

Statement of Principles

Thierry Merlin, March 19, 2021

I have been doing "lutte raisonnée" for about 19 years. I was one of the first winegrowers to be interested in a more respectful approach to the soil. We have been HVE for 1 year.

I use copper in small doses but mostly organic control products. I believe more in products which are based on shellfish, seaweed, dried fruits etc. Those products are in full development, but the tests take a long time to set up by the firms (Syngenta, Bayer etc.) Copper is a heavy metal and a soil sterilizer. Year round it sterilizes the soil and saturates it (and kills the earthworms and microorganisms).

Here is my way of doing things:

- Grinding of vine shoots for 40 years (restitution of organic matter).
- For 3 years I have been adding cow manure on different plots.
- For a year I have been sowing plant mixtures (radish, field beans, etc.) in the winter to allow the vines to capture nutrients (nitrogen, etc.), to structure the soil with radish pivots and to provide organic matter once mowed.
- Surface plowing in spring and hoeing in summer.
- Much less tight trimming to cause less stress to the vine, which is initially a wild plant (liana).

I am now leaning more on these cultivation techniques. I do what I think is good for the soil and the vine. But I don't want to be classified in this or that group. Many winegrowers have chosen the organic classification only for the commercial benefits. I have someone with whom I have worked for a very long time at our SICAVAC technical center. Clearly, I do "MERLIN".

Regarding the vinification, I also have consulted SICAVAC. I no longer rack the wines. If the lees are good, I leave the wine on these lees until bottling, so less pumping and therefore less oxygen transfer into the wine. I also try to reduce the dose of SO₂. Here is the main part of the work I do on wine: I let the wine live its life, "tasting" it from time to time of course.

Thanks for the compliments on the wine. I always try to improve what I do and pass the torch to daughter Agathe with the same vision.

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