



Clos Rougeard

Loire Valley (Saumur-Champigny)

The Foucault brothers have a long and yet quiet history producing wine under the Saumur-Champigny appellation. I say quiet because, despite the host of opinions given by the likes of Clive Coates, Andrew Jefford, Michel Bettane and others familiar with the estate, who all rank it among the top domaines of the Loire, Clos Rougeard still seems to have a very low profile, and is generally appreciated only by hardened Loire aficionados. Or perhaps Loire wine geeks would be a more appropriate name. Their wines are unique within the appellation, and when considering Cabernet Franc without doubt the Foucault brothers deserve to be ranked among France's finest.

Charlie and Nadi took on the responsibility of the estate in 1969, the vineyards having already been in the family for several generations, and they have continued to fashion the wines derived from their 10 hectares of vines using what are perhaps best described as artisanal and certainly organic methods.



"..a seriously great producer of seriously great wine ..." Jancis Robinson

"Producer of very great wines, amongst the best of France" Classement 2008 - 2 stars



The leading cuvée of Saumur-Champigny is **Le Bourg**, which comes from a 1 hectare plot of 70-year-old Cabernet Franc vines planted on soils comprised of a thin layer of clay. These are the vines that lie directly behind the courtyard and its anonymous gateway. There is also **Les Poyeux**, from a more distant plot of 45-year-old vines on more sandy soils, and finally for the reds there is the domaine **Saumur-Champigny** which is produced from other plots. If these wines are not sufficiently esoteric there is also a white Saumur named **Brèze**, made naturally from 100% Chenin Blanc, in miniscule quantities.

The vineyards are tended without herbicides or fertilisers, with the plough being an important method of weed control. After harvest by hand, the fruit is destemmed and fermented in barrel with the *chapeau* submerged by foot or by pumping over. The reds undergo malolactic fermentation in barrel, with Le Bourg going into new oak, Les Poyeux in used one-year-old barrels and the domaine wine in older wood again, often acquired from notable Bordeaux estates. There is no fining and no filtration, minimal use of sulphur, and the wine is bottled after 18-24 months in oak. The end result is, particularly in Les Poyeux and Le Bourg, a wine that stands apart from the traditional view of Saumur-Champigny as a light red for quaffing in Parisian bistros. There is a substance to the Rougeard wines that suggests they deserve more than that, but more importantly there is a textural quality to them, a silkiness to the tannins, that demands attention. These are subtle wines, wines that do not assault the palate, but seek to impress on grounds of their elegant composition rather than forceful flavour or aroma. They are truly stunning wines.



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