



Domaine MACLE

VIGNERON

CHATEAU-CHALON - JURA - FRANCE



Château-Chalon is the oldest and most famous of the 6 Jura AOCs. This single hilltop of just 19 hectares is home to the extraordinary Vin Jaune made from the Savagnin varietal. The grapes are harvested late and then aged in small oak barrels for a minimum of six years and three months, although some producers age their Vin Jaune for up to 10 years or more in barrel. The slightly porous oak barrels are, by design, not completely airtight, and nearly 40% of the wine evaporates over the years. No topping up is done and a thick layer of flor yeast, which looks like a white foam, develops on the surface of the wine and helps prevent excessive oxidation. This aging method, similar to that used for Fino sherry in Spain, but which in France is specific to the Jura, allows the wine to acquire its distinct flavors, characteristic of walnut, almond, spice and apple, before release. This remarkable dry wine, at its best is immensely complex and very aromatic, and best appreciated after at least 10 years in bottle but also has the ability, in good vintages, to age for a century or more.

Coming from a long line of barrel makers, the Macle family settled in Château-Chalon in 1850 to grow wine. Initially they practiced mixed agriculture, but by the 1960's were focused solely on wine. They cultivate 12 hectares, 8 planted to Chardonnay in the Côte de Jura and 4 planted to Savagnin in Château-Chalon.

Laurent Macle is the 7th generation winemaker of Domaine Macle. He works closely with his father, Jean, to produce some of the top wines from the Jura. They render sous voile or “under veil,” a semi-oxidative style of wine. Vin Jaune is not made every year: a committee of wine growers visits the vineyards to determine if it can be produced that year, depending on the grape quality. Jean has a knowledge of the chemistry of Vin Jaune production that is second to none and is known as the true master of Château-Chalon, while his son, Laurent, continues to learn more every year so that he may live up to his father's reputation.

The Macle family has a 16th-century cave where they store all the barrels for aging. Attached to each barrel is a little spout that is beneath the surface of the wine, so that it can be tasted without disturbing the veil of flor. They keep a library of their wines and are able to verify themselves whether there was something wrong with the vintage and the storage conditions of each lot.

Breaking with a long-standing tradition, Laurent has experimented with producing a non-oxidative (ouille) wine in very small proportions. According to Laurent, after sampling other examples of this style, he simply wanted to try his hand at it. What sets Macle apart from nearly all other Jura producers is their ability to give clear, diverse and unique flavors, with an undeniable mineral-driven elegance.



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