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: Haute Valeur Environnemental (certified)
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 began working at a her family’s domaine and 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.
DOMAINE DE LA VOÛTE DES CROZES (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wine</th>
<th>Blend</th>
<th>Vine Age</th>
<th>Soil Type</th>
<th>Vineyard Area*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Côte-de-Brouilly</td>
<td>Gamay</td>
<td>50 yrs</td>
<td>Schist, Porphyry</td>
<td>3.5 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Effervescence&quot;</td>
<td>Gamay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vin de France Blanc</td>
<td>Gamay</td>
<td></td>
<td>Clay</td>
<td>.27 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Perle de Gamay”</td>
<td>Gamay</td>
<td>Planted in 1970s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* “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:

- “Effervescence” is a vintage sparkling wine, although Nicole uses a non-vintage label
- Vinified in the méthode Champenoise
- Fermented in stainless steel tank
- Aged 18 months sur latte
- Hand riddled twice a day, then manual disgorgement
- 3 grams dosage

Vin de France Blanc “Perle de Gamay”:

- A white wine made from Gamay
- Fermentation in stainless steel for 3 weeks
- Aged 10 months in stainless steel
- Full malolactic fermentation
- Aged in bottle 6 months before release
DOMAINE DE LA VOÛTE DES CROZES (continued)

MISCELLANEA

Charrion’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 winey, 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