
CATHERINE & PIERRE BRETON
(Bourgueil, Loire)

January 2024



With Pierre Breton somewhere in Bourgueil at the entrance of a remote cellar, which is carved out of limestone

I have visited the domain of Catherine & Pierre Breton seven times since I have started importing their wines in 2010. Even though I have stayed a half-day when I visit, I feel like I am still scratching the surface of domain. The domain is small, like all of our producers, but Catherine & Pierre Breton is the only producer, who offers vintages that span many years. *Avis de Vin Fort*, for example, is bottled and ready in the spring following a vintage; *Clos Senechal* is only ready after three years following a vintage; and *Les Perrieres* is available after four, sometimes five, years after a vintage. Because *Les Perrieres* spends anywhere from 24 months to 36 months in *demi-muids* (600 litre barrels), followed by two years in bottles prior to release, there are multiple cellars, some remote, for *élevage*. It is an event to visit one of those remote cellars, which are out of nowhere and unmarked.

So, during one of the visits, Pierre and I were packed into his 1970's tiny Citroën truck. It is so tiny that when we sat down in the truck, our shoulders were nearly touching. Every time Pierre would have to change a gear, which its lever is mounted next to the steering wheel, I would have to move my shoulder so that Pierre can change a gear. Finally, Pierre parked the truck off a dirt road and we walked up a hill and then descended to the rocky steps, where they led us to a locked metal gated cellar. You can see a glimpse of the cellar in the previous page. The cellar is pure limestone and had been dug-out a few centuries ago. The icy chalk cellar contains barrels of multiple vintages of *Clos Senechal* and *Les Perrieres*, where the *élevage* takes place in silence and at a constant cellar temperature.

When some of our customers ask why the *Clos Senechal* and *Les Perrieres* are so compelling, I would point to the obvious - the vineyards and farming practices. But there is something more that I cannot quite describe. I think it is to do with the act of caring in *élevage*. *Élevage*, in French, means to 'raise' – like raising a child. All great wines have a hand-hewn quality that comes from the act of caring. After many years of travel on the wine routes, I am certain a *vigneron* like Pierre Breton don't come around too often. I am not sure how long the art of producing such long-*élevage* wines are going to last. The financial benefits of long-*élevage* are disappearing, even in France.

BOURGUEIL 'LES PERRIÈRES' 2018
SKU: 406116 SPECULATIVE 750ml 12 bottles/case
\$50.68 Wholesale per bottle



Singular. Alluring entry, textured mid-palate and lasting finish. A complete wine. Balanced with fine tannins. Captivating nose. The complexity and elegance of *Les Perrieres* become obvious when tasting it with the other wines at the domain. *Les Perrieres* is the most prized parcel in *Bourgueil* on a south-facing hill composed on sandstone on a bed of pure limestone. From the tiny one-hectare site. The maceration is traditional in open wood vats. The *élevage* follows in 600 litre *demi-muids*. A wine for occasions. 100% Cabernet Franc. This is the top wine for

Catherine & Pierre Breton.

BOURGUEIL 'CLOS SÉNÉCHAL' 2020

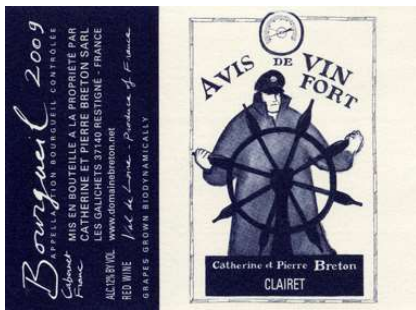
SKU: 161208 SPECULATIVE 750ml 12 bottles/case
\$42.44 Wholesale per bottle



Regal. Nervous. Full of energy. A compelling lead-pencil shaving taste that is unique to *Clos Sénéchal*. Catherine & Pierre Breton have 1.5 hectare of this *lieu-dit* of *Clos Sénéchal*. Macerated in a traditional open wooden vat and aged in neutral *demi-muids* for about 18 to 24 months. The wine is aged in bottles for an additional year prior to release. The ancients knew this vineyard gave *grand vin*. This tiny walled vineyard sits on pure limestone with clay on top. The vineyard is on a gentle slope, facing south. 100% Cabernet Franc.

BOURGUEIL 'AVIS DE VIN FORT' 2022

SKU: 161182 SPECULATIVE 750ml 12 bottles/case
\$27.66 Wholesale per bottle



Light. Crunchy. Fresh. Peony fragrance. A hint of minerality adds complexity. Glides down the gullet effortlessly. Drink this and look chic, while everyone else is downing thick black wines during winter. 100% Cabernet Franc that is macerated for only about 3 to 4 days, depending on a vintage. *Bourgueil* like no other. Light in colour from a short maceration. From a gravel parcel, where the vines are about 60 years old. *Élevage* in neutral barrels for about four to five months to round out the texture and to add a touch of class. Elegance of old world without being old. It is best chilled.

(Note: Labels are not current vintages and are for illustration purposes only)

BOURGUEIL 'TRINCH!' 2022

SKU: 161190 SPECULATIVE 750ml 12 bottles/case
\$27.85 Wholesale per bottle



A hint of violets and minerals. Crunchy – French would say *croquant*. From the Cabernet Franc vines grown on gravelly soil surrounding Catherine and Pierre's farm. Inimitable *Bourgueil*. Pure. Pleasurable. The macerated skins from the *Avis de Vin Fort* is added to *Trinch!*, which lends body, depth and colour. Best slightly chilled. *Trinch!* means Cheers! This wine ages remarkably well and tastes even better with a couple years in a cool cellar. But who can wait? It is delicious now. 100% Cabernet Franc.

BOURGUEIL TRINCH! 2022 (MAGNUMS)
SPECULATIVE SKU: 413948 1.5 L 6 bottles/case
\$62.45 Wholesale per bottle

There are several bottlings of Trinch! throughout a year. I try to get the last bottling of the year, where this Trinch! is relaxed in large vats for a few additional months. The extra time in the vats makes this Trinch! more complete, least to my palate. This is the last bottling of the year.

BOURGUEIL 'TRINCH!' 2021 (3 Litre Bag-in-Box -BIB)
SPECULATIVE SKU: 502325 3 Litre 6 BIBs/case
\$82.01 Wholesale per BIB

Trinch in a 3 Litre Bag-in-Box. Simply keep the wine in your fridge and pour the desired amount into a carafe. Leave the wine in carafe for 10 - 15 minutes to bring up the temperature a bit and enjoy. Perfect for a picnic, camping, or party. Also, the BIB is great when you want another glass of wine without opening another bottle. BIB lasts for about a month once you start using. One BIB equals 4 bottles of 750 ml Trinch! That is savings of 25% per volume, which comes from efficient packaging of BIBs. The only reason not to buy this wine is that you cannot drink 3 litre of wine in a month.

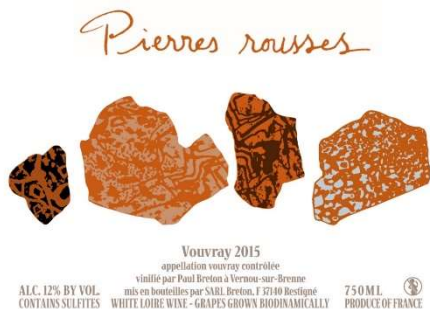
VOUVRAY 'LA DILETTANTE' METHODE TRADITIONELLE BRUT NV
SKU: 161075 SPECULATIVE 750ml 12 bottles/case
\$34.24 Wholesale per bottle



Zesty. Lively. Pure. 100% *Chenin Blanc*. This sparkler, along with the still Vouvray and Pét Nat below, is now Paul's baby - Catherine & Pierre's son. Paul now has purchased an old house with a cellar, where all Vouvrais are now vinified and cellared on site. Breton's Vouvrais were always delicious but Paul's dedication at the source is undeniable. The quality of their Vouvrais has jumped to another level. This Vouvray *pétillant* uses the traditional *Champagnoise* method. It is an equal blend of two vintages. The wine is aged about 30 months in its lees before disgorged. Paul's patience and

hard work really shine in all of his Vouvrais.

VOUVRAY 'PIERRES ROUSSES' SEC 2022
SKU: 124779 SPECULATIVE 750ml 12 bottles/case
\$33.72 Wholesale per bottle



100% *Chenin Blanc* from a single vineyard. This is from a small distinctive parcel in *Vouvray* that has particularly red rocks on the surface with limestone underneath, which impart a singular flinty stony taste. *Pierres Rousses* means red stones in French. Inimitable nose and taste of a great *Chenin*. It is self-evident. Very *cru* in its character – supremely elegant with laser focus. Compelling *Chenin Blanc*. Raised in neutral 600

litre barrels for about a year, followed by additional time in bottles prior to release.

VOUVRAY 'LA DILETTANTE' SEC 2020
SPECULATIVE SKU: 35006 750ml 12 bottles/case
\$33.67 Wholesale per bottle



Many people think that the above single vineyard Vouvray is better than this blended-parcel Vouvray. I, for one, am not convinced. For the same reason, the Bretons charge the same for the two Vouvrais. There is a long history of blending various parcels in Vouvray to create a sum that is greater than its parts. Some parcels are acidic, some are pure minerals, while other parcels have a great mid-palate and finish. Paul Breton blends the various parcels to create something more complete than what a single parcel can give. Dry still Vouvray. 100% Chenin Blanc with some additional

cellar age to smooth out. Graceful. Harmonious. Forty-year old vines grown on limestone from one of the most striking appellations. The grapes are hand-harvested and gently pressed. *Élevage* is in neutral tanks. Then, the wine is bottled and aged in bottles prior to release

ELLE EST PAS BULLE LA VIE (Pétillant Naturel Blanc) 2022
SPECULATIVE SKU: 426732 750ml 12 bottles/case
\$34.24 Wholesale per bottle

Pétillant Naturel from Catherine & Pierre Breton's son Paul. This is Paul's new baby. A hint of citrus fruits with compelling lime notes. The class of Chenin Blanc grown on limestone hills of *Vouvray* really shines. Crunchy with fine bubbles. Easy but with depth. 100% Chenin Blanc. From the tiny one-hectare parcel on the flinty clay with limestone bedrock in the village of *Vernou-sur-Brenne* in *Vouvray*. The vines were planted in 1960. Partially fermented wine is capped, where the fermentation continues to create happy bubbles. Hard to stop after one glass of this chilled bubbles. So lovely

ELLE EST PAS BULLE LA VIE (Pétillant Naturel Rosé) 2022
SPECULATIVE SKU: 331292 750ml 12 bottles/case
\$30.58 Wholesale per bottle

This is the first time we received this *Pétillant Naturel Rosé*. A hint of spring flowers and berries. It is made with 100% *Grolleau*. *Grolleau* is a thin-skinned varietal that used to be common in many parts of Loire but now has disappeared much since 1930's. This is made by Catherine & Pierre Breton's daughter France and her husband Jean-Baptiste. This speaks of spring sunnier days ahead or drink now to forget our rainy days of winter.

GROLLEAU 2022
SKU: 124782 SPECULATIVE 750ml 12 bottles/case
\$29.45 Wholesale per bottle

This is a ravishing thirst-quenching wine brimming with a strawberry-peony-like taste. Splendid. So pure. A striking *Grolleau*. Just a shade darker than a rosé, which is the natural colour of the

thin-skinned *Grolleau* varietal. This is made by France and her husband Jean-Baptiste (Catherine et Pierre Breton daughter and son-in-law). Pierre Breton told me just about all *vignerons* in *Bourgueil* and *Chinon* used to have small parcels of *Grolleau* vines before the AOC declared the appellations, allowing Cab Franc as the only red. So up to 1930's, the local *vignerons* and bistro patrons were downing bottles of *Grolleau*, while waiting for the regal but high-maintenance Cabernet Franc of *Bourgueil* and *Chinon* to calm down. The AOC *Bourgueils* and *Chinons* fetched higher prices. So, just about all of *Grolleau* vineyards were uprooted. Nowadays, *Grolleau* vines are hard to find.

CHINON 'BEAUMONT' 2020

SKU: 767731 SPECULATIVE 750ml 12 bottles/case
 \$31.58 Wholesale/ \$41.00 Retail per bottle



A cuvee that not many people know about because this is the only *Chinon* that Catherine & Pierre Breton make. Pure. Vibrant. Violets and minerals harmoniously weaved by fine-grained tannins. This wine is showing the class of this treasured vineyard in *Chinon*. This wine comes from the south-facing, mid-slope *lieu-dit* of *Beaumont* that hugs the *Vienne* River, where it is clay on top and limestone underneath. The vinification is traditional in wooden vats. 100% Cabernet Franc. A hidden gem.

BOURGUEIL 'LA DILETTANTE' 2020

SKU: 165916 SPECULATIVE 750ml 12 bottles/case
 \$31.58 Wholesale/ \$41.00 Retail per bottle



Elegant. Bright. Pretty. A minerally undertow adds complexity A Burgundy-like in texture. This wine is fermented with whole clusters. The fermentation is a classic Burgundy approach with the stems. Hands-off and gentle extraction to capture the essence of Cabernet Franc grown in gravelly soils of *Bourgueil*. This wine is aged in cement "egg-shaped" vats, where the shape of the vat gently and naturally keeps the wine moving during *élevage*. What a beautiful *Bourgueil*. Best slightly chilled. 100% Cabernet Franc.

BOURGUEIL 'NUITS D'IVRESSE' 2021

SKU: 349845 SEPCULATIVE 750ml 12 bottles/case
 \$35.66 Wholesale per bottle



Peony-like nose with alluring minerals. Full of energy. From the 60-year vines on clay with limestone bedrock. *Nuits d'Ivresse*, meaning 'Drunken Nights'. This wine comes from a single site of about 3 hectares of gravelly soil. The wine is raised in neutral barrels for about a year. Lively. Engaging. Pretty. Delicious. Hard not to drink this wine fast. 100% Cabernet Franc. This is the only cuvée that has no sulphur added, which gives this wine extra vibrancy.

BOURGUEIL 'NUITS D'IVRESSE' 2021 (MAGNUMS)
SKU: 454116 SEPCULATIVE 1.5 Litre 6 bottles/case
\$76.03 Wholesale per bottle

Also comes in MAGNUMS.

BOURGUEIL 'LA RITOURNELLE' ROSÉ 2021
SPECULATIVE SKU: 633826 750ml 12 bottles/case
\$27.85 Wholesale/ \$35.00 Retail per bottle



Last but certainly not the least, a rosé from *Bourgueil*. 100% Cab Franc. Crispy. Gently minerally, which lends complexity to this rosé. A rosé to sit with and sip all evening with your friends. This rosé is made from the vines grown on gravelly soil. Hand-harvested grapes are pressed with skins. The wine is fermented with ambient yeasts, like all of the Breton wines. This rosé is beautiful during summer, of course, but drink this rosé during our dark winter months and feel refreshed.



With Pierre Breton in his 1970's Citroën truck

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