

Château de Pierreux

RESERVE DU CHATEAU 2003

Geographical location

Pierreux is located at the heart of Brouilly – geographically the widest-ranging of the Beaujolais crus.

The Beaujolais region, pressing up against the foothills of the Massif Central, overlooks the Saône river plain between Mâcon and Lyon. The vines of the Beaujolais vineyards, with their undulating relief, are characterised by very dense plantation and exposure to all four points of the compass.

Pierreux is no exception to this rule. Here, in shallow, highly absorbent sandy soil consisting of pink granite dotted with blue porphyry stones (hurled out several million years ago by the Brouilly volcano), Gamay vines grow in solitary splendour.

The Château de Pierreux wine estate covers seventy-seven hectares, and this wine is produced not only from the best sites but also from the oldest vines, accounting for a total area of 7 hectares.

The vines

Variety: 100% Gamay

Plantation density: 10,000 rootstocks/ha

Vine age: around 40 years

Pruning method: *gobelet*

Vine training method: Ninon-style during summer months

Supervised control: practised for over 20 years in the fight against predators and cryptogams (fungus).

Work philosophy: cultivation based on organic and biodynamic concepts:

- soil work: de-earthing, scraping, inter-vinestock ploughing.
- Use of the horse for cultivating the narrowest, most inaccessible vine rows.

The fauna and flora of Pierreux

Very rich, yet sometimes wild, the well-preserved environment of Pierreux is home – amid its grounds, vegetable garden, woods and lakes – to some very dense fauna and flora, contributing to the ecological balance of the estate over the seasons... including doves, cicadas, squirrels, ducks, herons, wild rabbits and hares, partridges, sheep and horses, to name but a few. Botanically speaking, nearly five hectares are set aside for an arboretum containing some two hundred types and species of conifer – including fir, pine, larch and spruce trees, one of which is topped with a weather vane.

Harvesting

Harvesting dates: from 16th-20th August 2003

Pierreux is notable for its rich tannins and polyphenols, high sugar concentration and warmth in the mouth.

Careful attention to detail during harvesting, along with the removal of unhealthy fruit, allows the production of rich, elegant wines year upon year.

Manual sorting is performed during picking by the harvesters themselves under the watchful eye of Michèle, the team leader.

The 2003 vinification

Given the exceptional climatic conditions and a relative lack of vine stem maturity, we opted for 100% destemming. The very low yield was characterised by a strong sugar and polyphenol concentration.

Vatting lasted 14 days, with four days' cold prefermentation maceration. We then applied a little heat to get fermentation started quickly.

The grapes were crushed manually on a daily basis.

The wine was pressed before the must underwent static racking 48 hours later.

The wine was racked in tuns to complete alcoholic and malolactic fermentation. It was drawn off into three-wine or four-wine Burgundy casks .

Our vinification methods prohibit the use of external yeasts, enzymes or other oenological products. We believe that the love and care we put into our vines gives us a well-balanced grape, which is why we are particularly happy with the work performed by the natural yeasts.

Maturation

Barrels of an age of around five years are used: on the one hand, to enable the gas interaction which forms an integral part of wood maturation, and on the other, to avoid stamping the wine with too much woodiness.

Duration: 10 months

In casks made from oak from the forests of the Allier region.

Number of rackings: two, to clarify the wines.

Bottled: 24th June 2004 – on a 'fruit day' of the lunar calendar

Limited edition of 13,000 bottles

Tasting notes

Deep garnet colour with violet-tinged reflections: great sparkle.

Slightly woody on the nose, with vanilla and cinnamon notes developing into a more floral register (violet, iris): a good reflection of its terroir.

The wine is suave in the mouth, with a fine fruit-wood balance and aromas of dark-coloured berries such as blueberry. A clean finish with suitable length and plenty of freshness.

Delicious for drinking now as an accompaniment to a fresh goats' cheese with herbs, it will form a perfect partnership with roast Bresse poultry in the next year or two.

Christophe Gremeau, Sommelier at Amuse Bouche Epicerie Fine in Beaune.