

TUTTO

CHRISTIAN DUCROUX

Régnié, Beaujolais



For many, the name Christian Ducroux needs little introduction.

For the past four decades he has largely flown under the radar, despite being a pioneer of regenerative farming in the Beaujolais, as well as making some of the region's most delicious wines.

To offer some perspective, his work has been certified as organic since 1980 and biodynamic since 1985, long before such things were in vogue. From a long line of vignerons, today he farms around six hectares of old vines around the village of Lantignié. They are planted over pink granite at a density of up to ten thousand plants per hectare, resulting in wines of great depth and concentration. They face north at around four hundred metres above sea level, lending freshness in a region that has felt the effects of climate change more than most.

In a constant quest for biodiversity, the vines are planted amongst shrubs and fruit trees and the colours and birdsong found amongst the parcels signal a different approach to Beaujolais that favours what Christian describes as “the rhythms of life”. He believes that healthy soils are the first step towards expressing terroir and the earth is worked infrequently with the assistance of his two horses, who also provide fertiliser for the vines, trim the grasses and assist in transporting grapes during the harvest. The use of copper and sulphur is kept to a minimum, with herbal infusions favoured to strengthen the plants against disease.

In a simple space underneath the family home, whole bunches of Gamay are fermented in large concrete vats. Afterwards, they are moved to a big old press from the 1870s and the free-run juice, first and second presses are separated to produce three different cuvées — Prologue, Exspectatia and Patience. The wines are fed by gravity into old casks for élevage and once ready, are bottled with no additions.

Christian embodies the spirit of a true paysan vigneron. Focus is firstly on his land, which is treated with uncommon care and devotion, whilst a gentle hand in the cellar renders pure and nourishing wines that possess a wonderful capacity to age.

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EXSPECTATIA

2022

Gamay from vines up to ninety years old planted over pink granite. The wine was fermented as whole bunches for two weeks before being pressed to old casks for a year of élevage. A little lighter and brighter than Prologue, it is somehow more tapered and fluid too, possessing plenty of energy and a pleasantly salty, mineral character that adds complexity and intrigue.