

Château Soucherie



The Château Soucherie may be the most physically beautiful property of all the domaines with which we work. The house itself is a unique architectural gem that sits on a rise overlooking the 36 ha of vineyards that snake down towards the Layon river. Four of the thirty-six hectares are situated in the prime vineyard of Chaume and then two hectares are in Savennières in a single-vineyard known as “Clos des Perrières”. The remaining vineyards which encircle the château are in the Anjou and Coteaux du Layon appellations. Soucherie is surrounded by the villages of Rochefort-sur-Loire, Beaulieu-sur-Layon and Saint Lambert du Lattay.

Originally owned by Pierre-Yves Tijou, now owner of the neighboring Château de l'Éperonnière, Soucherie has been owned by Roger Beguinot since 2000. Beguinot worked alongside Thibaud Boudignon for nearly a decade, who pushed the domaine to embrace organic viticulture and pursue “agriculture intégrée.” Beguinot is now assisted by a new Maître de Chai, Vianney de Taste. The RWM team could not be more thrilled with the output from M. de Taste that it has encountered so far and looks forward to the heights Soucherie will reach in the future. Every year since I was introduced to these complex and savory wines, born from the marriage of the Layon and the noble Chenin Blanc, we have been privileged to purchase its dry and sweet versions of wines of the Coteaux du Layon and of Savennières, along with the simple and satisfying reds and rosés that render the fruits of the local Cabernet Franc and Grolleau.

Viticulture:

- **Farming:** Practicing organic
- **Treatments:** Copper sulfate only
- **Ploughing:** Annual ploughing to maintain vineyard health
- **Soils:** Schist/shale, clay, sandstone, flint, and limestone
- **Vines:** Planted at 5,000 vines/ha and trained in Cordon de Royat and Gobelet, vines average 35 years old.
- **Yields:** Controlled through severe winter pruning, debudding, and green harvesting, yields average 14 hl/ha for sweet wines
- **Harvest:** Entirely manual into small cagettes, usually late September to early October
- **Purchasing:** Entirely estate fruit

Vinification:

- **Fermentation:** White wines ferment spontaneously in stainless-steel tanks or 225-l barrels, with up to 1/3 new. Red wines see total destemming and a 1-2 day cold soak before fermenting spontaneously in stainless-steel tanks. Rosé wines ferment with selected yeasts in stainless-steel tanks.
- **Extraction:** Red wines see pumpovers during cuvaison.
- **Chaptalization and Acidification:** None
- **Pressing:** Pneumatic, whole-cluster direct pressing for white wines, pneumatic pressing for red wines
- **Malolactic Fermentation:** Spontaneous, following alcoholic fermentation for red wines, blocked by naturally high acidities for white wines, and blocked by temperature for rosé wines



Aging:

- **Élevage:** Basic wines age in stainless-steel tanks for 8-9 months. Savennières spends 9 months in 500-l demi-muids (33% new) and 9 months in stainless-steel tanks. Chaume spends 18 months in barrel (33% new). Champs aux Loups spends c. 12 months in neutral oak foudres.
- **Lees:** Wines remain on their fine lees until assemblage prior to bottling.
- **Fining and Filtration:** Wines are unfinned and filtered with diatomaceous earth.
- **Sulfur:** Applied after fermentation and at bottling, with 25-35 mg/l free sulfur