

Chablis 1er Cru 'Côte de Léchet' 2003

Chablis, Burgundy, France



Grape Varieties	100% Chardonnay
Winemaker	Daniel-Etienne Defaix
Closure	Natural Cork
ABV	13%
Residual Sugar	0.1g/L
Acidity	3.92g/L
Wine pH	3.41
Bottle Sizes	75cl

PRODUCER

Said to be the oldest domaine in Chablis, tracing its origins back to 1610, it is now run by Daniel-Etienne Defaix, 14th generation of the Defaix family. He took over from his father in 1978 and started making wine "as my grandfather had done". This involved keeping the wine in tank for a protracted period and putting it through a monthly bâtonnage, a practice he retains to this day. "My grandfather's generation used to keep the wine for so long in order to protect themselves against frost, to ensure they would always have wine to sell," he explains. Nowadays, this approach is unique in Chablis, and the extended ageing before release gives the wines a lovely evolved character that adds complexity to their freshness.

VINEYARDS

The Côte de Léchet 1er Cru is a prime vineyard site which was considered a 'Grand Cru' in the middle ages. The soils are Kimmeridgian marl and the steep (38° gradient), southeast facing slopes have an ideal aspect with morning sun exposure which means that the grapes undergo a slow ripening process.

VINTAGE

2003 was a vintage of extremes in Chablis, with frosts in April followed by an exceptionally hot summer with temperatures up to 41.7°C. Luckily, good water reserves from a wet winter enabled the vines to endure the heat. The grapes were harvested earlier than usual to ensure that there was the correct balance between sugar and acidity.

VINIFICATION

The grapes were pressed very gently and then went through a cool fermentation in stainless steel tanks with only natural yeasts. Malolactic fermentation took place and the wine was then left to age on its fine lees for four years in tank. During this period there was a monthly bâtonnage (lees stirring). The bâtonnage breaks up the fine lees and releases glycerine which acts as an antioxidant, this is part of what makes the wine age so well. After bottling, the wine was then aged for a further six months before release.

TASTING NOTES

This wine is gold in colour. The nose is opulent with ripe citrus fruits, buttery notes and a pronounced minerality. There is a lovely linear character on the palate and a vibrant acidity. The finish is complex and long.