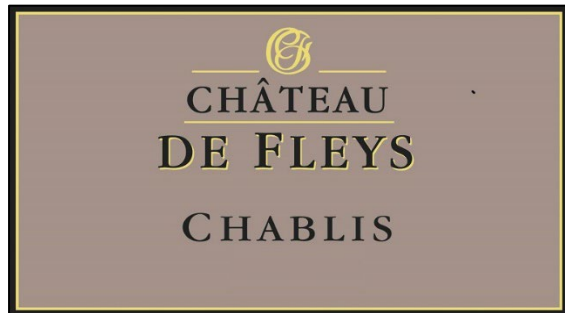


Château de Fleys

Chablis



Béatrice Philippon and her brothers Benoît and Olivier run this historic domaine in Fleys. Each had departed for separate careers before deciding to return home upon their father's retirement in 2006. Béatrice took over administration, Benoît the vines, and Olivier the cellar, with all three working in the vines when needed.

Their great-grandfather Julien Philippon came to Chablis from nearby Vézelay at the turn of the 20th century and began acquiring much of the acreage that makes up the domaine today. Vineyard land was cheap—phylloxera had just wreaked havoc—and Julien put together a polyculture farm. He had some brass in his makeup, however, for he was the first in Chablis to chance planting vines on American rootstock. He did this in 1936 with his son Louis, and today those vines produce the domaine's *vieilles vignes* cuvée of Mont de Milieu.

With the advent of WWII, Louis spent three years in a German POW camp. His wife managed the farm during those years with their baby son André (the siblings' father), a precocious lad who ran about until he contacted polio when he was six. Fortunately, he made a good recovery, and after coming of age he was the first to bottle wine from the domaine's grapes.

It was also André who purchased the château in 1988. The term may be a bit highfalutin for what is a handsome, narrow one-story rectangular structure built as a hunting lodge by a lord at the end of the 17th century. It ended up in the hands of a CEO of Renault in the 20th century (he was the one who replaced an orchard with vines in the clos), who in turn found a willing buyer in André. Originally, the lodge bordered the western edge of the village, but over time the village encircled the structure. It has, however, retained the clos that runs down the hillside with its two acres of vines and Olivier's beehives.

Béatrice and Benoît returned in 2006 and broke ground on a modern cellar across the road from the clos. In 2007, despite the fact that not one of them ever imagined working together, Olivier joined them. Today they farm 79 acres of vines around Fleys on the right bank of the Serein River, selling off approximately two-thirds in wine or must to the *négoce* and bottling about one-third under their label (a practice that originally had to do more with cash flow, but now has more to do with space—the winery is too small).