

Château du Petit Thouars



Built in the early 1500's for a wealthy family from the town of Thouars, the Château du Petit Thouars is a 150-ha estate run today by Sébastien du Petit Thouars, the twelfth generation to dwell here since his ancestor George purchased the property in 1636. Though records and physical evidence exist of wine production on the property centuries ago, it wasn't until the late 1970's that the enterprise was revived—this time, by Sébastien's father, who gradually planted 15 ha of Cabernet Franc (plus a little Chenin Blanc) immediately behind the house itself. The vineyards and cellar are managed by Michel Pinard, a born-and-bred Chinonnais who worked for many years as the right-hand-man of Charles Joguet—one of the appellation's most famous and respected vigneron.

The Château is located in the commune of Saint-Germain-sur-Vienne, in the southwest part of the Chinon appellation, along the south bank of the Vienne River. In contrast to the sandy soils that predominate further east in the appellation, the vineyards around Petit Thouars are on limestone-clay, much like those of Saumur-Champigny, immediately to the town's west. Saint-Germain-sur-Vienne did not belong to the Chinon AOC until 2015, as growers in Saint Germain decided to opt out upon the appellation's creation in 1937, betting on the "Touraine" designation instead—probably the "wrong" call in hindsight, but understandable given Touraine's broader name recognition at the time. In any event, the commune successfully lobbied for inclusion in the Chinon appellation after Touraine's AOC laws changed in 2012 to forbid 100%-Cabernet-Franc wines, and thus from 2015 on Château du Petit Thouars's wines are labeled as Chinon rather than Touraine.

Viticulture:

- **Farming:** In Organic Conversion
- **Treatments:** Copper sulfate, with synthetic treatments used as a last resort only when a crop is on the line
- **Ploughing:** Annual ploughing to maintain vineyard health
- **Soils:** Limestone-clay
- **Vines:** Trained in Guyot and planted from 1978-1988 and in 2010
- **Yields:** Controlled through severe winter pruning and debudding with a green harvest if necessary
- **Harvest:** Entirely manual and into small cagettes, usually from mid-September to early October
- **Purchasing:** Entirely estate fruit

Vinification:

- **Fermentation:** White wines ferment spontaneously in stainless-steel tanks. After total destemming and a 1-2 day cold soak, red wines ferment spontaneously in open-top tronconic oak foudres and stainless-steel tanks. Cuvaison lasts 10-30 days, depending on vintage and cuvée.
- **Extraction:** Red wines see daily pumpovers during cuvaison
- **Chaptalization and Acidification:** None
- **Pressing:** Pneumatic pressing
- **Malolactic Fermentation:** Blocked by naturally high acidities for white wines; spontaneous, following alcoholic fermentation for red wines



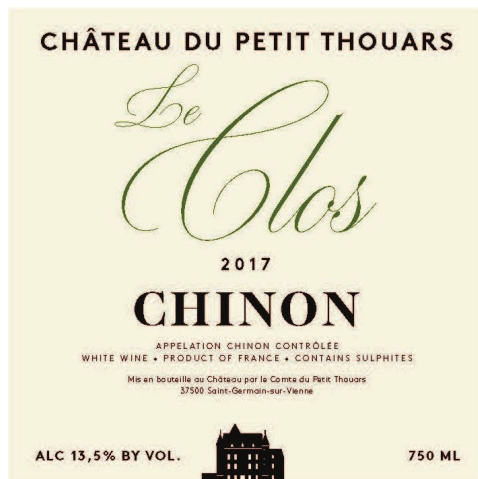
Aging:

- **Élevage:** Chinon blanc spends 18 months in 225-l neutral oak barrels purchased from Château Guiraud in Sauternes. Les Georges spends 6 months in stainless-steel tanks. L'Épée spends 18 months in stainless-steel tanks and neutral 225-l oak barrels. L'Amiral spends 24-48 months in neutral 225-l oak barrels.
- **Lees:** Wines remain on their fine lees until assemblage prior to bottling
- **Fining and Filtration:** Diatomaceous earth filtration
- **Sulfur:**

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Chinon Blanc Le Clos



At a Glance:

- **Appellation:** AOC Chinon
- **Encépagement:** Chenin Blanc (100%)
- **Average Annual Production:**
- **Average Alcohol by Volume:** 13%
- **Average Residual Sugar:** 3.5 g/l
- **Average Total Acidity:**

In The Vineyard:

- **Parcel Names, Slopes, and Locations:** From .75 ha of vines in a clos next to the Château du Petit Thouars, in western Chinon near Saumur-Champigny
- **Soil Types and Compositions:** Tuffeau chalk and limestone-clay
- **Vine Age, Training, and Density:** Trained in Guyot and planted in 2010
- **Average Yields:** 40-45 hl/ha
- **Average Harvest Date and Type:** Entirely manual into small cagettes, usually in mid-September

In The Cellar:

- **Fermentation:** Spontaneous, in 225-l neutral oak barrels
- **Pressing:** Pneumatic, whole-cluster direct pressing
- **Time on Lees:** 6 months
- **Malolactic Fermentation:** Blocked by wine's naturally high acidity
- **Élevage:** 6 months 225-l neutral oak barrels
- **Press Wine:** Blended after pressing
- **Fining and Filtration:** Diatomaceous earth filtration
- **Sulfur:**

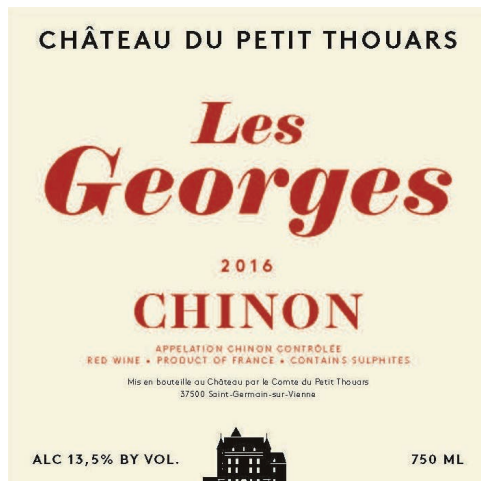
In The Glass:

Chinon is known largely as a red-wine appellation, but the best Chenin Blanc from here can rival its more-famous cousins in the Anjou for intensity and complexity. And, certainly, Petit Thouars's Chinon Blanc makes a strong case for their limestone-dominated corner of Chinon as an outstanding white-wine terroir. Its rich, assertive nose suggests tactile lushness, with classic varietal notes of honey and green apple vying for attention with an attractive musk-melon element. The palate—luscious as advertised—is broad and almost oily, yet it remains tensile and precise due to the wine's notable acidity. It finishes bold and clinging, with a strong impression of dry extract and a sense of underlying seriousness.

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Chinon Rouge Les Georges



At a Glance:

- **Appellation:** AOC Chinon
- **Encépagement:** Cabernet Franc (100%)
- **Average Annual Production:**
- **Average Alcohol by Volume:** 13%
- **Average Residual Sugar:** <5 g/l
- **Average Total Acidity:**

In The Vineyard:

- **Parcel Names, Slopes, and Locations:** From 13 ha of vines in Les Plantes, a lieu-dit west of Le Clos near the border with Saumur Champigny
- **Soil Types and Compositions:** Tuffeau chalk and limestone-clay
- **Vine Age, Training, and Density:** Trained in Guyot and planted from 1980-1988
- **Average Yields:** 40-45 hl/ha
- **Average Harvest Date and Type:** Entirely manual into small cagettes, usually in mid-September

In The Cellar:

- **Fermentation:** After total destemming and a 1-2 day cold soak, wine ferments spontaneously in stainless-steel tanks. Cuvaison lasts c. 10 days.
- **Pressing:** Pneumatic pressing
- **Time on Lees:** 6 months
- **Malolactic Fermentation:** Spontaneous, in tank following alcoholic fermentation
- **Élevage:** 6 months in stainless-steel tanks
- **Press Wine:** 100% free-run wine
- **Fining and Filtration:** Diatomaceous earth filtration
- **Sulfur:**

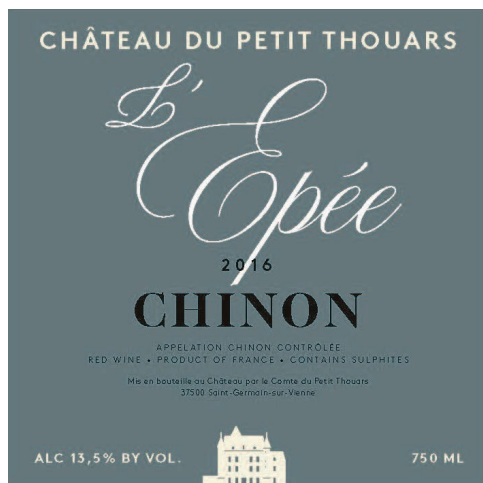
In The Glass:

Sébastien named this cuvée in honor of his ancestors, nearly all of whom are named Georges (in fact, his real first name is Georges too). The friendliest of the estate's three red-wine offerings, Les Georges is produced entirely from the free-run juice of Cabernet Franc, and is vinified and aged in steel tank. Far from a simple gulper, however, Les Georges is classic Chinon in its marriage of vibrant fruit, honest tannins, and refreshing earth-mineral interplay. The extraction is beautifully judged, and the gentle structure and perky acidity operate in unison to create an overall impression of drive and freshness. It's a real lip-smacker, with plenty of spice and fruits that lean toward the red end of the spectrum.

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Chinon Rouge L'Épée



At a Glance:

- **Appellation:** AOC Chinon
- **Encépagement:** Cabernet Franc (100%)
- **Average Annual Production:**
- **Average Alcohol by Volume:** 13%
- **Average Residual Sugar:** <5 g/l
- **Average Total Acidity:**

In The Vineyard:

- **Parcel Names, Slopes, and Locations:** From 13 ha of vines in Les Plantes, a lieu-dit near the border with Saumur Champigny and old vines in Le Clos, directly adjacent to the château
- **Soil Types and Compositions:** Tuffeau chalk and limestone-clay
- **Vine Age, Training, and Density:** Trained in Guyot and planted from 1980-1988
- **Average Yields:** 40-45 hl/ha
- **Average Harvest Date and Type:** Entirely manual into small cassettes, usually in mid-September

In The Cellar:

- **Fermentation:** After total destemming and a 1-2 day cold soak, wine ferments spontaneously in stainless-steel tanks. Cuvaison lasts c. 21 days.
- **Pressing:** Pneumatic pressing
- **Time on Lees:** 6 months
- **Malolactic Fermentation:** Spontaneous, in tank following alcoholic fermentation
- **Élevage:** 18 months 225-l neutral oak barrels and stainless-steel tanks
- **Press Wine:** 67% free-run wine, 33% press wine
- **Fining and Filtration:** Diatomaceous earth filtration
- **Sulfur:**

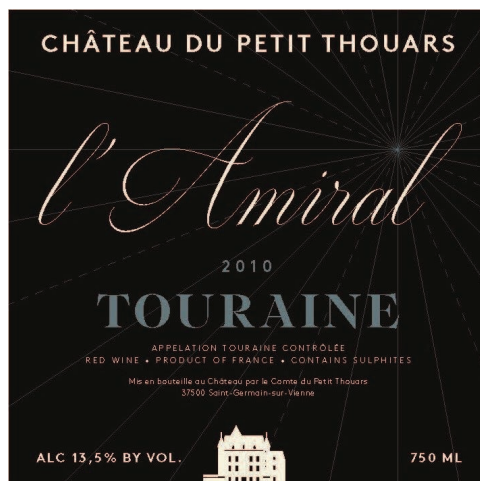
In The Glass:

Depending on the vintage, “L’Épée” is vinified and aged in a combination of steel tank and well-used oak barrels, though it is never produced exclusively in barrels. More powerful and serious on the nose than “Les Georges” above, this wine reaches a deeper register of spice, and presents a core of dark-red and black fruits. That said, L’Épée” does not want for lift, as the acidity here is just as crisp and ringing as its less-structured sibling. This is a remarkably classic, lovable Chinon whose ruggedness suggests it will age quite well yet whose scrumptiousness will make holding onto it a feat of will.

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Touraine Rouge L'Amiral



At a Glance:

- **Appellation:** AOC Touraine (AOC Chinon from 2015 on)
- **Encépagement:** Cabernet Franc (100%)
- **Average Annual Production:**
- **Average Alcohol by Volume:** 13%
- **Average Residual Sugar:** <5 g/l
- **Average Total Acidity:**

In The Vineyard:

- **Parcel Names, Slopes, and Locations:** From 13 ha of vines in Les Plantes and Le Clos, adjacent to the Château in western Chinon near the border with Saumur-Champigny
- **Soil Types and Compositions:** Tuffeau chalk and lime-stone-clay
- **Vine Age, Training, and Density:** Trained in Guyot and planted from 1978-1988
- **Average Yields:** 40-45 hl/ha
- **Average Harvest Date and Type:** Entirely manual into small cassettes, usually in mid-September

In The Cellar:

- **Fermentation:** After total destemming and a 1-2 day cold soak, wine ferments spontaneously in open-top tronconic wood foudres and stainless-steel tanks. Cuvaision lasts c. 21 days.
- **Pressing:** Pneumatic pressing
- **Time on Lees:** 6 months
- **Malolactic Fermentation:** Spontaneous, in tank following alcoholic fermentation
- **Élevage:** 24-48 months 225-l neutral oak barrels
- **Press Wine:** 67% free-run wine, 33% press wine
- **Fining and Filtration:** Diatomaceous earth filtration
- **Sulfur:**

In The Glass:

Made only in exceptional vintages, L'Amiral is an homage to the utterly uncompromising, rugged, old-school Chinon of ages past. Produced from the press juice from the domaine's oldest and finest parcels, its long ageing is necessary to tame its tannic and concentrated juice. Always broad and intensely tannic, the fresh and lively red fruits typical of Chinon do manage to emerge from its smoky and bramble-riddled fruit. It is a testament to the estate's commitment to classicism that the estate produces a bold, full-throttle wine that stands alongside other beloved outliers like Château Pradeaux, Domaine Levet, and Paolo Bea.