

Château de l'Éperonnière



After years of partnership with RWM, the Tijou family, propriétaires for several generations of the Chateau Soucherie in Beaufort-sur-Layon, decided to sell their property and effectively exchange the larger domaine of Soucherie for the smaller estate just down the road, Chateau de l'Éperonnière, which was also in the family for many generations. Mathieu Tijou, son of Pierre-Yves and Brigitte, established his domaine at Eperonnière and launched his career as independent vigneron with the 2007 vintage. This is a particularly pleasing development for us as we had worked vintage-to-vintage with his father at Soucherie for over twenty-five years, having commenced our relationship in 1982 by importing the 1980 vintage.

Mathieu and his wife, Charlotte, have renovated this spectacular property with impeccable taste, respecting the traditional architecture and, in fact, using the finest artisanal labor to repair one of the wooden ceilings in the chai that dates back to the thirteenth century.

The vineyards are sited on both sides of the Loire and overlook the Layon. Mathieu owns the "Croix Picot" vineyard in the Savennières appellation and the remaining vineyards around the Château are in the Anjou and Coteaux du Layon appellations.

Viticulture:

- **Farming:** In organic conversion
- **Treatments:** No herbicide for c. 5 years and movement away from synthetic treatments to copper-sulfate
- **Ploughing:** Annual ploughing to maintain vineyard health
- **Soils:** Schist/shale, clay, sandstone, flint, and limestone
- **Vines:** Trained in Gobelet and in Guyot and planted at c. 5,000 vines/ha, vines average 15-20 years old.
- **Yields:** Controlled through pruning, debudding, and green harvesting, yields average 75-80 hl/ha.
- **Harvest:** Savennières and Crémant are harvested manually, Rosé is harvested mechanically, usually from September to early October.
- **Purchasing:** Entirely estate fruit. (Crémant de Loire vinified off-site from estate fruit)

Vinification:

- **Fermentation:** Savennières ferments with indigenous yeasts in neutral barriques. Other wines ferment with selected yeasts in stainless-steel tanks.
- **Extraction:** White wines see bâtonnage only to counter reduction.
- **Chaptalization and Acidification:** Chaptalization when necessary
- **Pressing:** Whole-cluster direct pneumatic pressing for all wines
- **Malolactic Fermentation:** Blocked by wines' naturally high acidities



Aging:

- **Élevage:** Savennières spends c. 12 months in neutral barriques. Other wines age 6 months in stainless-steel tanks.
- **Lees:** Wines are racked following alcoholic fermentation and remain on their fine lees until assemblage prior to bottling. Crémant remains *sur lattes* c. 36 months.
- **Fining and Filtration:** Wines are fined with bentonite and see plate filtration.
- **Sulfur:** Applied at rackings and at bottling

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Crémant de Loire



At a Glance:

- **Appellation:** AOC Crémant de Loire
- **Encépagement:** Chenin Blanc (85%), Cabernet Franc (15%), Chardonnay (5%)
- **Average Annual Production:**
- **Average Alcohol by Volume:** 12%
- **Average Residual Sugar:** 2 g/l
- **Average Total Acidity:**

In The Vineyard:

- **Parcel Names, Slopes, and Locations:** From various parcels surrounding the Château near the village of Rochefort sur Loire
- **Soil Types and Compositions:** Schistous clay limestone with some sand
- **Vine Age, Training, and Density:** Planted at 5,000 vines/ha and trained in Guyot, vines average 15 years old.
- **Average Yields:** Controlled through pruning, debudding, and green harvesting, yields average 75-80 hl/Ha
- **Average Harvest Date and Type:** Entirely manual into small cagettes, usually in early September

In The Cellar:

- **Fermentation:** Wine ferments with selected yeasts in stainless-steel tanks.
- **Pressing:** Pneumatic, whole-cluster direct pressing
- **Time on Lees:** Wine spends c. 6 months *sur lie* and c. 36 months *sur lattes*.
- **Malolactic Fermentation:** Blocked by wine's naturally high acidity
- **Élevage:** c. 6 months in stainless-steel tanks followed by c. 36 months in bottles
- **Press Wine:** Wine is entirely press wine
- **Fining and Filtration:** Bentonite fining, plate filtration
- **Sulfur:** Applied at racking and at bottling

In The Glass:

This aromatic and expressive Crémant shows what superb sparkling wine can be made from Chenin Blanc with ample aging sur lattes (in this case, 3 years). With fine mousse and notes of yellow apple and wisteria across the midpalate, it's nicely balanced with 2 grams of dosage tempering the naturally high acidity of Chenin Blanc.

Château de l'Éperonnière



Rosé de Loire



At a Glance:

- **Appellation:** AOC Rosé de Loire
- **Encépagement:** Cabernet Franc (80%), Grolleau (20%)
- **Average Annual Production:**
- **Average Alcohol by Volume:** 12%
- **Average Residual Sugar:** < 5 g/l
- **Average Total Acidity:**

In The Vineyard:

- **Parcel Names, Slopes, and Locations:** From various parcels surrounding the Château near the village of Rochefort sur Loire
- **Soil Types and Compositions:** Schistous clay limestone with some sand
- **Vine Age, Training, and Density:** Planted at 5,000 vines/ha and trained in Guyot, vines average 15 years old.
- **Average Yields:** Controlled through pruning, debudding, and green harvesting, yields average 75-80 hl/Ha
- **Average Harvest Date and Type:** Mechanical harvest, usually mid-September

In The Cellar:

- **Fermentation:** Wine ferments with selected yeasts in stainless-steel tanks.
- **Pressing:** Pneumatic, whole-cluster direct pressing
- **Time on Lees:** c. 6 months
- **Malolactic Fermentation:** Blocked by wine's naturally high acidity
- **Élevage:** c. 6 months in stainless-steel tanks
- **Press Wine:** Wine is entirely press wine
- **Fining and Filtration:** Bentonite fining, plate filtration
- **Sulfur:** Applied at racking and at bottling

In The Glass:

Produced entirely via direct press and aged in stainless-steel tanks, Matthieu Tijou's Rosé de Loire offers juicy and slightly candied fruit, with strawberry and cherry-pit notes enrobing a subtle hint of varietal greenness. In broader good news, Mathieu will be beginning the process of obtaining organic certification as of the 2019 vintage (he has worked mainly organically for some years now).

Château de l'Éperonnière



Savennières Croix de Picot



At a Glance:

- **Appellation:** AOC Savennières
- **Encépagement:** Chenin Blanc (100%)
- **Average Annual Production:**
- **Average Alcohol by Volume:** 13.5-14%
- **Average Residual Sugar:** < 5 g/l
- **Average Total Acidity:** c. 4.6 g/l

In The Vineyard:

- **Parcel Names, Slopes, and Locations:** From south-facing, sloped Croix de Picot parcel, overlooking the Loire from the Savennières hill.
- **Soil Types and Compositions:** Schistous clay and slate
- **Vine Age, Training, and Density:** Planted at 5,000 vines/ha and trained in Gobelet
- **Average Yields:** Controlled through pruning, debudding, and green harvesting, yields average 50 hl/ha
- **Average Harvest Date and Type:** Entirely manual into small cagettes, usually in late September

In The Cellar:

- **Fermentation:** Wine ferments spontaneously in neutral barriques
- **Pressing:** Pneumatic, whole-cluster direct pressing
- **Time on Lees:** c. 12 months
- **Malolactic Fermentation:** Blocked by wine's naturally high acidity
- **Élevage:** c. 12 months in neutral barriques
- **Press Wine:** Wine is entirely press wine
- **Fining and Filtration:** Bentonite fining, plate filtration
- **Sulfur:** Applied at racking and at bottling

In The Glass:

The vineyards lie hard on the banks of the Loire River and are frequently covered in an early morning mist. The soil is almost exclusively composed of schist which renders a classic Savennières: rigorous, bone-dry, with an intense minerality to the finish.