



Country:

France

Region:

Loire Valley > Chinon

Estate owned by:

Philippe Brocourt

Winemaker:

Philippe Brocourt

Vineyards:

Lutte Raisonnée, practicing rigorous sustainable farming on 35 hectares.

Year founded:

1986

Home link:

domainebrocourt.blogspot.com/

Production:

“Les Gravieres” Chinon Rouge:

3,200 cases

“Les Coteaux” Chinon Rouge:

2,500 cases

The Domaine of Philippe Brocourt, formerly called Clos Godeaux, begins in Philippe's 21st year in 1986, when Philippe took over the estate from his mother. The family moved from Normandy to Chinon after World War II, where they bought land to begin the dream of wine production. It was a hard road for the family in the 1960s and 1970s and Philippe's father was ready to abandon the project. It was Philippe's passion for farming and winemaking that slowly turned this small family estate into something special.

To visit Philippe and his adorable dog Lizzie is to “drink the Kool-Aid”. His passion and dedication for the work are balanced by warm and good-humored nature. He eats, sleeps, and drinks the Cabernet Franc grape and the terroir of Chinon. Every decision he makes is to highlight the character of his region, expressed through the vineyards he farms.

The Brocourt estate is 35 hectares throughout 5 villages in the Chinon appellation and 32 of these hectares are on the Rive Gauche (Left bank of the river, on the southern side).

The different micro-climates allow for representative cuvées from all the terroirs present in the Chinon appellation. The gravel plains mixed with sand yield light and fruity wines while the clay-siliceous plateaus deliver powerful wines with fine tannins and texture. The rare clay-limestone hillsides, for his top cuvees, have great aging potential with strong tannins and full-body. Each parcel is farmed with rigorous sustainable viticulture.

Philippe is fiercely independent when it comes to his methods, experimenting and evolving with the changes. He will do what is best for the land and the grapes with the knowledge he has acquired over the last 40 years. The changing climate keeps things interesting and complicated with 2023 bringing the worst humidity in his lifetime. The philosophy of Brocourt is to understand nature and work more closely with it. Limited intervention is evident by the complex ecosystem in, and around the vineyards. Limited soil disturbance while weeding helps develop auxiliary fauna and a more enriched biodiversity, limiting the need for chemical treatments. He is also pursuing agro-forestry to help mitigate problematic insects.

Unhappy with some of the more vigorous clones from the 1980s and 1990s, he is now using selection massale to cultivate new vines. The average age of his vines is over 40 years and up to 85 years of age, only replacing dead or diseased plants.

Native yeast fermentations with no fining or heavy filtering help create savory, complex wines that are both fresh and distinctive. He doesn't like over-extraction so delestage is at a minimum and he didn't use this method at all for the 2022 vintage.

Carved out of the mountainside in the 1600s, we walk through the ancient cave where Philippe stores his barrels for the top cuvees. It gives one a sense of awe for the history of this place. Philippe retains that sense of awe he must have felt from a young age. He takes stewardship of the region's terroir and winemaking history very seriously, his passion and enthusiasm are infectious.

