

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.

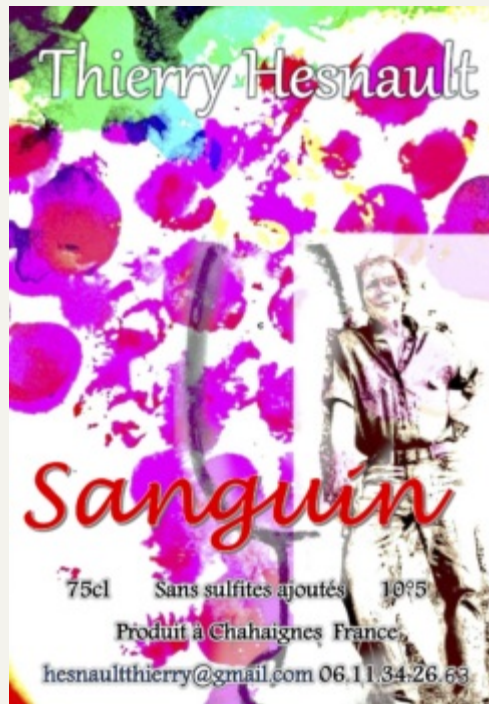
A native of Touraine, Thierry comes from a family of vigneron and travelled the world working in vineyards before returning to the Loire and working alongside the likes of Eric Nicolas and Jean-Pierre Robinot, whilst teaching at the Lycée Viticole in Amboise. He spent several years acquiring tiny parcels 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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SANGUIN

2022

A gorgeous take on Pineau d'Aunis from young vines planted over sand, silex and iron in the same parcel as Centenaire du Vauperroux in the Sarthe. The grapes were fermented as whole bunches for three weeks, before being pressed to old barrels to rest until the following spring. Light, bright and fragrant with wild strawberries, cleansing minerals and pink peppercorns, this is invigorating stuff.