



CHRISTINE VERNAY
DOMAINE GEORGES VERNAY
ORGANIC VITICULTURE



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« I love Caravaggio's paintings. Art, literature, cinema, poetry and theatre inspire my world. I don't just make wines: wine is also my canvas and each one imparts a piece of me. Sometimes, you can hear Caravaggio's paintings in them.... »

Christine Vernay



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THREE GENERATIONS, THREE LEGENDARY WINES



Coteau de Vernon *By Francis*

In 1940, Francis Vernay, a pioneer who was passionate about wine making, created the legendary Coteau de Vernon. Although this man who loved the vineyard did not live there at the time, he was already attempting to produce the perfect white wine, one with great finesse, in the northern Rhone Valley. Since then, the Estate has continued to perpetuate the Vernay family's commitment to excellence and its respect for the exceptional terroirs by producing a very limited quantity of fine wines from Syrah and Viognier, outright exceptions for Côte-Rôtie and the Condrieu.



Chaillées de l'Enfer *By Georges*

In 1953, his son Georges Vernay developed the Estate and created the prestigious « Les Chaillées de l'Enfer ». The name refers to the dangerous exposure and the winemakers' suffering in the vineyards. Internationally recognised as the saviour of the Condrieu appellation, he had always wanted to develop the quality of the Condrieu and Côte-Rôtie wines. Georges was actively involved in driving up the quality of the production and was President of the Union for the Defence of Condrieu for 30 years.



Maison Rouge *By Christine*

Since 1997, Christine Vernay has carried on the tradition of the family estate. In this time, she has not only put her stamp on the fine whites, but also created Maison Rouge and Blonde du Seigneur, two Côte-Rôties that have today sealed her reputation. The vision is still the one she inherited; to give wines the best expression of the exceptional terroirs by searching for finesse, elegance and harmony. A course of action supported by her work in organic farming which has resulted in her wines developing with greater clarity and vibrancy.

THE PERSONALITIÉS AND THE WINES

Successive generations have occasionally created wines that have left traces of their personality on the Estate. Here, they serve the land and the vines; while each wine is greatly influenced by the terroir and while it could be argued that the finesse, elegance and harmony are undoubtedly the common feature of the wines of the three winemakers, the personality of each is indeed expressed in their wine. Their work and their beliefs, as much as the expression of their feelings, can be read in these wines. Vernon will therefore always be Vernon, but the mark imparted by Christine perfectly reflects her personality, as does the development of her vintages. Each wine is therefore an adventure that continues and enriches the story, furthering the range without ever betraying it.



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With all our thanks to the restaurants
all over the world
that have trusted the
Domaine Georges Vernay
for many long years...
Christine





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THE ESTATE



THE ESTATE'S HISTORY

Since 1940, successive generations have served the terroir:

Francis launched the first Vernay cuvée ;

Georges followed in his father's footsteps in 1953. He is widely recognised as having saved the Condrieu appellation and created the Chaillées de l'Enfer in 1992 ;

Christine took over the Estate in 1996. In terms of whites, she is responsible for the Terrasses de l'Empire, which she created in 1998, but from that point she also made the Estate famous for its reds, launching its famous Côte-Rôtie cuvées: Maison Rouge which she re-launched and vinified from 1997 and La Blonde du Seigneur, created in 1998. Today, the Estate is internationally renowned for both these wines as well as the Condrieu appellations..





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THE ESTATE

Today, the Estate extends over 24 hectares, divided between the appellations AOC Condrieu, Côte Rôtie, St-Joseph, etc. 17 ha are on steep slopes where the talk is of « heroic viticulture ».

THE TERROIR, ITS CLIMATE, ITS SOILS

THE TERROIR

A fine wine is a meeting between a terroir and a man or woman. The exceptional quality of the terroir is a precondition which influences the talent of the winemakers, here Francis, Georges and then Christine, and which guides and perfects. The Estate's location presents extraordinary conditions for the development of the Viognier and Syrah grapes and crafting them sensitively reveals all their aromatic finesse, producing tense, elegant and classy wines.

THE CLIMATE

The vines are planted on steep slopes, in terraces. The low walls work with the climate, the stones storing the sun's heat during the day and releasing it overnight. So, the vine enjoys an exceptional microclimate, hot and sunny, subject to winds from both the north and south. Rare conditions indeed.

SOILS AND SUBSOILS

The vines also benefit from exceptional soil quality. The Coteau de Vernon is comprised of decomposed granite (the secret of its freshness...) and the Chaillées de l'Enfer come from a granite outcrop. The Maison Rouge vines are planted on granite soils which give the wines intensity and elegance.



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VALUES

« Here the vine grows in the shadow of those who craft it. »
Georges Vernay

Three generations have helped elevate the Estate to this level of excellence. This is a story of commitment and hard work, with the greatest respect for the land, the vine and the men and women who work it.

Achieving the most exquisite possible expression of the vintage is not guaranteed; a rarefied terroir, consecutive vintages, a wine created through effort, patience, listening, attentiveness, etc.

Here, this always means giving your best, sticking to your values and following your beliefs, caring by relying on the support of skilled teams, trained in the specific features of the Estate and charmed by Christine Vernay's strong beliefs.





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A HISTORY OF A FAMILY AND ITS TEAMS



After running the Estate alone for over 10 years, Christine is now assisted in the vineyard by her younger brother Luc Vernay, who manages and runs the field teams. Both manage the men and women employed by and committed to the business. Depending on the time of year, up to forty people work at the Estate carrying out the essential tasks required by organic farming on the steep slopes, where everything is done by hand.

VERNON



Vernon is a hillside and also a 19th century building constructed at its base by the Lyon-based architect René Dardel, a man who loved nature and painting. The family residence reflects the spirit of the Estate, life amidst the hills, listening to nature and making the best of it.



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CHRISTINE VERNAY

3ÈME GÉNÉRATION



Christine Vernay took over from her father in 1996. Once a teacher at the ENA, she grew up on these hillsides and the scent of mint, the taste of acacia and the delicacy of the violets runs through in her veins.

Through hard work and commitment, she has raised the celebrated estate that her father left her to the top of the podium and amassed a number of titles including “Man” of the year in 2012 (Bettane & Desseauve), Member of the Académie du Vin of France and the International Academy of Wine (AIV). She is also recognised as an outstanding winemaker and today makes some of the finest wines, some of which have been awarded the famous 100/100.



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SENSITIVITY, TECHNICALITY, EXPERTISE

Fine wines are those that tell a story. This means that those who make them give of themselves, offering up their innermost sensitivities. It also requires a perfect command of the production and vinification procedures that allow this sensitivity to flourish through a process that must be flawless. It is a story of technicality and expertise. An everlasting profession.



The constant quest for perfection means reviewing the working methods every year. Work begins in the vines, since a complete understanding of the plots of land and the vines is essential. Christine Vernay regularly walks the slopes of the vineyard and observes.

This is how she makes her decisions, such as those to prevent or treat diseases or when to harvest. This field work and her particularly mindful contact with its hillsides, guide her work in the cellar.

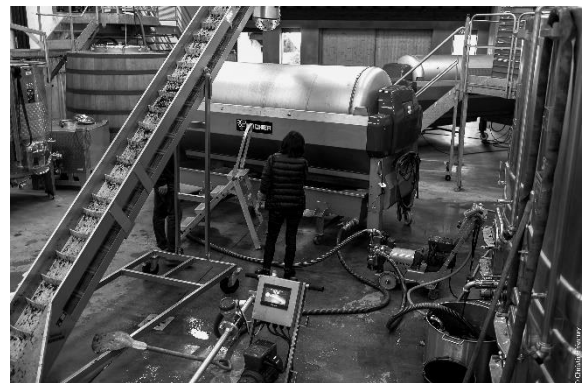


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*« I spend time in my cellar
where I take care of my wines.
Our jobs would quickly take us away,
but for a wine to tell a story one day,
it demands no other presence
but our attention,
for us to listen, our time ».*
Christine Vernay



Managing the vinification process allows her to follow her intuition. This means giving the wine the conditions that will allow it to reveal and bring out the best of its terroir.



Listening and understanding, getting closer to the uniqueness of the future vintage and guiding it, caring for it, without too much intervention. Everything is monitored gently and accurately to achieve excellence.



CHRISTINE VERNAY
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STRONG BELIEFS



THE ILLSIDES : INHERIT, CULTIVATE, PRESERVE OR RESTORE, FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION

The hillsides of Condrieu and Côte-Rôtie are places with a rich and dual heritage. They are not only vineyards set on land which must be kept for crops, they also represent a vital natural rural heritage.

Although Georges Vernay is recognised as having saved these hillsides, Christine has watched over them since 1996, an heiress taking care of her inheritance, but also an experienced winemaker and manager of an Estate that she runs and develops according to her values and beliefs. So here, there is no trade, only land that is acquired so it can be cultivated :

« I have a very strong attachment to my vines and my terroirs. I love identifying the terroirs and allowing them to express themselves. All my wines come from my vines and the grapes that I have cared for. Trading is another job, which I believe, must be separate. As my father said “12 jobs, 13 troubles » ».



In 2019, she rebuilt the chaillées, the dry-stone walls that support the terraced vines, on the Vernon hillside and replanted the vines. Once again, nothing was left to chance and the new plants were replaced using the selection massale, process where cuttings are taken from the best older vines in the vineyard, thereby maintaining the vineyard's health and diversity.

Photo : New planting, April and July 2019



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ORGANIC FARMING



For over 20 years, Christine Vernay has used organic farming methods.



Considering herself as the custodian of a land for which she is responsible for caring, she has long been committed to organic farming, long before it was fashionable or urgent to do so. She has now successfully demonstrated that, while it is difficult to work the steeply sloping vineyards using organic farming, it is not impossible.

Mulching, grass growing... she is constantly experimenting and today, most of her investments go towards implementing sustainable cultivation techniques which protect the environment and unquestionably enhance the purity of her wines.



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BIODYNAMICS

While she believes that organic farming is an ethical issue, she is moving towards biodynamics as a philosophy :

« For more than 20 years I have worked using organic farming methods, even if I only recently applied for certification. This is primarily an ethic deeply rooted in the Estate's values rather than a commercial strategy... Over 20 years, I have shown that we can be organic even on the slopes, that this had a price, but that it was possible. I'm trying to go even further, towards biodynamics which is more of a philosophy, a personal belief. Organic farming is a responsibility. But it is a great adventure and I'm beginning to see the results in my wines. Aubert de Villaine says that wines from organic practices have greater transparency. I think they also have another vibrancy. But everything is in the subtlety of the attentiveness !».





CHRISTINE VERNAY
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AND A CONSTANT SEARCH FOR THE BEST CHOICES

VINIFICATION



Christine stands out due to the unique personality of her wines. She owes their elegance to her work with the vine, but also in the cellar, searching out the meeting point between her personality and the terroir. She reveals the wine as much as the excellence she expects of it. Intensity, tension, freshness... « The colour, the aromas... everything that the wine slowly releases to the senses has a meaning and must be interpreted ».

*« When I create a wine, I'm not
looking to impress. A fine wine must
enthral. »*

Christine Vernay

PRESS

« There is a link between the Coteau de Vernon and the philosopher Marcus Aurelius. The winemaker Christine Vernay and her belief that a form of happiness is possible in what makes nature itself content. A state of mind that has created the best wines from the northern Rhône Valley »

**Les Cuvées de Convictions
de Christine Vernay,**
Stéphane Reynaud,
Le Figaro Vin, 25 mars 2018



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MATURATION

Time does its work, amid the secret of the cellars, the wines slowly develop, releasing aromas, building structure. Behind the breathable wood, each of the wines gradually matures before, one day, providing an amazing encounter.

Once again, the choices reveal Christine Vernay's beliefs. For both the reds and whites, the nature of the containers (tanks, barrels, etc.) enables her to craft her search for the expression of the terroirs. Without ever confining herself to systematic practices, she experiments, tests, tastes, tests, tastes and adapts depending on the years and the characteristics of the vintages. Here, nothing is left to chance, but everything is constantly reassessed, adapted and adjusted. Christine Vernay does not simplify things; she goes into detail and loves it. It is her very own hallmark, perfectly unapologetic....

BOTTLING

From the land to the glass, every stage in the life of the future wine is a decisive moment. Christine Vernay supervises each step because she has long known that she also owes the exceptional quality of her wines to the sum of all the details that make a fine wine possible. Biodynamics requires that bottling takes place on still days with no wind, preferably a fruit day (when the moon is in Aries, Leo or Sagittarius) and with a waxing moon. As for the emotion that emerges from La Caille on such days, it is unique, and also the emotion of a team that is seeing the culmination of the care taken... to take care.



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THE ESTATE'S WINES

VIIGNIER ET SYRAH, TWO UNIQUE VARIETIES

The quality of the terroirs of the Domaine Georges Vernay and the climate particular to this region help to avoid any heaviness and reveal the legendary aromatic subtlety of these two great grape varieties. The story of the Condrieu is the result of the magic of an exceptional terroir and a unique grape variety. The Domaine Georges Vernay has implemented significant resources to understand the difficult Viognier variety. Trained teams scour the particularly dangerous, steep slopes on which this variety likes to grow. Sparse but concentrated, Viognier is temperamental, sinuous and fragile and must be worked gently and not rushed. During fermentation, it releases understated aromas of flowers such as hawthorn and lime and fruits including white peach, apricot and sometimes pear. Analysing these delicate vinification aromas in order to obtain a fine wine is a very important task at the estate. The wine is slowly matured in barrels which respect its character and bring out the wine's existing full-body. The Syrah grown on the Domaine Georges Vernay is also very demanding. It needs to be grown on craggy terraces, on steep, south/south-east facing slopes. The passing years bring fullness, substance and depth. To bring out the best from these beautiful Syrah grapes requires a lot of physical work and care. An undisturbed maturation process provides the structure that will allow the Côte-Rôtie to develop slowly and age for 10 or 15 years



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IN THE CELLAR

The best grapes are harvested manually. They arrive at the cellar in crates where they are sorted again.

The grapes are considered differently every year.

White grapes may be destemmed or not, subject to skin maceration or pressed immediately.

After passing through the pneumatic presses, the juices are decanted then partly fermented in tanks or in barrels for the other cuvées.

Red grapes are destemmed, undergo a cold pre-fermentation maceration, then fermented with long vatting periods at a moderate temperature. All techniques are considered: rack and return, pumping over or punch down.

For three generations, the raw material has controlled the method. The free-run juices and pressed juices are separated to be blended later.

In terms of maturation, white wines which have only seen tanks or the vat stay on their lees, sometimes going back into suspension. Racking takes place in January and the wine rests until it is placed in stainless steel vats in May, with cold stabilisation. Wines matured in barrels stay on their lees and are regularly stirred until spring and left to mature for twelve months, with bottling taking place at the end of the year. Some vintages will undergo malolactic fermentation, while others will not, the option being made through analysis and tasting. The choice of wood is key and never exceeds 25% of new wood. For red wines, maturation takes place in barrels (40% new for Côte-Rôtie). The wines remain in the barrels for two years without sealing, with a single safety filtration before bottling

« My work with organic farming and biodynamic processes are gradually changing my wines.

With each vintage, I can feel them increasing in clarity, a kind of luminescence and then this very particular vibrancy. Yes, I believe that they are breathing better, they are even more alive. »

Christine Vernay



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THE CONDRIEU

White wines produced exclusively from the Viognier grape, characterised by its aromas of apricot, white peach and violets. An unmistakable component in our vin de pays, the terroir is expressed with greater length and finesse in the Condrieu. Produced from old vines and matured in barrels, the rich and complex cuvées of the “Chaillées de l’Enfer” and particularly the “Coteau de Vernon” should be drunk between 3 and 10 years.

Coteau de Vernon Intensity, finesse and length

A complex yet elegant wine, Coteau de Vernon is one of the finest expressions of the subtlety of the Viognier grape. Depending on the vintage, this unique Condrieu, from the very centre of the Condrieu appellation and the estate, presents aromas of yellow fruits, fresh and candied citrus fruits and exotic fruits, along with notes of spices, tobacco, wood and leathers and a lingering bitter finish. Its balance is always perfect, with plenty of freshness, vegetal and menthol notes, white flowers and a very good acidity. Coteau de Vernon is a fine, tight, self-assured, precise and delicate wine with a restrained exuberance, a quintessential Condrieu.





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Chaillées de l'Enfer

Vigour & balance



Les Chaillées de l'Enfer is a wine « with incredible charm ». It blends fruit (apricot, pear, white peaches) with citrus fruits, waxy notes and other more floral (white flowers, rose, violets), more vegetal (mint, thyme, etc.) and spicy (ginger, saffron) notes.

A tight Condrieu with saline and iodine tones, elegant, with a lovely freshness, this is a white of great purity with a perfect balance that could be called closed and tense.

Terrasses de l'Empire

Fruit & freshness

The Condrieu « Les Terrasses de l'Empire » is the archetypal fruity wine, with inimitable aromas of white peach, apricot kernels and white almonds and a finesse that perfectly represents the charm of the style. This is an elegant, extremely harmonious wine with great freshness, best enjoyed young.





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THE VINS DE PAYS

Le Pied de Samson

The sumptuous Viognier

More complex than it appears, Pied de Samson takes its name from the giant Samson who, stooping to drink water from the Rhône, left his footprint not far from the estate. It presents the Viognier in its original form with expressions of indulgent fruits and freshness. In blind tastings it is often mistaken for a Condrieu; on the palate it is a pure moment of pleasure !





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THE CÔTE-RÔTIE

Maison Rouge

Intensity, elegance, length

*« I love well aged red berries and the finish that results on the palate. I always search for finesse, softness, the silky side of the Côte-Rôtie. »
Christine Vernay*

Dark fruits, oriental spices, smoke, liquorice, cigar-boxes, chocolate, black pepper... This Côte-Rôtie launched by Christine has sealed the Estate's reputation, as much as Vernon: from mature Syrah vines in the Maison Rouge locality, it has an incomparable class! Structured, perfectly balanced, it is as sensuous and full-bodied, as it is spicy and enchanting. The tannins are assertive, but the mastery of its vinification creates an exceptionally silky, velvety palate. Intensity, elegance, harmony, sensuality...



Blonde du Seigneur

Finesse, fullness, delicacy

This côte blonde-style Côte-Rôtie with 5% Viognier, is the perfect blend of intensity and delicacy. A dark colour with a mineral smoky nose with dark fruits, black olive and pepper all enhanced by a floral component brought by the Viognier. This is a highly aromatic and elegant wine. With well-constructed but perfectly smooth tannins, this Côte-Rôtie is well-rounded on the palate with a beautiful long finish. Smooth and sensual, it expresses an immediate pleasure.





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THE SAINT-JOSEPH

Dame Brune

Structure & minerality

La Dame Brune, a wine produced from mature 45-year old vines planted on the granite slopes of Saint-Joseph, presents an exemplary minerality combined with the most beautiful Syrah notes of dark fruits, spices, pepper and black olives. In its youth it has smoothness and a remarkable structure, this is a wine that can be enjoyed for its balance and uniqueness, which extends the pleasure...



Terres d'encre

Dark fruits & spices

Dark fruits, liquorice, subtle spices, red pepper, chocolate, woodlands, woody notes. Terre d'Encre (literally translated as 'Lands of Ink') is a wine worthy of its name. This dark-coloured wine is produced from 30-year-old Syrah vines planted on granite soils in the municipality of Chavanay. It presents the spicy structure and body of the estate's fine wines.



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THE VINS DE PAYS



Sainte-Agathe

Depth & delicacy

Intense on the nose and full on the palette with red berries after a frank attack with good acidity. A saline freshness but spicy, peppery structure, Saint-Agathe, produced from mature Syrah vines on the Condrieu appellation, plays remarkably well on the Syrah, a very pleasant wine, finely crafted like all the Estate's wines.

Fleur de Mai

A gourmet wine

This cuvée, produced from mature Syrah vines offers a taste very similar to that of a Côte-Rôtie! Its name is derived from the variety of peach trees that were once planted on this May Flower plot. This is wine with intense aromas of green pepper, black cherries, game and spices that wrap around a smooth, balanced, mature, lasting and fresh texture. It is produced in limited quantities.





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