

Gérard BOULAY

Chavignol



Lucie & Gérard Boulay



The tasting room in question



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France

LOIRE VALLEY Sancerre

OVERVIEW

Gérard Boulay's tasting room is right there on the main drag in Chavignol. Too long it remained ignored by those proud importing explorers of French back roads...and there is not even a glitz to the place that might have caused them to be suspicious. Indeed, Boulay—a naturalist/minimalist in the winery—channels his energy for creating resplendence into his wines, at the same time turning the conventional wisdom that Sancerre is not long-lived on its head, in the same tradition as the Cotat cousins, Thomas-Labaille, and Edmond Vatan. While it is true that Sauvignon Blanc is not known for its longevity, it can last—and improve—for a decade or more thanks both to the care of conscientious producers, and to the unmatched prime Sauvignon real estate surrounding Chavignol, from which each of these producers draw. The variegated limestone Kimmeridgian soil that streaks across north and central France is behind this success, as it is in Pouilly-Fumé, Champagne, and Chablis.

Varieties: Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Noir
Total Acreage: 22 acres in Chavignol, including the 1.85 acre *Clos de Beaujeu* and a small plot in *Les Monts Damnés*
Average Production: 2,500 cases

VINEYARD/CELLAR PRACTICES

- Manually farmed organic vineyards, heavily restricted yields, harvested by hand.
- Slow fermentation with ambient yeasts and finished with minimal usage of SO₂.
- Wines are fermented and raised in tank, neutral barrels, or a mixture of the two.

WINES

Sancerre Chavignol

A tank-raised, pure expression of Chavignol, this wine is a showcase for a heady panoply of flavors, strong minerality, and unique waxy satin texture.

Sancerre Clos de Beaujeu

A surging, sensuous wine from a minute single vineyard (a rarity in Sancerre), this wine's vibrant, typically gorgeous and idiosyncratic (the joys of the single vineyard!) scent and concentrated flavor range expand dramatically with aeration...or cellaring!

Sancerre Les Monts Damnés

One of Sancerre's finest terroirs, this steep vineyard of Kimmeridgian marl yields complex, caressing wines right out of Boulay's cellars, but after 7-8 years in your cellar, the reward is a wine of soaring majesty bearing a typhoon of unexpected and stirring aromas and flavors.

Sancerre "Comtesse"

A super-cuvée and scion of a small patch of 70-year-old vines grown in the tenderloin of *Les Monts Damnés*, this wine is available...occasionally, and even then in tiny amounts. Its kaleidoscopic array of flavors and its extraordinary textural finesse are at once a dazzling and intimate experience. It's a commitment, but it pays back in spades.

Sancerre Rosé

If the French have raised rosé to an art form, then Boulay is the Rodin of rosé—this has an extraordinary, crystalline expression of cherry and marzipan tones, yet it remains suggestive and coy, drawing you back to the glass over and over. Old vine Pinot Noir grown in front of Boulay's house yields but 200 cases of this classic—a perfect companion for lobster bisque.

Sancerre Rouge

50+ year-old vines allow Boulay to render an amazingly full-throated (esp. for the Loire) Pinot Noir with an unbeatable quality:price rapport. Fruit-forward yet finesse-driven, its color evokes the transparent ruby of a Volnay 1er Cru (*sans tragic price tag*), with a flavor all its own.

ACCOLADES

"Very much in the firm, strongly mineral, nuanced and extremely concentrated style of Sancerre made by their neighbors the Cotats – a world away from the regular refreshing but forgettable norm. This is wine that demands your attention and...it should really be compared with a white burgundy in terms of its rewards and complexity."

Jancis Robinson on JancisRobinson.com