

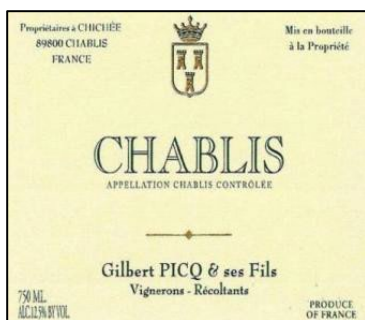
Gilbert Picq & ses Fils

Chichée



Didier Picq presides over this small domaine located in the sleepy village of Chichée, which has long been one of the finest exponents of tank-fermented and -matured Chablis. A range of Chablis AOC bottlings that includes several cuvées that would embarrass many loftier appellations is complemented by two premiers crus, Vaucoupin and Vosgros.

—William Kelley, The Wine Advocate, September 2023



Brothers Didier and Pascal quickly established themselves as rigorous growers after taking over this 32-acre domaine from their father in 1976. They prune severely in winter and de-bud twice in spring for low yields. They farm according to the ecological but pragmatic principles of *lutte raisonnée*, or reasoned fight, and all that keeps them from being considered organic is their preference for new fungicides rather than copper. They do alcoholic and malolactic fermentation in steel, and age the wine in steel. For a while, their Japanese importer demanded that

they make a cuvée in barrel for him, but eventually he saw the light and gave it up. They look for elegance, depth, purity of fruit, length and minerality in their wines, while aiming for age-worthiness and moderate levels of alcohol. These brothers have been around the block and there's no pretense here, just fabulous, true Chablis. Production averages 7,500 cases.

Didier Picq is passionate about horses and wine. He loves riding his horse all over the appellation of Chablis, and he's attended trade shows in the Loire just to taste up on Chenin Blanc. He's also a nut about Champagne, and he visits domaines along the Côte d'Or on a regular basis. Pascal is passionate about tractors and wine. He heads up the vineyard work (Didier heads up the cellar work), and this guy knows tractors like Vince Lombardi knew football. When he's not in the vines, he's often with Didier tasting wine.

The domaine and its vineyards are in the commune of Chichée, upstream from the town of Chablis and the grand crus in the Serein River Valley. The hills are steep here and are graced with two noble premier crus on either side of the river: Vosgros and Vaucoupin. Vosgros tends to have more weight and fat, while Vaucoupin typically has a lean, mineral profile. Vaucoupin is, with Montée de Tonnerre and Fourchaume, one of the more highly regarded premier crus of the appellation.

The fundamental change here happened with the 2006 vintage, when the brothers got a sorting table. This enabled them to control their grape selections to the point where they elected to forgo yeast inoculations. Didier admitted to a number of sleepless nights because the fermentations were consequently much slower than normal, but this resulted in better breadth and textures, and subsequently working with spontaneous yeast fermentations has become the norm *chez* Picq. No fining, only a light filtration.