



DOMAINE OLGA RAFFAULT

Loire, France

LOUIS/DRESSNER SELECTIONS

Domaine Olga Raffault is unquestionably one of the long-time reference points for top-quality, traditional Chinon wines. Its history is intriguing. Olga and her husband Pierre operated the estate together until he died unexpectedly just before harvest in 1947. Alone with two small children, Olga was left to run the business but was ably assisted for the vintage by employee Ernest Zenninger, a German prisoner who had found refuge and work at Raffault at the end of the war. Ernest stayed on, becoming the winemaker and working closely with Olga's son Jean Raffault. The two of them ran the estate as a team for decades, under Olga's watchful eye, until Jean's daughter Sylvie and her husband Eric de la Vigerie took over about 10 years ago.

Raffault is in the Véron, a wedge-shaped strip of land where the Vienne River intersects with the much larger Loire. Véron is temperate, humid and low-lying, with some small hills, and two main types of soil, one gravel-based and the other clay-limestone-based. Raffault farms parcels totaling 24 hectares of vines--23 planted to Cabernet Franc and 1 to Chenin Blanc—with vines averaging about 30 years. Their flagship Cabernet Franc comes from the renowned lieu-dit Les Picasses, on a south-facing, limestone-rich slope on the highest hill in the area; this is the most structured, powerful and age-worthy of their reds. Added to the line-up later in the estate's life were Les Peuilles, a nearby plateau with southern exposure and clay-silica soils, and Les Barnabés, on a plain of sandy gravel soils near the Loire. The scarce bit of Chenin comes from 50-year-old vines planted in the heavy clay-limestone soils of the monopole called Champs Chenin.

The farming is certified organic and harvest is manual. This minimalist approach in the vineyard extends to the cellar. The fruit is destemmed, with the whole berries going uncrushed into tank for fermentation with native yeasts. Les Picasses is aged the longest before release: a minimum of four years, mainly in old foudres, some of chestnut as well oak. This wine lives for decades, and the family has always maintained a deep library of back vintages, released periodically in minute quantities. The less brawny, younger-drinking Les Peuilles spends only 6-12 months in wood, and the earliest-release Les Barnabés sees no wood at all. Through the generations, the winemaking has remained traditional, allowing the superiority and expression of Raffault's sites to shine through.



Chinon “La Fraich” 2022 12/750ml

100% Cabernet Franc. 2022 is the first vintage for the new entry-level Chinon from Raffault. The fruit comes from very young vines in sandy, flat parcels near the winery not far from the the Vienne River. The farming is certified-organic and the harvest is manual. The berries are destemmed but not crushed and fermented with native yeasts in tank with a maceration of about 15 days. The wine is aged in stainless steel tanks for about 6 months before bottling. This vin de soif has a pretty and playful label that complements its style perfectly.

Technical Specifications

Product Type: Red Wine

Appellation: Chinon

Varietal: Cabernet Franc

Farming Type: Organic