

Danilo Thomain



Home of the second-highest winegrowing zone in the valley, the the Enfer d'Arvier is a splendorous amphitheater of steeply terraced vines overlooking the Dora Baltea/Doire Baltée river below. Covering a scant 5 ha, the majority of the Enfer d'Arvier's output is via the local co-op, and with his single hectare in production, Danilo Thomain stands as the zone's only independent bottler of wine. Amazingly, he is currently clearing and de-foresting another hectare's worth of hillside above his current holdings in order to expand production, thereby reclaiming some of the long-unused but prime terrain whose viticultural records date back to the 13th century.

The huge diurnal shifts between Enfer d'Arvier's scorching days and chilly nights—"Enfer d'Arvier," after all, means "The Hell of Arvier"—expresses itself in a palate tug-of-war between rapier-like acidity and thick, luscious fruit that vibrates with energy—and as a recently consumed 2008 attested, it can age beautifully. It seems like just the other day that, through a recommendation from his pal Ermes Pavese, we had yet another face of the Valle d'Aosta's incomparable terroir revealed to us. These are the sorts of treasures we at Rosenthal live for—arresting wines made by fascinating people working in unique corners of the earth—and Thomain's wines were an immediate success. Danilo produces only a few hundred cases of wine each vintage, and being able to purchase over half of it for the USA is a great privilege indeed.

Viticulture:

- **Farming:** Lutte Raisonnée
- **Treatments:** Synthetic products allow for a dramatic reduction in vineyard treatments, with 5 rather than the 20 that would be necessary if using only copper-sulfate
- **Ploughing:** Annual hoeing and working of the soil to maintain vineyard health
- **Soils:** Sandy glacial moraines
- **Vines:** Trained in Guyot and planted at 10,000 vines/ha, vines average 35-40 years old.
- **Yields:** Controlled through severe winter pruning, debudding, and an occasional green harvest
- **Harvest:** Entirely manual, usually in early October
- **Purchasing:** Entirely estate fruit



Vinification:

- **Fermentation:** After total destemming, wine ferments spontaneously in fiberglass and stainless-steel tanks. Cuvaison lasts c. 2 weeks.
- **Extraction:** Wines see pumpovers during cuvaison.
- **Chaptalization and Acidification:** None
- **Pressing:**
- **Malolactic Fermentation:** Spontaneous, in stainless-steel tanks following alcoholic fermentation

Aging:

- **Élevage:** Wine ages in stainless-steel tanks for c. 9 months
- **Lees:** Wines remain on their fine lees until assemblage prior to bottling.
- **Fining and Filtration:** Wines are unfinned and unfiltered.
- **Sulfur:** Applied after malolactic and at bottling