît the existing minimalistic cellar practices have become even more transparent. Harvest has always been done by hand and is initiated by many factors all guided by Yannick and Benoît's combined experience. Each parcel is picked at its own optimal ripeness and in several passes and the bunches are transported to the cellar where they are sorted again and destemmed. Fermentations are indigenous and conducted in large, open-topped, conical oak vats. Macerations are long, lasting up to sixty days with pigeage only at the very beginning of the fermentation and remontage reserved only for the ripest vintages and cuvées to prevent more rustic tannins in the wines. Only the first press is used and is aged in neutral vessels: amphorae, French oak demi-muids, and well-seasoned oak vats. New wood is added only to replenish their stock of barrels.

Before phylloxera, Chenin Blanc was planted alongside Cabernet Franc in the western Touraine, in what would become AOCs Chinon, Bourgueil, and St-Nicolas de Bourgueil. All three appellations were established in 1937, but only in Chinon was Chenin allowed to remain. As a result, any Chenin Blanc north of the Loire was replaced with Cabernet Franc. Wishing to revive a tradition extinct for nearly a century, Benoît Amirault began replanting Chenin Blanc in 2017. He chose a terroir suited to Chenin and adjacent to Le Grand Clos – a shallow, flinty clay-limestone soil over tuffeau bedrock. Bâtard-Princesse is a fitting name for such an illicit endeavor resulting in a remarkably aristocratic wine. Given the youth of these vines, this portends a bright future for the return of Chenin to Bourgueil. Just give the INAO about another century to figure this out.

ORIGIN

France

APPELLATION

Val de Loire

SOIL

Clay and flint over tuffeau

AGE OF VINES

5

ELEVATION

50 meters

VARIETIES

Chenin Blanc

FARMING

Certified organic (AB)

FERMENTATION

Hand-harvested, double sorting, slow direct pressing, natural yeast fermentation in French oak barrels

AGING

10 months in French oak barrels

