



CLUB MAGNUM

VINS ET EXPÉRIENCES

# DOMAINE DU PÉLICAN



**DOMAINE DU PÉLICAN IS ONE OF THE MOST EXCITING NEW ENTRANTS TO THE FINE WINE SCENE IN RECENT YEARS.**



Domaine du Pélican is one of the most exciting new entrants to the fine wine scene in recent years. From its first vintage in 2012, the estate has developed rapidly, now encompassing 15ha of prime vineyard in and around the pretty village of Montigny-les-Arsures on the hills outside of Arbois together with a new winery that is being built to its owners demanding specifications.

The adventure started back in 2008. Having returned to Volnay five years earlier following his father's death in 2003, Guillaume d'Angerville was already thinking about how to grow his business. He had been a known buyer for suitable parcels in and around Volnay but had found little success.

One lunchtime, at Taillevent in Paris, a favourite haunt for Guillaume and his wife Pauline, the Jura came onto his radar unexpectedly. His usual rule at Taillevent was for the sommelier to choose the wine and to serve it blind. He was happy to give him free rein, as long as it wasn't from Burgundy- quite reasonably,

All five major Jurassic grape varieties- Savagnin, Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Trousseau and Poulsard- are grown here and the full range of the region's wine are either already available or in the pipeline.



those being available to him on a daily basis in Volnay.

On this particular afternoon, a white wine was served and Guillaume set about to identify it. Quickly, he came to the conclusion that it was a Chardonnay, most likely a Burgundy and quite possibly from a good vineyard on the slopes in Meursault. He enquired of the sommelier whether he had forgotten their rule.

**THE SOMMELIER SMILED KNOWINGLY AND REVEALED THE WINE: A CHARDONNAY FROM ARBOIS MADE BY THE HIGHLY REGARDED TISSOT FAMILY.**

Guillaume confessed to knowing very little of the region but remembers saying to Pauline that if it was possible to produce wines like this in Arbois, they must go there and find out more.

Thus the search began. Together with his régisseur in Volnay, François Duvivier, who became a partner in the new project, they engaged the services of the noted geologist Yves Hérody to help them locate suitable parcels of vines. The pair saw dozens of possibilities but Hérody dismissed them all. "Too wet", "too windy", "poor drainage" being his constant refrain.

Eventually, in the spring of 2012, they became aware of the availability of the vineyards of the Château de Chavanes in Montigny-les-Arsures. Its owner, François de Chavanes, had lavished money on them some ten years earlier, replanting extensively and installing a modern winery alongside but his fortunes had changed and he wished to sell. The vineyards, at around 5 ha, were both manageable, very well located and in excellent health, already being cultivated biodynamically. The deal was done.



A second opportunity presented itself soon after. The site in question, named 'Grand Curoulet' and also around 5ha, was highly-regarded in the region. Its owner, Jean-Marc Brignot was a convert of the natural wine movement and it is not unfair to say that his interpretation had been that the vines would look after themselves. The vineyards were in poor condition and would require replanting but the quality and health of the soil, the aspect and location were superb. A second deal was done.

The first vintage of the new property, named Domaine du Pélican after the heraldic symbol of the town of Arbois, arrived in 2012 and was made in the cellars at Château de Chavanes. Three wines were produced, a Chardonnay, a red blend called 'Trois Cépages' and a Savagnin Quillé. The Savagnin grape is perhaps the calling card of the region, on account of its central role in Vin Jaune, the most famous wine of the region. Guillaume and François were not ready however to produce oxidative styles wines from the beginning and thus followed a more Burgundian vinification, meaning that the barrels would be topped up ('ouillé') to avoid oxidation.



**IN 2014/15, THERE WAS A FURTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT. THE REVERED JACQUES PUFFENEY, KNOWN AS THE ‘POPE OF ARBOIS’, WAS RETIRING. GUILLAUME AND FRANÇOIS WERE HONOURED TO BE ENTRUSTED WITH THESE VINEYARDS, WHICH WERE SOME OF THE VERY BEST IN THE ENTIRE REGION.**

Puffeney also agreed to be on hand to advise them, particularly as they laid the ground to start to produce their own Vin Jaune, which we are likely to see for the first time in 2023.

As the estate has grown, so has the range of wines produced. Alongside the original trio, a single varietal Poulsard appeared in 2015 and more recently a single varietal Pinot Noir. In 2018, we see the first vintage from a famous Puffeney vineyard, ‘Béranger’, with a fabulous single-site Trousseau.

In white, there are two single-site Chardonnays, one from the top of the Grand Curoulet vineyard, giving a wine of substance, breadth and texture and the other named ‘En Barbi’ after its source, another excellent vineyard this time from the original Chavannes purchase. Here the resulting wine has a more lifted, ethereal dimension, drier and more obviously mineral. A third single-site white is the Savagnin Ouillé ‘Grand Curoulet’, a magnificent expression of this unique grape which Guillaume and François feel is perfectly matched to the soils of the site.

Eager to learn more about the full range of possibilities in the Jura, the pair intend to continue to experiment and expand the range. As well as the hotly-anticipated Vin Jaune, a skin-contact Savagnin ‘Macération Pelliculaire’ has already appeared, its limited run of 1500 bottles already finding great favour with sommeliers and hipsters in the trendiest of places.

Guillaume’s bold move has not been without challenges. In particular, the arrival of a ‘big name’ from Burgundy was, perhaps understandably, initially viewed with suspicion by his new neighbours. Time is a healer however and the efforts made by the Pélican team to integrate themselves fully into the area, to be a Jura domaine rather than an offshoot of a Burgundian one, to have a full-time dedicated team on site and now to invest further through the new winery has won over the doubters. The news of their arrival has undoubtedly helped to boost the international profile of the region too, to the benefit of all.

However, all of this news and attention would quickly fade, as it has in so many other instances around the world, if the wines of the newcomers failed to excite. That the Pélican wines have won plaudits and are, quite simply, wonderfully delicious is the best advertisement of all.

