



Dom. de la Chevalerie

FRANCE | LOIRE VALLEY

The Caslot family produces biodynamic cabernet franc from a historic vineyard in Bourgueil.

THE CELLARS AT DOMAINE DE LA CHEVALERIE in Restigné are among the largest in Touraine, carved out of tuffeau, the local white limestone, between the 11th and 13th centuries. The Caslot family has owned and managed the estate since 1640. Emmanuel Caslot is currently in charge of the vineyards, a total of 81.5 acres that he farms under biodynamic principles—Demeter-certified in 2016—including 59 acres of vines surrounding the family’s home and cellars. He leases vines from an uncle, a grandfather and cousins, making this domaine an extended-family business. He farms them at yields significantly below the authorized limit, providing his sister (and winemaker) Stéphanie with concentrated fruit that she vinifies with indigenous yeasts and brief *élevages* (usually less than 8 months), and then bottles without fining or filtering. —c.w.

2014 Bourgueil Chevalerie (\$40, 94 points) This wine comes from a 20-acre parcel between the winery and the Galichets block, closer to the river. The vines were first planted in 1922, growing in two feet of clay over limestone. The site can sustain old vines; currently, the average age is 50 to 55 years old. A backdrop of lush raspberry and red currant bring depth to the wine’s mineral tension. As of late, Stéphanie has incorporated the grapes from the sandier portions of this vineyard into the Galichets cuvée.

2014 Bourgueil Galichets (\$25, 93 points) The limestone bedrock at Galichets’s 25 acres is covered in more than three feet of stony, sandy clay. The oldest vines date to 1934, followed by successive waves of replantings in the '70s, '80s, and '90s that bring the average vine age to 40 years. Whether it’s the vine age or the time in 225- and 600-liter neutral oak barrels, this wine displays rich blackberry flavors, foresty and meaty.

2016 Bourgueil Diptyque (\$22, 90 points) The Caslots select this from sand, gravel and clay soils and present it as an immediately appealing *vin de soif*. Stéphanie Caslot opts for a light maceration before four to six months in concrete vats (depending on the vintage, she might use a small proportion of older barrels as well). That aging encourages the tobacco and spicy jalapeño flavors to jump out of the glass, along with red-berry fruit.



FOUNDED: 1640
OWNERS: The Caslot family
WINEMAKER: Stéphanie Caslot
VITICULTURIST: Emmanuel Caslot
ACRES OWNED: None
CASES PRODUCED: 10,000
IMPORTER: Vintage '59 Imports, Washington, DC

photo of Delphine Vesselle by MKB Photos