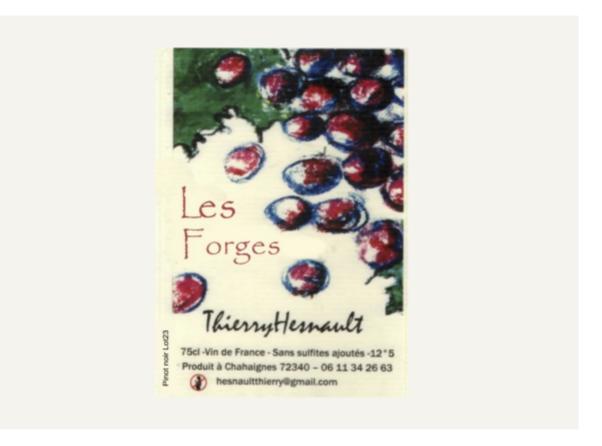# TUTTO

THIERRY HESNAULT

Jasnières, Loire

One particularly drab January night we met Thierry Hesnault, one of the Loire's most discreet vignerons, 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 vignerons 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.

THIERRY HESNAULT
Jasnières, Loire

LES FORGES
2023

From a forty year old parcel of Pinot Noir planted over clay and tuffeau, this is quite unlike any expression of the grape we have tasted from the Loire. The grapes fermented as whole bunches for two months, before being pressed to old barrels until the following spring. A cooler vintage has produced a luminous wine of gorgeous colour that is perfumed with red berries, blood orange, earth and spice.