



NICOLAS JOLY

CHATEAU DE LA ROCHE AUX MOINES



In the firmament of winemaking pioneers, there are few whose star burns so brightly as Nicolas Joly. His Roche aux Moines estate in Savennières is a shrine to the biodynamic movement and includes a rare monopole appellation contrôlée and one of the Loire's most famous vineyards; his seven hectare vineyard: the Coulée de Serrant. Labeled as Le Clos de la Coulée de Serrant, it is a defining expression of the Chenin Blanc grape and when on form, one of the world's finest dry white wines.

Joly, born in 1945, is typical of many of his generation of vigneronnes. As a young man he traveled and only returned to his family's estate in his thirties after years abroad following a different career, in his case, as a Wall Street investment banker. This wrinkle of irony, given his subsequent calling, only lends depth to the mystique of Joly's almost zealous pursuit of what has now come to be known as 'natural' winemaking. But, just as Alice Waters was a generation ahead of 'Farm to table' or Slow Food, Joly has been to the movement that followed his lead.

2012 represents the strongest young vintage I have ever seen from this magnificent estate. The wines are precise and clean, yet carry the density and crystal clear character of chenin in abundance.



For the collector, there is just one wine to focus on, the Coulée de Serrant. It is a pillar of the appellation controlee system and perhaps the ultimate chenin blanc. It has an enormous concentration of the honeyed apple fruit that is so typical of the grape but brings those flavors to focus with a razor sharp minerality and crispness that marks it out for greatness.

A lot has been written about the ability of this wine to age, but the 2012 already has it all, already. There is absolutely no reason to wait for an improvement on such pleasing precision.

Clos de la Coulée de Serrant 2012

\$89 per bottle

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Savennières-Roche-aux-Moines Clos de la Bergerie 2012

\$56 per bottle

The Roche aux Moines estate also contains another single vineyard, bottled separately under the more general, but nonetheless tiny, appellation of Savennières; the Clos de la Bergerie. For those interested in exploring how eloquently chenin blanc can express differences in terroir or the signature of one of the world's most revered winemakers, the Clos de la Bergerie provides a satisfying alternative for a less demanding price.

Savennières Les Vieux Clos 2012

\$39 per bottle

And finally, for the enthusiast, there is a third option; a blended wine that necessarily blurs and loses some of the distinction of the single cru wines but still can claim to be an expression of a more general terroir as well as carrying the signature of Nicolas Joly. The Vieux Clos is the wine-drinkers' wine. It is also a chef's wine being a wonderful and rewarding match for food. In short, it is a good answer to many questions.

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COULEE DE SERRANT



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