

Sébastien Brunet

Vouvray 'Arpent' Sec



Appellation: Vouvray

Cuvée: Arpent

Color: White

Grapes: Chenin Blanc

About: Sébastien's entry level wine made from a selection of almost all of his vineyards. A perfect demonstration of how Sébastien makes some of the most taut yet expressive wines of all Vouvray. The Cuvée name comes the first year of production, 2007, when all the fruit came from a single parcel sized "one Arpent", which is an old French unit of measure, just under half a hectare.

Vines

Location: from the communes of Chançay and Vernou

Size: 5 hectares

Age: vines planted in 1980

Soils: clay soils comprising a lot of silex

Exposition: north-facing

Altitude: 100m

Training: on wire, cordon de royat

Farming: organic, cover crops

Average yield hl/ha: 40

Climate: continental with cool, wet winters and hot, dry summers

Winemaking

Fruit is hand harvested into small 15kg boxes, and carefully sorted on arrival at the winery. It's immediately very slowly pressed for about 5h and cold-settled overnight. Moved to stainless steel tank, it's fermented using natural yeasts at a naturally cool cellar temperature, around 16 to 22°. About 20% is moved to finish ferment and then to age in 10 year old barriques. No sulfites are added until just before bottling. It's aged for 6 months before bottling, without fining or filtration, except for a gross filtration to remove large particles.

"Picture perfect Chenin" – Jancis Robinson



Sébastien Brunet is a fast-rising new star of the Touraine region of the Loire. Based in Vouvray at Chançay, Indre-et-Loire, just north of the river between Tours and Blois, he is helping to re-define Chenin Blanc.

Sébastien's a big, young guy, quiet and reserved – preferring, you sense, to let the wines do the talking.

His wines possess a minimalist beauty. They're perfectly ripe in both essential aromatics and structure, without any dilution or superfluity, a great achievement with Chenin Blanc in Vouvray, where most wines are over-cropped, under-ripe, and over-chaptalised. Sébastien's wines are quiet, sensitive, pure reflections of their terroir.

He works with Chenin Blanc only, from which he produces several styles, sparkling, dry in various degrees, and a couple of sweet wines. This is a grape which, in the right hands, can transform magically with every nuance of the soil and climate in which it's grown. Chenin Blanc has been planted in Vouvray since the 13th century, while the vineyard was first planted by the monks of Marmoutier, near Tours, which was founded in the 3rd century. While Orbois (aka Menu Pineau) is permitted, in fact it's rarely used.

Sébastien took over the family Domaine in 2006 at a young age. He attended the Lycée viticole d'Amboise where he became friends with Vincent Careme and to whose advice he listened. He has quietly steered the Domaine, created by his father in 1974 (and previously called La Roche Fleurie), into fine organic production, and the recognition of his peers, while two previous generations had cultivated vines but sold fruit to a local cooperative.

The Domaine comprises 15 hectares around the communes of Chançay and Vernou, along the valley of the Brenne, a small tributary of the Loire that runs perpendicular to the North, on which vines are sited on both the first hillside and the plateau behind. The most northerly plots are in the village of Reugny and follow the course of the Brenne down through Chançay, the hamlet of La Folie and onto Vernou, where the stream joins the Loire itself.

Soils are comprised of clay, limestone, and much silex, a type of quartz stone. The climate is cool and humid where the Atlantic meets Continental but sheltered to the north by the Coteau de Loir; it can be a challenge for organic viticulture, each year brings different weather, sometimes very wet, sometimes a heatwave, thus vintage variation, and consequent fascination. It's this terroir that gives Sébastien the base to produce magic and he's modest about the work he does to produce "simply ripe and healthy" grapes from it.

He occupies an amazing cellar in La Chançay that comprises 10 kilometres of tunnels carved out of the tufa (chalk) hillside and which was previously used as a mushroom farm. It provides perfect conditions for wine production, being cool and damp – but may be rather hazardous if you don't know where you're going. His presses are always very slow and gentle lasting around 4 hours and he always allows the wine to cold settle for up to 48h before fermentation. The cool of the settle and the low pH of the wine tends to block the malo from happening and there's a gentle tangential filtration before bottling to ensure stability.

Certified by 

"Sébastien Brunet took over the family domaine in 2007 after the passing of his father. Brunet has converted to organic viticulture, achieving certification in 2016. His production is 50/50 still/sparkling, and he focuses on dry wines, which he believes are a better vehicle for terroir than sweeter styles. He is certainly a modern Vouvray producer, making sparkling as well as a range of still, dry whites, and a sweet wine when nature permits. Wild fermentation is the norm here, and foudres are often used as the fermentation vessel. Brunet's Renaissance is benchmark dry Vouvrays." – Vinous