

Domaine Sylvaine & Alain Normand

Maçonnais



Alain Normand hails from the Loire Valley, but his ancestral home is Normandy, hence his name. That makes him a Norseman—a Viking--and true to form he is a tall red-headed man. He met Sylvaine, a Burgundian, in the wine school in Beaune. They began their careers by taking over an abandoned vineyard in La Roche-Vineuse with a *métayage* contract, a common agricultural practice in France whereby the landlord is paid in wine. Today, Alain works the vineyards, makes the wine, and sells off the landlord's portion to *négociants*. He keeps the finest for himself. Sylvaine handles the office work when she's not handling the two children. Theirs is a typical family domaine operation.

He works eleven hectares (27 acres) in La Roche-Vineuse, an old village nestled on the steep flank of the huge limestone outcropping that gives name to Vineuse. This village sits astride the small pass that cuts through the Mâcon ridges and leads to Cluny, the seat of power for the Benedictine order of monks in their Medieval heyday. On his hillsides in Vineuse, Alain farms Chardonnay, a little Pinot Noir for AOC Bourgogne Rouge, and a little Gamay for AOC Mâcon Rouge.

In 2003 they inherited a tiny parcel of Pouilly-Fuissé in Solutré from Sylvaine's father and made about a pallet of wine every year from it. After the harvest of 2009, they inherited the rest of Sylvaine's family vines—seven hectares (17 acres) total. Three (7 acres) are in AOC Pouilly-Fuissé divided between mostly old-vine parcels in Chaintré (vines are 50-60 years old) to the south and Solutré (vines are 30 to 80 years old) in the northern half of the appellation. The remaining four hectares (10 acres) are on the lower slopes of Chaintré and Solutré and are classed as Mâcon-Villages. The Normand Pouilly-Fuissé production is now divided along the lines of the Mâcon production: an old-vine cuvée made in old and new oak, and a classic cuvée made in vat. All four cuvées are raised with long lees contact.

It's worth noting that the two Pouilly-Fuissés bottled at chez Normand all come from the Solutré vineyards. The wine from the Chaintré, a warmer zone, is sold off to the *négoc*.

Alain farms according to the pragmatic principles of *lutte raisonnée*, or reasoned fight. He plows his vineyards rather than using herbicides, and he doesn't use pesticides or chemical fertilizers. His methods both in the field and in the cellar are the antithesis of the cooperatives whose wines dominate the Mâcon trade.

www.domaine-normand.com/en/

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