

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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LA CENTENAIRE DU VAUPERROUX

2022

Thierry's iconic Pineau d'Aunis is borne from a hundred and thirty year old vineyard planted on original roots over sand, silex and iron in the Sarthe. The grapes were destemmed and the wine fermented on the skins for five weeks, before being aged in old barrels for fifteen months. Displaying impeccable balance and poise, this rivals the greatest expressions of the grape, with fine tannins framing red fruit, minerals and the variety's signature spice.