

Domaine Jourdan

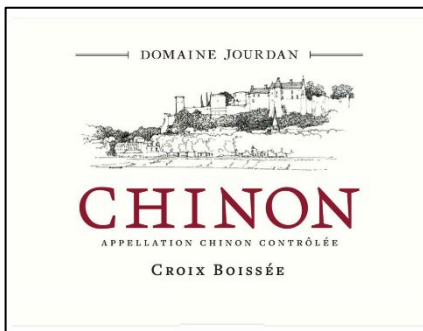
Chinon



Francis Jourdan has become a sure bet for Chinons thanks to wines that are always comfortable with tannins.

--Bettane & Desseauve, Guide des Vins 2019

In 2012 Francis and Annick Jourdan left their home in Normandy to start a new life in Chinon. They were cereal farmers and grain brokers with a passion for the vine, so much so that Francis actually tried to get the rights to plant a vineyard near Caen but could not persuade the authorities to let him (he admits that he has two feet in the soil but a head sometimes in the clouds). Consequently, they jumped at the chance to exchange the production of grains for the production of wine when the opportunity came in the form of Philippe Pichard, who was the fifth generation to run his family's domaine in Chinon. But he had no heir, and when the Jourdans offered to buy into the domaine as partners, he agreed.



Pichard went organic in 2000, eventually applied for and received certification from Ecocert in 2011. After the Jourdans came on board, the domaine received biodynamic certification from Demeter in 2015. The Jourdans embraced the philosophy—it was their wish to make wines as naturally as possible—and the only immediate change they made was to add white to the domaine's red by planting one acre of Chenin Blanc. That happened in 2013, and they planted it on a highly regarded hillside site known as La Croix Boissée, where Domaine Bernard Baudry has its parcel of Chenin. The slope is particularly dense with limestone and perfect for Chenin. In fact, the domaine's parcel is adjacent to the Baudry parcel, and it was Matthieu Baudry who persuaded Francis and Philippe to plant Chenin.

In the years that followed, Francis and Philippe added modern windmills and a water spraying system for frost protection. Today, the domaine farms 44 acres divided into 20 parcels. Nearly 80% of these vines are within a mile and a quarter of the winery, which lies in the eastern part of the Chinon appellation near the village of Cravant-les-Côteaux. This is the small Vienne River valley, and the domaine's vines start pretty much at the river, range across the plain (or benchland, if you prefer), and extend up to the plateau above Cravant. At the river, the soils are sand and gravel; the plain is limestone and much more clay; and the hillside heading up to the plateau has clay with a lot of limestone. Each cuvée is grounded in its geology. All the vines are hand-harvested, the grapes are de-stemmed, and all ferments are normally allowed to happen spontaneously.

After working with the Jourdans for nine years, Philippe Pichard retired in 2021.