



ÉRIC CHEVALIER

Country: France

Region: Loire

Appellation(s): Vin de Pays du Val de Loire,
Muscadet Côtes de Grand Lieu

Producer: Éric Chevalier

Founded: four generations old

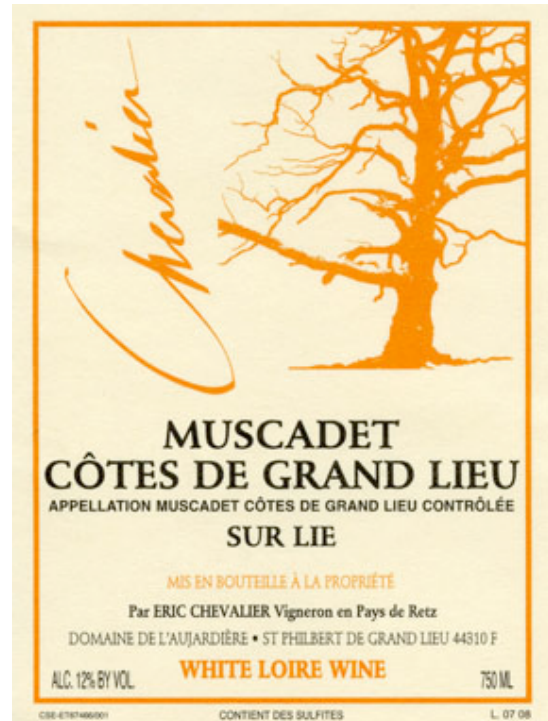
Annual Production: 22,000 cases

Farming: Organic (practicing)

Website: www.chevalierledomaine.com

Éric Chevalier is a rising star in the Nantais of the Loire Valley. For ten years, he sourced fruit for a large *négociant* in the Touraine. In 2005, he decided to return to his hometown of Saint-Philbert de Grandlieu, just southwest of Nantes, and ended up taking over the family domaine, Domaine de l'Aujardière, the next year. His father, a talented *vigneron* who did not bottle much of his wines and was well-known as a high-quality source of bulk wine, had stopped working the vineyards and the vines were either going to have to be pulled up and replanted, or sold. Éric was anything but enthusiastic. Little by little his passion grew, and today he is proud to be the fourth generation to farm the domaine. He is also proud to be bottling more and more of the family's production himself. Éric sustainably farms twenty-five hectares of vines, producing wines of great character and finesse. He found his future in his family's past.

The Nantais is a maritime climate, and the vineyards are not far from the Atlantic Ocean. Consequently, there is an interesting variety of sedimentary, igneous, and metamorphic rocks, as this area once was ocean floor. Of the twenty-five hectares he farms, a large percentage of his production is dedicated to the production of Melon de Bourgogne (Muscadet Côtes de Grand Lieu, mostly from old vines in the superb *lieu-dit* of *La Butte*). The soils here are comprised primarily of serpentinite and quartz, with the exception of his ancient granite parcel known as *La Noë*. The other half of his crop (Chardonnay, Fié Gris, and Pinot Noir, among others) goes towards the production of Vin de Pays du Val du Loire, and the soils are rich in granite, sand, and silt. Of these "country" wines, the most notable is Éric's Fié Gris. This grape, pulled out of vineyards for many years to be replaced with the more profitable Sauvignon Blanc, is indigenous to the Loire. Also known as Sauvignon Rose or Sauvignon Gris, Éric's vines are one of the few remaining strongholds of this elegant and luscious varietal. It makes an impression, with almost an Alsatian exoticism.





ÉRIC CHEVALIER (continued)

<u>Wine</u>	<u>Blend</u>	<u>Vine Age</u>	<u>Soil Type</u>	<u>Vineyard Area*</u>
Vin de Pays du Val de Loire Chardonnay	Chardonnay	10 – 15 years	Serpentine, eclogite, quartz	3 ha
Muscadet Côtes de Grand Lieu Sur Lie <i>Le Clos de la Butte</i>	Melon de Bourgogne	50 years	Serpentine, eclogite, quartz	6 ha
Muscadet Côtes de Grand Lieu Sur Lie <i>La Noë</i>	Melon de Bourgogne	20 – 60 years	Granite	4 ha
Vin de Pays du Val de Loire <i>Blanc Fié Gris</i>	Sauvignon Gris	20 years	Gravel, silt/sand	2.5 ha
Bon Plan Gros Plant (AOC Gros Plant du Pays Nantais)	Folle Blanche	35 – 40 years	Serpentine, Eclogite, Quartz, Granite	2.3 ha
Vin de Pays du Val de Loire Rosé Pinot Noir	Pinot Noir	15 years	Metamorphic rock	2.5 ha
Vin de Pays du Val de Loire Pinot Noir	Pinot Noir	15 years	Metamorphic rock	3 ha
Vin de Pays du Val de Loire Cabernet Franc	Cabernet Franc	15 years	Metamorphic rock	1.5 ha
Val de Loire Rosé “Grolleau”	Grolleau	20 years average	Metamorphic rock	0.6 ha

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

VITICULTURE / VINIFICATION

- Grapes are slowly and gently crushed by pneumatic press
- Juice is transferred underground into glass-lined *caves*
- Natural fermentation by indigenous yeasts
- Wines age on the lees, and lees are stirred regularly
- Wines are never racked or filtered
- Bon Plan Gros Plant ferments in underground glass tanks and ages for 18 months on fine lees
- Rosés are made by direct press, do not undergo malolactic fermentation
- Vineyards to be certified organic in 2020