

DOMAINE DES BAUMARD

The estate in Rochefort-Sur-Loire has been in the family since 1634, playing a key role in the history and development of Loire Valley wines.

Quarts de Chaume 2017

Loire Valley, France

ESTATE

Located in the town of Rochefort-Sur-Loire in the Anjou, Domaine des Baumard owns 110 acres of the best vineyards in the Anjou, producing some of the finest examples of Chenin Blanc in the world. Jean Baumard and now his son, Florent, are universally regarded as the finest winemakers in the appellation. From their bone-dry and mineral chiseled Savennières to their gloriously sweet Quarts de Chaume, theirs are among the most unique, rewarding, and long-lived white wines in the world.

WINE

Long acknowledged as one of the greatest vineyards of the Loire Valley, the 75-acre vineyard Quarts de Chaume was officially granted AOC (AOP) status in 1954; it was elevated to "Grand Cru" in 2011. This small sweet-wine-only appellation is itself a subregion of the large Côteaux du Layon AOC, and its vineyards are planted along a perfectly exposed hillside above the Layon river. This exposition allows the Chenin Blanc grape to ripen fully in most years, often enriched by the development of botrytis. Domaine des Baumard's Quarts de Chaume is renowned the world over as perhaps the single greatest example of this tiny vineyard, of which Baumard owns 15 acres on a steep, terraced hillside. Quarts de Chaume is always long-lived, sweet but never cloying, and in great vintages it can be almost immortal, improving for decades.

VINEYARD

Soils: Broverian schist and limestone mixed with quartz, rhyolite and spilite.

Farming: The vines average 35 years of age, and yields are a minuscule 20 hl/ha.

WINEMAKING

Variety: 100% Chenin Blanc

Fermentation: In stainless steel tanks at low temperatures on their lees.

Aging: 9 months, entirely in stainless steel, allowing for a purer expression of site.

Alcohol: 12.5%

VINTAGE

2017 was nearly a disastrous vintage in the Anjou, as severe Spring frosts decimated the young crop, in some cases reducing the potential yields to zero. Baumard's Quarts de Chaume vineyard was less-severely affected, but the crop was still reduced by about 60%. The weather for the remainder of the vintage was more even and Baumard harvested a small crop of perfectly ripe fruit, but with very little botrytis. The inclusion of some 'second crop' buoyed the acidity, and the resulting wine is rich and velvety but delicate, with a firm acid spine lifting the wine. This vintage can be enjoyed young for its vibrant fruit, but it will certainly last and improve well into its third decade.

Wine & Spirits

97

"Spring frosts reduce their yields by about 60 percent, and what remained is fermented all in stainless, and produced something spectacular. This wine's aromas are coy, hinting at a jam made with an Edenic bounty: apricot, peach pear and ginger with a floral edge. Then a taste completely fills your head, tucking that bounty of fruit into every corner of your skull until it feels like your brain is cushioned in a cloud. There's sweetness, yes, but it's just a brown-sugar depth rather than a driving force in the wine." - C.W., 2/2021

