

Xavier Gérard



Xavier Gérard is an up-and-coming force to be reckoned with in the Northern Rhône. Having assumed control of his family's impressive holdings in Côte-Rôtie and Condrieu with the 2013 vintage, Xavier has been steadily honing his craft over the ensuing years; today, his svelte, pure, classicist renderings of Côte-Rôtie's unique terroir rival anything produced in the appellation. Furthermore, his nimble, acid-prizing touch with Viognier yields Condrieu of appealing restraint and foregrounded minerality. Xavier is steering his viticulture toward the fully organic—a particularly arduous feat on these brutally steep terraced slopes—aiming for certification over the next several years, and he has refined his touch in the cellar to allow for sensitive rather than systematic whole-cluster usage, natural fermentations, and minimal handling of the wines during their élevage. His emphasis on elegance and precision provides a wonderful counterpoint to the beloved Côte-Rôtie of the Levet family (who introduced us to Xavier ten years ago), while offering an equally profound glimpse into these slopes' prized schist.

Viticulture:

- **Farming:** Practicing organic
- **Treatments:** Copper sulfate only
- **Ploughing:** Annual hoeing and ploughing to maintain vineyard health
- **Soils:** Granite and limestone-clay
- **Vines:** Staked and head trained, vines were planted at 6,000 vines/ha in the 1922-5, 1968, 1981-5, 1988, 1993, 1998, 2001, 2011-2, and 2017.
- **Yields:** Controlled through severe winter pruning, debudding, and an occasional green harvest, yields average c. 35-40 hl/ha
- **Harvest:** Entirely manual, usually in late September
- **Purchasing:** Entirely estate fruit



Vinification:

- **Fermentation:** Condrieu L'Arbuel ferments spontaneously in neutral, 228-l barriques and 600-l demi muids. Condrieu Côte Châtillon ferments spontaneously in stainless-steel tanks (50%) and neutral demi muids. After partial destemming and a 2-3 day cold soak, red wines ferment spontaneously in concrete vats.
- **Extraction:** Wines seem pumpovers during cuvaision.
- **Chaptalization and Acidification:** None
- **Pressing:** Vertical basket press
- **Malolactic Fermentation:** Spontaneous, following alcoholic fermentation

Aging:

- **Élevage:** Saint Joseph and Condrieu wines spend 12 months in neutral, 600-l demi muids and 228-l barrels. Half of Condrieu Côte Châtillon ages in stainless-steel tanks. Côte Rôtie spends 24 months in neutral, 600-l demi-muids. Côte Rôtie La Landonne spends 30 months in 228-l barrels (50% new).
- **Lees:** Wines are racked off their gross lees after cuvaision and remain on their fine lees until assemblage prior to bottling.
- **Fining and Filtration:** Red wines are unfinned and unfiltered. White wines are unfinned and see plate filtration
- **Sulfur:**