

Domaine des Closiers



You can't overstate the rapturous reception in France for Domaine des Closiers' 2019s. Michel Bettane and his partner Thierry Desseauve led the chorus, calling them, essentially, the second coming of Clos Rougeard. But once you taste the wines, and learn more about the *terroirs* that produce them, you realize that is in fact one of the most important domaines to emerge in the Loire in decades.



Domaine de Closiers is the vision of Anatole de la Brosse, who, prior to heading one of the world's largest management consulting firms, had trained as an enologist. Eventually, Anatole decided to leave consulting and return to his first passion. He was able to acquire Domaine des Closiers, an historic property in Parnay in 2018. The estate's name derives from the vineyard workers who once inhabited the ancient caves carved into its hillsides.

Because much of Saumur-Champigny is relatively flat, the wealth of slopes in Parnay, and Closiers in particular, sets it apart. This is especially true of the **Les Coudraies** climat, but extends to many of the estate's holdings. The estate's vines also average over 35 years of age, giving further credence to Anatole's belief in Closiers' potential.

To fully realize his vision, he enlisted two of the Loire Valley's most celebrated names to help with the transition. The first, **Michel Chevré**, of Clos de l'Écotard, earlier worked side-by-side with Thierry Germain as they developed a pioneering biodynamic regime. Michel helped tailor a similar program to Closiers' diverse *terroirs*.



The second name is even better known: **Nady Foucault**, who, with his late brother Charly, made Clos Rougeard one of the towering icons of French wine. Nady's wealth of experience helped guide Closiers' team as they developed their own winemaking regimen.

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“This kind of winemaking isn't taught in school ... Cabernet Franc with this expression - so dynamic, bursting with aromatics, and in the mouth, it's explosive ... I haven't had a Saumur-Champigny like this in 10 years.” Michel Bettane & Thierry Desseauve

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WINEMAKING PHILOSOPHY

For each of its wines, the estate aims to preserve the freshness and purity of their fruit. The reds start with a pre-fermentation maceration that can last for days before fermentation commences spontaneously. Total maceration can last up to a month before pressing and transfer to casks for aging and settling.

The entry level red, **Les Closiers**, is assembled from multiple parcels around Parnay, and aged for 6 to 8 months in tank and older wood before bottling. A second cuvée is selected from the **Les Coudraies** hillsides. With its more structured fruit, this bottling is aged approximately 12 months in mostly used barrels. Powerful and restrained, it is an exemplar of Loire Valley Cabernet Franc.

A third red is produced from an old-vine parcel called **Les Trezellières**. Aged for an additional year in barrels (only 10-20% new), it rivals any red produced in the Loire Valley today. All three reds share the velvety textural character reminiscent of old bottles from Joguet's or Clos Rougeard's top sites.

Less than 5% of the estate's hectares are planted to white varieties, but they also yield two extraordinary wines. Some rare Chardonnay is



fashioned into the IGP "**Cuvée Libere.**" And the **Saumur blanc "Allegory,"** comes from a few rows of Chenin Blanc. Each wine is a striking example of its varietal and terroir, and each shares the hallmark textural depth demonstrated in the region's finest whites.

In just a few short years, Anatole's exacting vision has melded the best of the region's collective wisdom with some of its finest terroirs. The result is nothing less than a precise range of fully formed masterpieces; wines that demand to be experienced.