



KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

CHÂTEAU D'ÉPIRÉ

Country: France

Region: Loire

Appellation(s): Anjou, Savennières

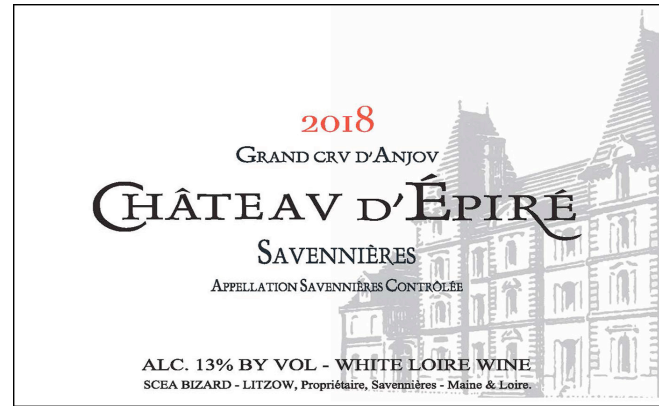
Producer: Luc Bizard

Founded: 1850

Annual Production: 4,000 cases

Farming: Lutte Raisonnée

Website: www.chateau-epire.com



One of the oldest and most celebrated domaines in Savennières, Château d'Épiré is rich in history, not only for its fabulous architectural rendition of the Petit Trianon of Versailles, but most especially for its exquisite wines. Savennières is situated just southwest of Angers, on the north bank of the Loire River. Vines have been cultivated there since the time of the Romans. The Plantagenet dynasty allowed for the first exports of the wine to be sent to Great Britain in the 11th century. The domaine itself has been in the Bizard family continuously since the 1882. The most recent owners and caretakers of the land are Monsieur and Madame Luc Bizard. They own eleven hectares, nine of which are entirely dedicated to the cultivation of Pineau de la Loire, known today as Chenin Blanc. The château is exquisite, but the *pièce de résistance* is their winery, formerly a Romanesque chapel, which is from the 12th century. Truly a blessed wine!

Despite the beauty and timelessness of the building structures, it is the vineyard for which the domaine is best known. The Savennières from Épiré is regarded as *Grand Cru*. The domaine works primarily three parcels: *La Croix Picot*, *Le Parc*, and *Le Hu-Boyan*. It is the latter that sits just above another famous vineyard, *La Coulée de Serrant*. The soils here are rich, and the microclimate is ideal. Southern and south-eastern sun exposure brings ripeness to the grapes, while the proximity to the Loire River keeps the temperatures moderate. The subsoils are comprised of sandstone and schist, and the top soil is a beautiful blue slatey schist that covers the vineyard floors, lending nerve and firmness. We import two cuvées of Savennières from Château d'Épiré. Their Cuvée Spéciale is blended by Kermit from their best parcel and creates a dry wine, austere within its first two or three years, that develops substantially with age. This cuvée is aged in traditional but largely abandoned chestnut barrels. The other cuvée is also dry, but more accessible young, with notes of exotic fruits. Both are delicious and spectacularly complex, and show a value disproportionate to their pedigree.



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CHÂTEAU D'ÉPIRÉ (continued)

<u>Wine</u>	<u>Blend</u>	<u>Vine Age</u>	<u>Soil Type</u>	<u>Vineyard Area*</u>
Savennières	Chenin Blanc	30-55 years	Schist	8.5 ha
Savennières “Cuvée Spéciale”	Chenin Blanc	Planted in 1989	Schist	1.5 ha
Savennières Moelleux	Chenin Blanc	30-55 years	Schist	1 ha
Anjou Rouge <i>Clos de la Cerisaie</i>	Cabernet Franc	40 years	Schist	1.5 ha

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

VITICULTURE / VINIFICATION

- The Bizards’ vineyard land sits at the highest point in the Savennières appellation
- Vines are pruned in gobelet
- Cover crop is planted in between every other vineyard row
- Hand harvested
- Grapes are pressed gently by pneumatic press
- Juice rests for 24 hours before being racked into stainless steel *cuves* or barrel for fermentation to begin

Savennières “Cuvée Spéciale”:

- Bottled especially for Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant
- Wine ferments for 6 weeks in small, stainless steel *cuves*
- Ages for about 6 months *sur lie* in very old chestnut *demi-muids*
- Bottled unfiltered

Savennières Moelleux:

- Fermentation lasts one month in acacia barrels
- Aged in acacia barrels until April bottling
- 35 grams/Liter residual sugar
- Parcel is located near the Loire river and benefits from the mists from the river, which add in the development of botrytis

Anjou Rouge *Clos de la Cerisaie*:

- An actual clos, but part of the walls have collapsed
- Fermentation with indigenous yeasts in stainless steel
- Primary fermentation lasts 15 days, with daily pumpers
- Wine ages in 30 hectoliter stainless steel tanks
- Wine ages until spring and is bottled in April
- Neither filtered nor fined



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CHÂTEAU D'ÉPIRÉ (continued)

MISCELLANEA

A brief history of Château d'Épiré:

Elisabeth Poudret de Sevret was the last heir to Château d'Épiré's castle. She was an only child, as was her mother, grandmother, and great grandmother. Elisabeth received great wealth from them, including the castle. She was very generous and helped build schools, retirement houses, and religious buildings (like the new church of Épiré). After the untimely death of her husband, Emmanuel Las Cases, in 1854, ten days after their wedding, she decided that upon her death (1882) to bequeath all her property to her close friend Théophile Bizard. The Bizard family has run the estate since that time.

The Château d'Épiré filters all of its wines except those sold to Kermit Lynch. Why? Sadly, the majority of European consumers and sommeliers are willing to forsake body and taste for perfect stability and sediment-free wines.... Based on my tastings of each over three different vintages, there is a two-point difference between the normal cuvées and the Cuvée Spéciale and another two-point difference between it and Lynch's unfiltered cuvée.

Pierre Rovani, *The Wine Advocate*

It is difficult to imagine another wine from France likely to provide the sheer intellectual marvel we seem to enjoy with every bottle of d'Épiré's Savennières.

Bruce Neyers, KLWM

The Cuvée Spéciale is what it usually is, their best parcel, old vines next to the Coulée de Serrant, fermented and raised in demi-muids, and bottled unfiltered. All for us! It is intense with a strong goût de terroir to go with the fruit. It is powerful, coiled like a spring, needs some time, and can age well into the next century.

Kermit Lynch