



Yannick Amirault

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Bourgueil & Saint Nicholas de Bourgueil



Bourgueil is located west of Tours in the western part of the Loire Valley. Bourgueil is situated on the northern side of the Loire, across the river from Chinon, and represents one of the northern-most appellations for growing red grape varieties in France. There are a variety of soil types here with the biggest and most cellar-worthy wines generally coming from the best vineyards on the slopes located further away from the Loire to the north and north-east of the town of Bourgueil. The vineyards on the flat gravelly river soils closer to the Loire yield wines which are usually aromatic, elegant and earlier to mature.

Amirault has about 13 hectares of vineyard holdings in Bourgueil, mostly located on, or just at, the base of these slopes to the north and northeast of the village of Bourgueil. He also has 6 hectares in Saint Nicolas de Bourgueil. Even in abundant years the yields are kept very low by doing a green harvest so the quality and consistency at this estate is remarkable. 2006 was a year that also benefited the late ripening Cabernet Franc but only those growers who worked hard to control the yields have gained the benefits. Amirault's average yield in 2003 + 2004 was 44 hl/ha compared to authorized yields of 55 hl/ha for Bourgueil and 60 hl/ha for Saint Nicolas de Bourgueil.

All vinifications are made with indigenous yeasts with no acid or sugar adjustment. All wines are bottled unfinned and unfiltered. Amirault produces 5 Bourgueil's and 4 St Nicolas de Bourgueil's from which we have selected following;



2007 Bourgueil "La Coudraye" – from 25 to 35 years old vines on sandy slopes situated closer to the Loire River. Two thirds of this cuvee are aged in large specially designed wooden tanks, the rest in stainless steel tanks. This wine is notable for its freshness and perfume and has very fine tannins well covered with admirable flesh coming from fully ripe fruit.

2006 Saint Nicholas "La Mine" - This wine is regarded by some as one of the most classic wines of the whole Saint Nicholas de Bourgueil appellation. This cuvee from Saint Nicolas de Bourgueil is always in very high demand and sells out very quickly each year. Produced from vines averaging 40 years old, this wine is loaded with perfumed cherry and red-currant fruit along with generous hints of spice, white pepper and even chocolate. This is only the third vintage he has allowed us to buy a little of this wine as this cuvee has a very strong following in France.

2006 Bourgueil "La Petite Cave" – is produced from old vines averaging more than 45 years old which are located around the middle of the slope on the best soils. The wine is matured in 450 litre "demi-muid" barrels and is the richest and deepest wine in his cellar. In great years like 1997 and 2003 the wine is a thick almost impenetrable black colour with amazing concentration and depth of mulberry and black raspberry fruit with anise and spice notes that linger for ages. This is a wine that shows very well at a relatively young age in ripe years like 2006, and which will also age effortlessly for decades. This wine has remarkable depth of fruit supported by substantial fine tannins with just enough acidity to keep the wine fresh and appetizing without becoming too heavy. This is Bourgueil, and Cabernet Franc, at its finest.

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