

"I'd like to introduce you to one of the future stars of French viticulture: Xavier Weisskopf" – Jacqueline Freidrich Guide to the Loire



Le Rocher des Violettes (organic)

www.lerocherdesviolettes.com Montlouis, Loire

Xavier Weisskopf is one of the new generation of young producers buying into appellations in the Loire that are less developed and explored enabling his purchase in 2005 of well established old vineyards at Montlouis in Touraine.

Having studied viticulture and oenology at Beaune he worked as cellar-master at Chateau St Cosme in the southern Rhone before buying his first parcel of 6.8 hectares. He has gradually increasing his holdings to the current 13 ha of vines



with 9 ha of vines in Montlouis (this appellation just south of the Loire from Vouvray being 100% chenin blanc on soils that are more sandy than Vouvray) and 4 ha of vines in Touraine AOC which produce some white chenin blanc as well as Grolleau for rose and very old vines of Côt (known more widely as Malbec) and Cabernet franc. Although these Touraine wines come from a very large and humble appellation these wines of his deserve discovery offering a rare sense of freshness minerality and intensity and detail not often found in this appellation meaning these offer great value for savvy buyers.

The entire estate is farmed organically without the use of any chemicals or artificial fertilisers. With most of his vineyards being planted pre-1940 the yields are naturally low and all harvesting is done by hand. Xavier prefers wines that are fresh mineral and long rather than fat so these are wines made with a light touch showing wonderfully pure and lifted aromatics with freshness and detail on the palate to a level rarely seen from these appellations and varieties. The wines are vinified with little or no SO₂ and bottled with minimal but safe amounts of SO₂.

"...the most exciting was Xavier Weisskopf, of Le Rocher des Violettes. His wines, crystal-pure, vibrant, pithy and long, were revelations." thewinedoctor.com Feb 2015



2013 Montlouis sec 'Touche Mitaine'

100% Chenin blanc from 4 hectares of his youngest vines averaging 35 years old. Produced from very low yields and aged in barrels for 8 months.

"A lightly polished mineral nose, with a soft and feminine perfume to it, reminiscent of soapstone. The palate has a rather gentle style, with soft orchard fruit substance, quite a deep, sappy character to it, with a textural grain that feels a little raw. Nice acids, despite the rather open feel of it. Very primary. This has some promise." thewinedoctor.com Feb 2015

2013 Montlouis sec 'La Negrette'

100% Chenin blanc from a very old vineyard around 90 years old. Made from very low yields and aged in 225 litre barrels for 18-20 months before bottling with minimal SO₂. *"From old vines, aged 90 years, with élevage in some new demi-muids plus older barriques, aged 5-6 years. A rather restrained character on the nose, with a little trace of honeyed straw which might be the oak coming through, over a layer of very delicate fruit. The palate feels soft, open and loose-knit at the moment, although there is some nice acidity beneath the rather delicate blanket of fruit."* thewinedoctor.com Feb 2015

2015 Touraine Cabernet Franc

100% Cabernet franc from 3 plots of vines totaling just 1 hectare of vines averaging around 40 years old. The grapes for this wine are de-stemmed before crushing and then vinified like Burgundy with daily pump-overs and gentle punching down. Ageing is done in barrels of one to 3 years old for 20 months and the resulting wine is remarkably perfumed fresh and bright giving a violet perfume so typical of the very best Cabernet franc with fine silky tannins and bright fresh brambly fruit. Totally delicious and shows how great Cabernet franc can be in the right hands.

2013 Touraine Côt vieilles vignes

100% Malbec *"This is sourced from three parcels of vines, planted in 1918, 1970 and 1991. The overarching terroir is clay and limestone. Whole-bunch fermentation in this vintage. A rather dark, grainy, dried-fruit character on the nose. The palate has a fairly firm acid core, with gentle, macerated fruit wrapped around it, and a dried-fruit skin character, dark and savoury."* thewinedoctor.com Feb 2015