

Les Wineries du Rhône

Xavier Vins



PORTRAIT —

THE WIND BENEATH HIS WINGS

Whether we're looking at wine production (where he feels there's less and less need for intervention) or his myriad other commitments, one thing's for sure - Xavier Vignon simply exudes energy.

Like the famous cat, Xavier has at least three different lives. Firstly, he's a winemaking consultant –although since the pandemic he has had to cut back significantly on the travel the job usually involves, and find new ways to conduct this part of his business from home. Secondly, he's a négociant, his passion and in-depth knowledge of the Rhône Valley ensuring that his Xavier Vins label performs well. And thirdly, Xavier is a vigneron, a wine grower. Vignon – Vigneron: it was written in the stars. This new chapter in his life has planted him firmly in his beloved Dentelles de Montmirail, where he's acquired some land. But it's not enough for Xavier, the great-great-grandson of a master stonemason. Now as the big five-oh looms ever larger, what he really wants is to make a success of his life. To make his voice heard, to get involved, and to pass down his heritage.

The French Spirit

As a name, both for a foundation and a wine, it has a certain ring to it. Powerful enough to bring people together, to appeal to those whose background isn't necessarily in wine and to have an impact. "We need to change tack, to take a step back. We need to bring back traditional ways of working

with selected grapes, and be more environmentally minded. We need to preserve the old ways of living, of being, of working. When it comes to plant health, we've swung from one extreme to the other, coming uncomfortably close to a line we must never cross. If we carry on living and consuming the way we are, it won't be sustainable in the long term. We have a responsibility; we have to tell people. It's not just our wildlife disappearing; our knowledge is too – our skills, all the tried and trusted old methods." Esprit Français, the French Spirit, is our new association, a foundation if you will; we're very open, and we listen. It's also the name of one of our wines, which prides itself on traditional French values.

Another of Xavier's commitments is to the maritime world. His Une Bouteille à la Mer (Bottle for the Sea) donates €1.00 for every bottle sold to the Sea Foundation, which in turn supports Samuel Le Bihan's initiative to clear beaches of plastic, and has led to a close association with 2020 Vendée Globe finisher Alexa Barrier. Artist Nicolas Vial was commissioned to design a label for the wine, and created a rather sombre illustration speaking volumes about the state of the sea and the world today.

Standing back

It's clear to Xavier that the world has changed. The climate crisis has altered everything. Where a 13% ABV bottle used to make us gasp, we now routinely see 15-16%. The one good thing is that we now work with riper, more expressive grapes. "Here in the Rhône Valley, we grow at least 25 varieties, whose expression is now better than ever as they ripen more easily. We've seen grape juices so extraordinarily good that I ask myself what right we have to flavour it. There's really no need. We should be fighting to preserve what we have." And to preserve what nature has given us, what could be better than glass? Every material, be it wood, concrete, ceramic or stainless-steel, impacts flavour and changes the essence of the wine. Only glass is neutral. So Xavier makes his

Xavier Vignon has settled in the Dentelles de Montmirail



Established:
October 1998
Employees: 15
2020 turnover: €7.5 million, of which 70 % from export



"When the grapes are this good, there's not much that oenology can add."

wine in huge glass containers – wine globes – which he helped develop. He has found no other vessel that doesn't change the wine in some way.

A Winery for the future

Xavier's new winery will allow him to do everything he dreams of doing. A plastic-free winery, where wines are made in borosilicate glass. He intends to call it the Vinarium: no fancy estates or châteaux, just wine, made in glass. It'll be a winery for the future, managing water and energy using natural methods such as Canadian wells to provide cooling. If all goes well, Xavier Vignon's Vinarium will be operational from the 2025 harvest.



Xavier Vins

1901, route de Sorgues 84230 Châteauneuf-du-Pape

contact@xaviervignon.com

www.xaviervignon.com

Contact UMVR

+33 (0)4 90 27 24 16 / 18

presse@umvr.fr

www.umvr.fr