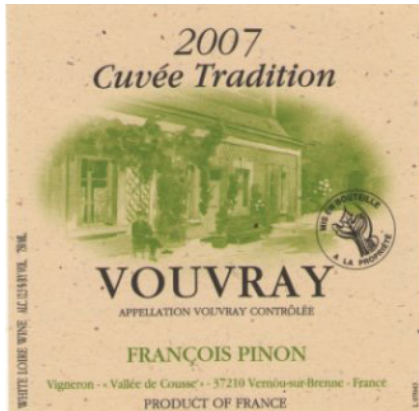


**LOIRE VALLEY**  
**VOUVRAY**
**FRANÇOIS PINON**  
**VERNOU-SUR-BRENNE**


**OVERVIEW** | François Pinon is located far from the center of Vouvray, in the Vallée de Cousse, in the small hamlet of Vernou-sur-Brenne. Together with Champalou, Huet, and Foreau he is at the top of the list in this appellation.

**VINEYARD AREA:** 14 hectares

**ANNUAL PRODUCTION:** 5000 cases

**SOIL TYPES:** clay, flint

**GRAPE VARIETIES:** chenin blanc

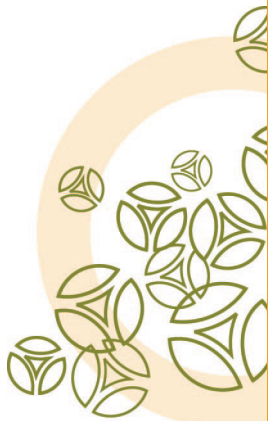
François is the seventh generation of his family to take charge at the domaine. He initially trained as a psychoanalyst, and enjoyed a successful career as a child psychologist before returning to his roots in 1987 to take up the running of the domaine where his father left off. When François accepted his new role, he came with a determination to make something special, and if that meant doing things the hard way, then so be it.

Today Pinon oversees 14 hectares of vines, scattered in a multitude of locations all around the valley. Maintaining many different plots can insulate the vigneron against the devastating effects of vine disease, for if one hectare of fruit is lost there are always other distant plots that have hopefully fared better. And a parcelled domaine also makes for a more varied mix of terroirs; Pinon has sections that are clay, some which are flint, and some which provide a mix of the two. The vineyards are predominantly Chenin Blanc, although there is still a hectare of red grapes including Cot and Grolleau. The Cot was planted by Pinon's grandfather in order to provide a red wine for the workers, and there were originally between 3 and 4 hectares. In more recent years much of this has been lifted and replanted, but 1 hectare remains and it is the basis for his sparkling Touraine rosé.

**VINEYARD/CELLAR PRACTICES** | There is no shortage of old vines, with many exceeding 30 and 50 years of age, and new vines are in-house selections rather than nursery clones. The vineyard practices are a combination of the traditional and the modern technique biologique; François is thoroughly organic, eschewing herbicides, pesticides and chemical treatments, and in humid warm years, that means he is fighting a daily battle with oidium.

The vineyards are ploughed to discourage the weeds and to encourage the vines to root more deeply, using tractors. The yields are controlled using short pruning, and the harvest is 100% manual. In the cellar, the fermentation uses natural indigenous yeasts and takes place in old wood, followed up by aging in stainless steel or large foudres. There is minimal racking, filtration and a controlled use of small amounts of sulphur.

**WINES** | There are four méthode traditionnelle sparklers: a sugar-free dosage (non-dosé), a brut and a demi-sec, and a tiny production of Touraine rosé. The still chenins begin with the sec, followed by the demi-sec Cuvée Tradition, which is often described as a sec-tendre. Pinon generally blends his terroirs at this level. There is also a moelleux, and in some vintages there may be liquoreux, namely the Première Trie, Cuvée de Botrytis or Cuvée de Novembre cuvées.


**trriage wines**

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