

DOMAINE DROUHIN-LAROZE

In this family, generations follow one another to the rhythm of the Clos Vougeot. This is transmitted through the respect of older generations and the daring of the days to come.

Like a swing on the family tree over the generations, the Clos Vougeot is the pendulum that marks the great moments of Drouhin-Laroze: "It is part of our history: my great-grandfather already owned a few small *ouvrées* of it, to which were added those my father Bernard acquired in 1970, explains Philippe Drouhin. *In the family we bought rather more vines at the top than the bottom, so we own 1.02 hectare in the stony sector known as 'des Papes', in two parcels separated by a path in the lieux-dits called 'Plante Labbé' and 'Quartier de Marei Haut.'*"



CLOS DE VOUGEOT 2014
"We suffered with this vintage, given the chaotic climatic conditions.
But in the end, it has lovely aromatic intensity and fine tannins.
It is an intense wine, with good back-bone and little spicy notes on a base of black fruits, ideal for keeping".

Regarding his children, Caroline and Nicolas, he gently shrugs his shoulders: "I am making way for them and in an advanced hand-over phase that started in 2014. During this year of 2017, I am becoming just a consultant: I prefer to let them put into effect their own vision of things, since giving up total destemming is just not in my culture. Better for them to assume their new technique and apply their own ideas". Picking up the remark on the rebound, Nicolas remains cautious: "For our Clos Vougeot, we do tastings of grapes and stems as the harvest comes in and there I define very precisely the proportion of whole bunches, floating between 20 and 40 %, but never going beyond that. But note that we verify the grapes are well-attached within the bunch; if not, there is no point in adopting such a practice. For a dry year like 2015, this type of vinification brings freshness and tension to the wine. On the other hand, as that approach was not necessary, in 2014 we destemmed everything." This young man seems very open, with a very natural side to him! He adapts to each vintage. Mindful of sustainable development, he aims to carry on with the reasoned growing process put in place by his father, as near as possible to organic but maintaining the possibility of adapted reaction if a harvest is ever put in peril. Everything in their world is expressed by precise gestures, repeated a thousand times: high top-trimmings bring about a good vegetation canopy, necessary for an enhanced supply of sap. The vine is thereby energised and grapes avoid being scorched by the effects of intense heat. Innovating without disturbance, respecting the past while giving more life to it, such is the challenge for Nicolas: "The objective is still to achieve vegetation as widely spread as possible over the row of vines for good aeration of the fruit canes and grapes. Evidently, green harvesting is part of the traditional approach and is virtually systematic."

Bearing a big smile, Caroline Drouhin takes you down for a well-led cellar visit. The cellar seems broad-shouldered to match its rounded architectural form, brightened up by a large tapestry and stained-glass windows worthy of Saint-Bernardin. The galleries underground are spread out like so many chapels, where one may reflect reverently in front of the prettily arranged vintages. In quick succession, all the grands crus of the domain may be embraced. Completing the range of the Bonnes Mares, Musignys, Latricières, Chapelle-Chambertin and Chambertin-Clos-de-Bèze, the Clos Vougeot stands out as the most powerful.

Communion begins with the 2011, hearty and welcoming while remaining elegant; progressively, earthier nuances become apparent. Ethereal, but with more precise fruit, the 2013 wears a lovely cherry mantle, nuanced by a subtle hint of liquorice on the finish. Intensity increases with the 2014, dynamic and deep: this classical style will deserve longer keeping. Already charmingly seductive, the 2015 exhibits delicious floral notes; its velvet touch deserves another glassful, a question of accompanying the generous cheese-puff gougères of Christine Drouhin. With a twirl of her wrist, this incomparable cuisinière cooks up a boeuf bourguignon that calls for a Clos de Vougeot 1949, where the depths of the Earth then appear to open to offer up the hidden, sensual flavours of black truffle. **DENIS HERVIER**



*Philippe Drouhin
et ses enfants, Caroline et Nicolas.*