

## Passion x 3 – Wine, beef and wood



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– **W**ine, beef and wood. Those are my three passions, says Pierre Vincent with a smile.

In his life he has managed well to combine the three. He runs the 42 hectare, fully biodynamic, Domaine de la Vougeraie in Premeaux-Prissey. He comes from a stockbreeding family specializing in Charolais beef and he is involved in the process of selecting the wood used for the barrels at the domaine.

– My father is

a farmer, he continues. When I was growing up, like many others, I didn't want to have the same job as my parents. But I was, and I still am, very interested in terroir, soil, nature and science. My grandfather was a Burgundy lover, especially Vosne-Romanée. But that was 40 years ago, when Vosne-Romanée was less expensive.

Pierre Vincent is walking around the cellars of Domaine de la Vougeraie, pipette in hand, moving between barrels of Corton, Charnes-Chambertin, Clos de Vougeot, Bonnes Mares and Musigny. This has been his professional home since 2006 when he took on the winemaking duties after Pascal Marchand.



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– In terms of winemaking our styles are different, he says. My style is more elegant. I love the purity and finesse of the pinot noir. And I love the minerality of the chardonnay.

The domaine was created in 1999 when Jean-Charles Boisset brought together a number of vineyards from the Boisset family under the name of Domaine de la Vougeraie. Back then focus was on the Côte de Nuits. About two thirds of the vineyard holdings were in the northern half of the Côte d'Or. Only in Vougeot the domaine had ten hectares. Since then much land outside

the Côte de Nuits has been added.

– In recent years we have bought regional appellations – Bourgogne, Bourgogne Hautes-Côtes de Nuits and Bourgogne Hautes-Côtes de Beaune, says Pierre Vincent. In 2014 we bought two hectares in Puligny-Montrachet. In village appellation we got Noyer Bret and Rue aux Vaches. In premier cru we got Champ Gain and in grand cru we got Bâtard-Montrachet, Bienvenues-Bâtard-Montrachet and Chevalier-Montrachet.

– When your boss is Mr Boisset it is much easier to buy vineyards, smiles Pierre Vincent. If I was running this domaine it would not be possible. You need someone with the financial power. Also, when you are biodynamic and wish to produce more wine you can't buy grapes. You need to have your own certified vineyards.



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The ten hectares in Vougeot include two parcels of grand cru in Clos de Vougeot. There is the white premier cru monopole of Le Clos Blanc de Vougeot and there is the village appellation monopole of Le Clos du Prieuré, which comes in both red and white.

– One of our two parcels in Clos de Vougeot is a small one at the bottom, says Pierre Vincent. Just 0.30 ha, which Mr Boisset got in 1993 when he bought the Pierre Ponnelle domaine.

– The other parcel is at the top, just next to the entrance of the castle. It is 1.2 ha and was bought in 1997 from L'Heritier-Guyot.

– The two parcels are harvested and vinified separately. We blend them just one month before bottling. In general the parcel at the bottom is cooler, so it produces a more tannic wine. At the top you have more finesse. I think both are interesting, but when we blend we get a very good blend. We are lucky, because the proportions are good – 80 per cent from the top and 20 per cent from the bottom. The opposite would have been more difficult.

For both parcels 50 per cent of whole bunches are used. The average age of the vines is 65 years for the top parcel and 25 years for the bottom one.



The village of Vougeot, squeezed in between Chambolle-Musigny and Flagey-Échezeaux, is of course primarily known for its grand cru, the mighty Clos de Vougeot. Unlike other villages in the Côte d'Or Vougeot has very little village appellation and premier cru land. While the Clos itself covers 49.13 ha, there is only 10.93 ha premier cru and 3.38 ha of village appellation Vougeot.

– Our premier cru monopole in Vougeot,

Le Clos Blanc de Vougeot, is just in front of the Château du Clos de Vougeot, says Pierre Vincent. It's typical soil for white wine. Only limestone. There is only 20 metres between Le Clos Blanc and Clos de Vougeot, where the soil contain more iron and clay. Typical soil for pinot noir. They are not far apart, but in terms of soil they are very different.

Le Clos Blanc de Vougeot has been planted with vines since the ninth century. There is also a tradition to have some pinot gris and pinot blanc, five per cent in total, planted among the chardonnay vines, which is being maintained by Pierre Vincent.

– It is said that the first vineyards to be planted in white was Meursault Perrières, Corton-Charlemagne and Le Clos Blanc de Vougeot, continues Pierre Vincent. Le Clos Blanc de Vougeot is a wine with less Côte de Nuits-character than other wines from this part of the Côte d'Or. Many say it is like a Chablis on the nose, but with the power of a Meursault on the palate. It ages very well and would say it needs at least ten years.







The wood used for the barrels comes from the forest in nearby Cîteaux. Pierre Vincent is involved in choosing the trees to be used for the barrels.

– The Cîteaux is large, he says. If you are too close to the Saône there is too much humidity, which is not good for oak. You get wood which is not fine-grained enough. Around Saint-Nicolas and Saint-Bernard it is drier and therefore the quality is higher. The trees need to be at least 200 years old.

The village appellation Vougeot, Le Clos du Prieuré, is planted with both pinot noir and chardonnay. The part next to the river Vouge, where you have a bit more humidity, is better suited for chardonnay.

– Le Clos du Prieuré is part of the *lieu-dit* called Le Village. On the other side of the Vouge you have Chambolle-Musigny. It has been planted in both red and white for a very long time. Already when it belonged to the Benedictine Priory of the Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés in Paris many centuries ago it produced wine in both colours.

– The white cuvée is a typical white wine from the Côte de Nuits. Rich and opulent. The soil is clay and limestone, so I would say it is a kind of soil better suited for red than white. But the white is very easy-drinking and approachable. A wine to drink after a maximum of three years.

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