



FRANÇOIS VILLARD

Rhône, France

Francois Villard was not born into wine; he started out his career as a chef. He grew up between Vienne and Grenoble, in the French countryside. He made his first Condrieu in 1991, a whopping 400 bottles. Today, makes wine from 64 hectares, of which he owns 40 hectares, purchasing fruit from the balance. He makes wine from Côte-Rôtie down to Saint Peray, and a little of everything between: four Condrieu, five Saint-Joseph (red and white), three Crozes-Hermitage, a Cornas, and four Vin de France (Marsanne-Roussanne, Viognier, and two Syrah).

Villard farms sustainably and hopes to be certified organic by 2022. He works his soils and uses organic fertilizers and organic treatments for disease as needed. He's working with spontaneous fermentations and he's begun experiments with making wine with very minimal sulfur during vinification and it's gone well, so he'll expand on that in the coming years. He has no intention of eliminating sulfur altogether and plans to continue to use a minimum amount of sulfur at bottling. He filters the wines if he needs too, but tries to avoid it.

In terms of style, Villard tends to harvest later than his neighbors, optimizing ripeness. He uses whole clusters during vinification as the stems give freshness to the wine. For his Condrieu, he likes to work with botrytis if possible, but he will only wait if the potential alcohol does not get too high, balance being the key. Villard never chaptalizes his whites (and very rarely the reds) and will make several passes in the vineyards to wait for the fruit to ripen. He's using barrels and foudres for aging, some new depending on the cuvée. The whites are bounding with succulent fruit, a rich texture, and have a deft balance. The reds strike a nice harmony between red fruit notes and spicy earth, classic Northern Rhône.

—Michele Peters, French Portfolio Manager



Syrah “L’Appel des Sereines” VdF

12/750ml

A young vine Syrah from several villages Chavanay, Ardoix, Saint-Michel-sur-Rhône, and Verin, all with a decomposed granite soil. Twelve day maceration with twenty-five percent whole clusters in open-top wood tronconique vats followed by eleven months of aging, half in the vat and half in neutral barrels. A peppery and juicy Syrah.