



# DOMAINE SAINTE MADELEINE

## Vézelay Les Saulniers

Vézelay, in many ways, is much like hundreds of small rural villages in France. Built on a hill overlooking hedge-lined tidy fields mixed with dense forests, the countryside around Vézelay is timeless, comforting, and quintessentially pastoral. It would be easy to overlook Vézelay if not also home to one of Romanesque architecture's finest monuments, the Basilica of Sainte Madeleine. The prosperity and preservation of Vézelay owe much to the shrine of Mary Magdalene. Since wine is an essential part of the daily eucharist, the unbroken history of wine growing in Vézelay can be traced back over a millennium. Unfortunately, unlike other regions linked to Paris either by navigatable rivers and canals or by rail, when phylloxera struck Vézelay in the late 19th century, a vast majority of the vineyards were lost either converted to pastureland or allowed to become overgrown by the surrounding forests. From an estimated 1000 hectares of vines before phylloxera, only 10 hectares were left by the mid-1970s.

### ORIGIN

*France*

### APPELLATION

*Vézelay*

### SOIL

*Bathonian clay-limestone*

### AGE OF VINES

*30*

### ELEVATION

*245-260 meters*

### VARIETIES

*Chardonnay*

### FARMING

*In conversion to certified organic*

### FERMENTATION

*Hand harvested, whole cluster pressing, natural yeast fermentation in stainless steel tanks, malo in the Spring*

### AGING

*7 months on the lees in stainless steel tanks*

Among the second generation of winegrowers in Vézelay are Alexandre and Blandine Corguillé. Alexandre is descended from farmers from Seine-et-Marne, but when he worked a harvest in Champagne at the age of 17, he instantly knew he wanted to become a viticulturalist. While working in Provence and Bandol and raising a young family with Blandine, they decided that they wanted to start their own project and be closer to family. Since Blandine was born and raised in Burgundy, when a chance posting about a parcel for sale in Vézelay they jumped at the chance to move closer to home. Alexandre oversees all aspects of the work in the vineyard, from the planting through the bottling of the wines. Initially, the wines were made at the Cave Cooperative, but now he leases space from Domaine de la Cadette while searching for a permanent home for his cellar. Harvest is manual, and the fruit sees a rigorous selection before the whole clusters are gently pressed into stainless steel tanks. Fermentations are spontaneous, and malo occurs naturally the following Spring.

Les Saulniers is a parcel of 30-year-old-vines situated midslope on a hill crowned by forest southwest of the village of Saint-Père. Curving around the west-facing edge of the hill, the vines of Les Saulniers face northwest, west, and southwest, giving the wines from here precision and clarity that is remarkable for such a young appellation. Alexandre feels that this site is so unique that it will eventually be recognized as a 1er cru.

