

Domaine de la Chevalerie (biodynamic) Bourgueil



The Wines:

- *Cuvée Diptyque* : A Loire Cabernet Franc. This is the domaine's *vin de soif*, made from vines growing in gravelly, sandy, and clay- sandy soils. The élevage is in concrete vats with, sometimes, a small proportion done in older barrels. Light maceration—the intent is to have an easy, supple wine. *Diptyque* is ancient Greece referring to two panels linked together. In painting, this is two panels linked; in music, an oeuvre in two parts. Here, with wine, it is a cuvée made with sun and soil. In normal years, production averages a little over 1,600 cases.

As for the subtitle on the label, Franco de Porc is a play on words. Literally, Franco de Port is French for FOB, Freight on Board, i.e., the commercial term for the cost of something before transport charges. Here, port is porc, or pork, because Diptyque is perfect with a plate of charcuterie among friends.

- *Galichets*: A Loire Cabernet Franc. A 25-acre vineyard heading down the terrace toward the river that is planted on stony, sandy clay soils (the limestone bedrock is at least three feet below the surface and typically more). The oldest vines in Galichets date from 1934. A part of that plantation was replanted in the 1970s and 80s, with yet another small section replanted in the 1990s. The siblings are beginning to replant some of the oldest vines now, bringing the average age of this vineyard to 60 years. Galichets tends to make the domaine's most fleshy wine, with a lovely middle and ending with sleek, round tannins and lift. Production in those rare, normal years averages 1,500 cases.
- *Chevalerie*: A Loire Cabernet Franc. A 20-acre parcel between Galichets and the winery, planted on about two feet of clay overlying limestone. Initially planted in 1893, today the oldest parcels date from 1903 and 1922, and the average vine age is 75 years old. Like Busardières, this site supports older vines better than the above two parcels. This wine typically has the intense, full fruit of Galichets but with more tannic structure. These days, the grapes from the sandiest section of this vineyard, nearest Galichets, go into the Galichets cuvée (making it far and away the largest production).

- *Busardières*: A Loire Cabernet Franc. Another 7.4-acre block just above the winery that grows in a thin layer of topsoil less than one-inch-thick overlying hard clay, which in turn overlies solid limestone. Half of the vineyard was first planted in 1880; half in 1922, and the vines average 70 years old. 400 cases in a normal year. This tends to be stonier, leaner and more austere than the above wines, with notable length and finesse coming out in time.
- *Bretèche*: A Loire Cabernet Franc. Bretèche is an old word referring to a window or entrance to a fortified building, often above a gate in the form of an arrow-slit to enable defenders to rain arrows upon attackers. It can also refer to entrances and exits in general, and this particular vineyard grows on the edge of the Restigné commune, where a road comes in. Pierre Caslot planted his parcel between 1988 and 1992 after his wife inherited the rights to rent it from her family. They farm just over 13 acres here. The soils are young limestone and a little clay, and this makes for a long, more linear wine than Galichets or Chevalerie, one with evident stony aromatics, lift and focus given by the limestone. We work with this wine rather than the Grand Mont because the profiles and quality are quite similar, but the rent the family pays on Grand Mont is considerably higher as is, therefore, its price.
- *Bulle de Fort*: This is a small production *méthode ancestrale*, or in Montlouis what's codified as a *Pétillant Originel*, i.e., no sugar or yeast additions. It comes from Chevalerie's Cab Franc vines on sandy clay soils, based on limestone. The first vintage was 2020. Ferments are spontaneous and élevage is roughly 50-50 in neutral 500L *demi-muids* and in 220L ceramic eggs before the wine is bottled *en tirage*. Subsequently, the first of two disgorgements is at 15 months. The name *bulle de fort* is a play on words: in the central Loire, *boule de fort* is a tradition of pétanque (aka, *boules*). Production averages 1,200 bottles.