

DOMAINE DE LA NOBLAIE

CHINON 'LES BLANCS MANTEAUX'

ORIGIN

Ligré, Loire, France

WINE TYPE & VARIETIES

Still red, Cabernet Franc

VINEYARD

Les Blanc Manteaux

SOIL

Tuffeau limestone

AGE OF VINES

+ 65 y/o

VITICULTURE

Organic and biodynamic

VINIFICATION

Manual harvest, slow whole bunch pressing, gentle maceration, indigenous yeast, spontaneous fermentation, moved through cellar by gravity 12 months ageing on lees in demi-muid of 500 L, time in stainless steel before bottling. Moderate use of sulphur.

"I think Jérôme Billard is one of the most exciting new talents to emerge from the Chinon appellation in the past decade." – Richard Kelley

A trip to Domaine de la Noblaie is like stepping back in time. For starters, the Crusaders used to live in their backyard. 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 Christian 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. From the top of the Les Chiens-Chiens parcel, you can look out across the river to the Chateau de Chinon, where Joan of Arc asked Charles VII for the chance to lead his army. Things didn't work out so well for her.

The domaine has undertaken restoration of the old buildings, cellars and presses as an homage to an old way of winemaking.

Consisting of beautiful limestone clay plateaus and hillsides, the domaine consists of 20 hectares of Cabernet Franc and 6 of Chenin Blanc. The vines are surrounded by woods that protect them from frost & thunderstorms and are studded with parcels of cereals (triticale, peas, wheat, sunflowers), all grown organic. Wildlife, both wild and domestic, is not left behind: chickens tirelessly roam the vineyards closest to the cellar. An apiary has been installed a little further for a few decades. A herd of sheep grazes the land into meadows and fallow in the summer and grazes the plant covers of the vines during winter.

Today, the Domaine is home base for four generations (grand-mère usually holds court in the living room while holding her new iPad.) It is 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 at Dominus in California.

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.



VIN EST. 2012

The point is not to produce green or vegetal Cabernet Franc but to find that perfect razor's edge maturity that privileges the varietal's earthiness and spiciness while showing off the fruit and elegance at the same time.

Vinifications are long and slow, with indigenous yeasts used exclusively. Some of the wines are fermented in stainless steel, some in barrel, and some in chalk. Yes, chalk.