

MARC AUGUSTIN Kabbalah, HomSham and bioenergy

Author Caroline Henry©

Marc Augustin is a fifth generation grape grower and fourth generation winemaker. He joined his father Jean after finishing his viticultural and winemaking studies in Avize, and took over the company in 1991.

Jean is one of the few winemakers who in the 70's refused to fertilize the soil in his vineyards with the often not very organic garbage from Paris (gadou); instead he used manure. He also never used any herbicides, but continued to plough the soil. *"My father was always close to the land, this is why he did not want to pollute the soil with gadou or herbicides"*, says Marc. He adds: *"when I was young people used to call us names because of this, today I am very grateful my dad stuck to his guns; giving me healthy soils was the best present ever!"*



Between 1996 and 1998 Marc acquiesced to peer pressure and used herbicides under the rows, but as he saw no qualitative or quantitative difference, he returned to ploughing the soil after a couple of years. From 2004 he began to eliminate pesticides and other chemical products and in 2012 he applied for organic certification. *"2012 was a terrible year, my vines were suffering terribly and I was suffering with them. However, I felt that this was the purging we both needed to be able to turn the page"*, reminisces Marc.

(Ecocert/Demeter)

His wife Emmanuelle had always been interested in alternative healing practices, and in 2010 she took things a little further by training in homeopathy and reflexology. Marc joined her and in 2011 the couple meets Eduard Van den Bogaert, the founder of HomSham. HomSham is a sensitivity driven way of homeopathy, practiced in a bio-modular way, without chemicals or machines; it breaks up our reality into 5 different realms: the mineral, vegetable, animal, mental and homeopathic realm, which are the basis of healing. At one of the workshops in 2012 Marc met Alain Glauda, a bio-geologists and farmer, who helped him rebalance the energies in his vineyards. Alain convinced Marc to apply for biodynamic certification in 2013. That same year he also joined

forces with Hervé Jestin. Marc explains: *"I wanted to work completely in a bioenergetics way; Alain helped me in the vineyard and Hervé continued this work in the winery. This way we managed to successfully translate the grape energy of the vineyard into a wholesome wine."*

Marc has 9,5 hectares, mainly in Avenay-Val-d'Or but he also has some vines in Vertus. The soil is a mixture of clay, silt and limestone. Marc ploughs from early spring till after fruit set, after that he lets the grass grow back in between the rows. He works with most biodynamic preparations, and uses several herbal teas and plant concoctions as well homeopathic treatments. He also continues to experiment: for instance, in 2015 he planted some root vegetables in between the rows of one parcel to restore the soil balance and bring a more lively energy to the plot. In another vineyard he did not trim the vines but instead wound them around an especially added

top wire. *"Both experiments changed the energy in the vineyard and made it a more peaceful joyful place, this is why I would like to expand on these experiments next year"*, elaborates Marc.

The grapes are picked ripe, but only by women, to keep their fertile energy. Once pressed, the must is allowed to settle before being racked off into barrel or enamel tanks. Indigenous yeasts are used (via pied de cuve) for the first fermentation, the malolactic fermentation is allowed to happen naturally, and hearts adorn the tanks and barrels, to keep a loving energy whilst the must mutates into wine. He bottles in line with the cycles of the moon in at the beginning of summer, and sulphur is only used sparingly if at all at the press. Marc produces only around 10,000 bottles, the rest of the grapes are sold to Champagne Houses. His wines are named after our natural elements according to the rules of the Kabbalah.



CUVÉES

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All grapes come from vineyards in Avenay-Val-d'Or and are 2013 harvest but the vintage has not been declared.

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CCXCI Cuvee Elément Terre: 100% Pinot Noir from younger vines planted on a mixture of clay and limestone. Fruit forward cuvee with lots of orange citrus (tangelo, kumquat), a little dried mango and toasted macadamia in the long flinty finish (dosage: 1,05 g/l)

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CCXIV Cuvee Elément Air: 50% Pinot Noir and 50% Chardonnay planted more than 60 years ago on a clay and limestone mix. Airy champagne, full of light. Lots of meyer lemon, pineapple and a little tangerine, long flinty finish (dosage: 0.4 g/l)

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CCCX Cuvee Elément Feu: 100% Pinot Noir from vines planted between 47 and 62 years ago on clay and limestone soil. Very rich almost velvety cuvee, with layers of blood orange, kumquat, tamarillo and very ripe mango, a little star aniseed in the long wet stone finish. (dosage: 0,95 g/l)

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CXVI Sans Soufre: 100 % Pinot Noir planted between 47 and 82 years ago on clay and limestone soil. Pure and intense cuvee, lots of blood orange, tamarillo and a little pomegranate, some cardamom in the very long wet stone finish. (0 dosage)

