



KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

DOMAINE DE LA VOÛTE DES CROZES

Country: France

Region: Beaujolais

Appellation(s): Côte-de-Brouilly

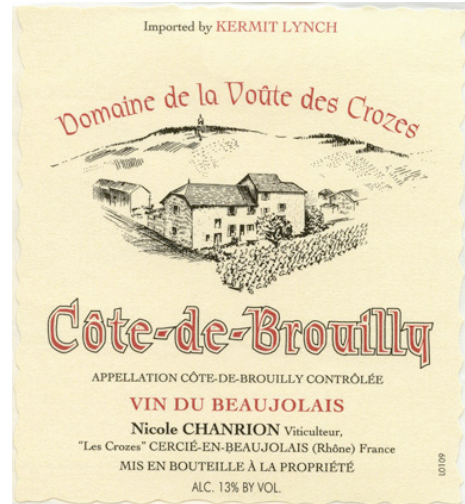
Producer: Nicole Chanrion

Founded: 1861

Annual Production: 2,500 cases

Farming: Lutte Raisonnée

Website: N/A



When Nicole Chanrion began her career in the 1970s, convention relegated women to the enology labs and kept them out of the cellars—even her mother thought winemaking was man’s work—but she would not be deterred from her dream of becoming a *vigneronne*. With six generations of family tradition preceding her, she grew up helping her father in both the vineyards and the cellar in the Côte-de-Brouilly, one of the southernmost *crus* of the northern Beaujolais. Though she is mild-mannered and slight of build, her determination and conviction have consistently defied all doubts. Ever since taking over the family domaine in 1988, she works all 6.5 hectares entirely by herself, from pruning the vineyards and driving the tractors to winemaking and bottling, all without bravado or fanfare. In 2000 she became president of the Côte-de-Brouilly appellation, a position of respect and importance among peers. It’s small wonder then that she is affectionately referred to as “La Patronne de la Côte,” or the Boss of *la Côte*.

The Côte-de-Brouilly appellation sits on the hillsides of Mont Brouilly, a prehistoric volcano that left blue schist stones and volcanic rock along its slopes. These stones yield structured wines with pronounced minerality and great aging potential. After her formal training at the viticultural school in Beaune Nicole had a brief internship in the Napa Valley, where she learned another approach to winemaking but, happily for us, gained a deeper appreciation of the traditional winemaking techniques of the Beaujolais: hand harvesting, whole-cluster fermentation, aging the wines in large oak *foudres* for at least nine months, and bottling unfiltered. The resulting wines are powerful, with loads of pure fruit character and floral aromas.

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DOMAINE DE LA VOÛTE DES CROZES (continued)

<u>Wine</u>	<u>Blend</u>	<u>Vine Age</u>	<u>Soil Type</u>	<u>Vineyard Area*</u>
Côte-de-Brouilly “Effervescence”	Gamay Gamay	50 yrs	Schist, Porphyry	3.5 ha

* “ha”=hectares; one hectare equals roughly two and a half acres

VITICULTURE / VINIFICATION

- Vineyards are on the east- and northeast-facing mid-slopes of the Côte-de-Brouilly, planted to a density of 10,000 to 12,000 vines per hectare
- Grapes are hand harvested, techniques in cellar are purely traditional
- Fermentation is 100% whole cluster (and does a *full* carbonic maceration) with natural yeasts. The whole clusters are put into 65-HL stainless steel *cuves* and then are filled 2/3 of the way full to leave room for the CO₂ to release from the grapes to form a natural cap over the must.
- The grapes are removed from *cuves* and pressed, and the juice is put back into the *cuves* to finish alcoholic fermentation (15-20 days).
- The wine is then racked into *foudres* where the wine undergoes malolactic fermentation, and then ages for at least nine months before an unfiltered bottling
- “Effervescence” is a vintage sparkling wine, although Nicole uses a non-vintage label

MISCELLANEA

Chanrion’s gorgeous cuvée is from a blend of five large old foudres housed in her earthen cellar...It shows a brilliant dark garnet hue and sports an aroma of fresh strawberries with a touch of cinnamon. On the palate it is rich, spicy, perfumed, and fine, loaded with red and black berry fruit, and it doesn’t disappoint on the long elegant finish.

Dixon Brooke, KLWM

Her Beaujolais is different from the rest, and when I have a glass of it in hand, I cannot imagine a better one. Hers is superbly winery, if you know what I mean. And forget any prejudice about wimpy Beaujolais. This woman makes macho wine. It is loaded! It is also super complex: mainly it smells of real, live red fruits, especially freshly crushed strawberries.

Kermit Lynch