

Philippe Gilbert



The history that surrounds the Domaine Philippe Gilbert, located in the central French hamlet of Faucards, extends to the reign of Louis XV, when François Gilbert took over the vines of his father in law in 1768, and stretches through nine generations to the current vigneron, Philippe.

Philippe's tortuous path to managing the 27 ha of vines inherited from his father, the first professional oenologist in the appellation, offers an inspiring lens into the resurgence of the too-often overshadowed Menetou-Salon appellation: Philippe was a successful dramaturg, producing and writing plays for the theatre – in fact, one of his creations, a poetic and philosophical contemplation of the horrors of the Srebrenica massacre in Bosnia, was performed in the States – when his father's impending retirement threatened the survival of the Gilbert family domaine. Having traveled the world and explored the intellectual side of the arts, he still felt the pull of the soils that his father worked for many years. His decisions to embrace biodynamic farming in the mid-2000's, introduce horse ploughing to some parcels, and increase his focus on single-vineyard expression has transformed the domaine to the benchmark estate in the appellation.

Viticulture:

- **Farming:** Certified Biodynamic by Demeter since 2017, certified biodynamic by Biodyvin since 2007. Certified organic by Ecocert since 2006, practicing organic since 2003
- **Treatments:** Copper-sulfate only
- **Ploughing:** Annual ploughing to promote soil health, with 1 ha ploughed by horse
- **Soils:** Kimmeridgian limestone clays, similar to the soils of Sancerre and Chablis
- **Vines:** Trained in Guyot and planted at 10,000 vines/ha. Average age is 25-30 years.
- **Yields:** Controlled through severe winter pruning and debudding
- **Harvest:** Entirely manual, in mid-late September
- **Purchasing:** Entirely estate fruit

Vinification:

- **Fermentation:** All wines ferment spontaneously in stainless-steel and concrete tanks. Red wines see c. 70-80% destemming. Cuvaison lasts 2-3 weeks.
- **Extraction:** Red wines see pumpovers during fermentation; white wines do not see bâtonnage.
- **Chaptalization and Acidification:** None
- **Pressing:** Pneumatic pressing for reds, pneumatic, whole-cluster, direct pressing for whites
- **Malolactic Fermentation:** follows alcoholic fermentation for reds, blocked in whites to preserve freshness



Aging:

- **Élevage:** Wines spend 10-18 months in stainless-steel and concrete tanks
- **Lees:** 6-8 months for basic wines, 12 months for single parcel wines
- **Fining and Filtration:** Wines are fined with diatomaceous earth or bentonite and are unfiltered.
- **Sulfur:** 25-40 mg/l total sulfur