

CHAMPAGNE

AUBE

VOUETTE ET SORBÉE
BUXIÈRES-SUR-ARCE

OVERVIEW | Bertrand Gautherot's Vouette et Sorbée is based at the little known village of Buxières sur Arce in the Aube. He is deeply influenced by the work of organic and biodynamic farmers and vigneron and farms biodynamically himself.

VINEYARD AREA: 5 hectares

ANNUAL PRODUCTION: 2500 cases

SOIL TYPES: kimmeridgian marl and portlandian

VARIETALS: chardonnay, pinot noir

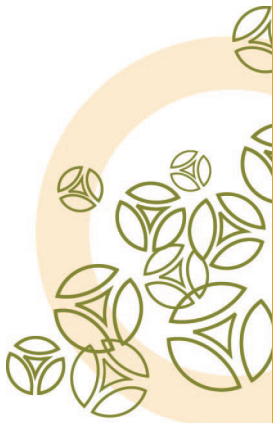
Bertrand is dedicated to the exclusive production of mono-varietal champagne at his family estate of Vouette et Sorbée. The estate consists of four hectares of meticulously tended vineyards that are on average 21 years old. A devotee of natural production and protégé of Anselme Selosse, Bertrand has been Demeter certified since 1998 and heads the organization of organic producers in Champagne (the group consists of 32 growers out of more than 20,000 producers in the region).

In the past, Gautherot was content to tend his vines, selling his grapes to the local cooperative, and in the end it was his friend Anselme Selosse who convinced him to vinify his own wine. His first vintage was the difficult 2001, which yielded grapes of only ten percent natural alcohol; in 2002, he says, "I harvested too early," while 2003 was "a very small harvest," as was the case everywhere in Champagne. Gautherot persevered, however, and began to sell his 2001 champagne in 2004. He quickly gained a devoted following, and today he enjoys near cult-like status in the Aube among champagne aficionados, rivaled perhaps only by Cédric Bouchard in nearby Celles-sur-Ource. He has steadily increased his production as he's stopped selling his grapes to the négoce, with a final contract with Duval-Leroy terminating as of 2008.

The name of Gautherot's estate is derived from two primary vineyard sites: Vouette, a parcel that lies just behind his house, on Kimmeridgian marl; and Sorbée, a one-hectare plot located farther up the slope, primarily on Portlandian soils. A third vineyard, Biaunes, is a two-hectare parcel not too far away from the others, sharing the same type of Kimmeridgian soil as Vouette.

VINEYARD/CELLAR PRACTICES | Gautherot's operation has been Demeter certified biodynamic since 1998. His property is also filled with animals. "Having animals like cows and chickens around is important for cultivating biodiversity, in order to increase the diversity of natural yeasts," says Bertrand. "But that's not the only reason I have them. My cows are important to me because they regulate my mood. I take care of them first thing in the morning, and if I'm in a bad mood, they know it, and they'll let me know that they know it. It makes me realize that I have to calm down and readjust my attitude before I go out into the vineyard."

Harvest is done entirely by hand, followed by traditional Coquard pressing. In the cellar, Gautherot prefers to keep his hands off of the wine as much as possible. All of the work is done entirely by gravity, from the press to débouillage to barrel, and the primary fermentation is always carried out with natural yeasts. Fermentation takes place in barrique, with a light bâtonnage only very early, usually in mid-December. The wines are bottled without fining, filtering or cold-stabilization, and total sulfur is very low. Riddling and disgorging are all done entirely by hand, and the wines are released without dosage.



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