

TUTTO



THIERRY HESNAULT

Jasnières, Loire

One particularly drab January night we met Thierry Hesnault, one of the Loire's most discreet vigneron, at the little church in the village of Chahaignes. We followed him through a number of lanes into the woods, arriving at the entrance to a small cave. Candles were lit and we stepped out of the rain and into the tuffeau, spending the next few hours tasting his subtle, moving wines.

A native of Touraine, Thierry comes from a family of vigneron and travelled the world working in vineyards before returning to the Loire and working alongside the likes of Eric Nicolas and Jean-Pierre Robinot, whilst teaching at the Lycée Viticole in Amboise. He spent several years acquiring tiny parcels of the oldest vines he could find and in 2009 began making his own wine.

He now farms two and half hectares of old vines of Chenin, Aunis and hybrids spread out in tiny parcels across the Sarthe, planted over a complex melange of clay, iron and silex. In addition to these, Thierry also keeps a couple of old parcels of Gamay planted over deep sand near his home in Touraine. Having grown up amongst the vines, he farms with a real respect for nature, with treatments kept to an absolute minimum and a focus on channelling the energy of these remarkable old plants.

In the cave, Thierry makes wine as they did in yesteryear, without electricity or running water, relying on a deft hand, great patience and the perfect conditions for *élevage* the tuffeau provides to produce achingly pure wines with a real capacity to age.

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A PART!

2021

In response to the painfully low yields his plants produced in 2021, Thierry decided to create a one-off blend of old vines Pineau d'Aunis from the Sarthe that would usually go into La Centenaire du Vauperroux, and Gamay from Touraine that would usually make up Les Maluseaux. The two were fermented separately as whole bunches for three weeks, before being pressed and assembled into a couple of old barrels for eighteen months of élevage. A wine of gorgeous texture and a perfume of berries, flowers, earth and spice, this is a complex, elegant and highly original expression of the parts of the Loire Thierry knows so well.