



KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

THIERRY GERMAIN

Country: France

Region: Loire

Appellation(s): Saumur-Champigny, Saumur

Producer: Thierry Germain

Founded: 1992

Annual Production: 10,000 cases

Farming: Biodynamic, Organic since 2002

Website: <http://www.rochesneuves.com/>



The rendering of Thierry Germain by renowned French wine artist Michel Tolmer that appears on most of Thierry's labels is the perfect image to capture the essence of his accomplishment. A tall and imposing presence, physically and intellectually, Thierry casts a long shadow. His vines, old, wise, and vibrantly healthy thanks to biodynamic viticulture, cast an imposing shadow themselves. They meet in a symbolic embrace of perfect connection, each feeding off the other's energy.

Thierry's domaine, Roches Neuves, whose vineyards are planted in the Saumur (Blanc) and Saumur-Champigny (Rouge) appellations, has rightfully become one of the greatest examples of high achievement in biodynamic vine growing in France. We put him up there with the greats: Abbatucci in Corsica, Ganevat in the Jura, Ostertag in Alsace. His total dedication to site specific wines produced from Cabernet Franc and Chenin Blanc, his "parcelles," has produced some of the most exciting wines in the Loire Valley today.

Thierry relocated to the Loire from Bordeaux in the early 1990s, and soon fell under the influence of his spiritual father, Charly Foucault of Clos Rougeard. Thierry would ultimately convert his entire domaine to biodynamic viticulture, which was the equivalent of his wine epiphany. Listening and observing his plants, allowing them to guide him, revolutionized his way of thinking. Thierry harvests on the relatively early side to preserve fresh, vibrant fruit. His goal is to produce Cabernet with purity, finesse, and drinkability, while avoiding rusticity, vegetal character, and hard tannins. When it comes to his Chenin, he makes bone dry, high acid, mineral wines that drink like Chablis young and take on weight slowly over time. Aging takes place in large oval *foudres* (for the whites) and round *foudres* and *demi-muids* (for the reds) in Thierry's frigid *tuffeau* cellars below his winery in Varrains. His incredibly diverse *terroirs* are translated with utter clarity and precision.

While most of Thierry's bottlings bear the Roches Neuves name, others include the name of his long-time associate and vineyard manager at the domaine, Michel Chevré, who purchased some of his own vineyards with Thierry's encouragement. These wines are followed by Thierry, Michel, and their team (biodynamically of course) from vine to cellar and vinified at Roches Neuves in Varrains.



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THIERRY GERMAIN (continued)

<u>Wine</u>	<u>Blend</u>	<u>Vine Age</u>	<u>Soil Type</u>	<u>Vineyard Area*</u>
Saumur-Champigny “Domaine”	Cabernet Franc	4 to 70 years	Sand, Clay, Tuffeau Limestone	15 ha
Saumur-Champigny “Roche”	Cabernet Franc	25 years	Chalk, Sand, Clay, Limestone	6 ha
Saumur-Champigny “Terres chaudes”	Cabernet Franc	45 years	Clay, Tuffeau Limestone	4 ha
Saumur-Champigny “Marginale”	Cabernet Franc	45 years	Clay, Turonien Supérieur Limestone	2.5 ha
Saumur-Champigny “Franc de Pied”	Cabernet Franc	12 years	Sand, Limestone	1.20 ha
Saumur-Champigny “Clos de l'Echelier”	Cabernet Franc	40 years	Clay, Turonien Supérieur Limestone	1.80 ha
Saumur-Champigny “Mémoires”	Cabernet Franc	112 years	Silex Scree, Turonien Supérieur Limestone	0.8 ha
Saumur-Champigny “Outre Terre”	Cabernet Franc	20 years	Clay, Limestone	0.60
Saumur-Champigny “Bavardages”	Cabernet Franc	30 years average	Sand, limestone	.50 ha
Saumur-Champigny “La Foulée”	Cabernet Franc	25 years average	Clay, limestone	.65 ha
Saumur “L'Insolite”	Chenin Blanc	90 years	Silex, Clay, Red Limestone, Sandstone	3 ha
Saumur “Clos Romans”	Chenin Blanc	8 years	Sand, Clay, Senonien Limestone	0.30 ha
Saumur “L'Echelier” <i>Blanc</i>	Chenin Blanc	70 years	Sand, Clay, Turonien Supérieur Limestone	1 ha
Saumur “Clos de l'Ecotard”	Chenin Blanc	8 years	Clay, Active Limestone (with limestone outcroppings)	1 ha
Saumur “Les Pentès du Clos de l'Ecotard”	Chenin Blanc	8 years	Active Limestone	1 ha
Saumur “Le Clos du Moulin”	Chenin Blanc	80 years	Sand, Clay, Senonien Limestone	1 ha
Saumur “Terres”	Chenin Blanc	90 years	Silex, Clay	0.60 ha
Saumur “Bulles de Roche”	90% Chenin Blanc, 5% Cabernet Franc, 5% Chardonnay	60 years	Clay, Limestone	1.20 ha
Saumur “Solera”	Chenin Blanc	70 years	Clay, limestone	n/a

* “ha”=hectares; one hectare equals roughly two and a half acres



THIERRY GERMAIN (continued)

VITICULTURE / VINIFICATION

- Hand harvested
- Sorted by hand at the winery
- Natural fermentation for all wines
- No new oak barrels or tanks of any size
- All still wines aged in bottle for 6 months
- All vineyards are certified biodynamic by Biodyvin except the Clos de L'Ecotard which is certified organic by Ecocert (and is also worked biodynamically)

Saumur-Champigny “Domaine”

- 100% de-stemmed
- Fermentation in stainless steel tank for 8 to 10 days
- Light pumpovers during fermentation—meant to infuse the grapes not extract them
- Aged in stainless steel and wood tanks, on fine lees, without sulfur, for 3 to 4 months
- Communes: Chaintres de Varrains and Saumur

Saumur-Champigny “Roche”

- 100% de-stemmed
- Fermentation in stainless steel tank for 8 to 10 days
- Light pumpovers during fermentation—meant to infuse the grapes not extract them
- Aged in stainless steel and wood tanks, on fine lees, without sulfur, for 3 to 4 months
- Communes: Chaintres de Varrains and Saumur

Saumur-Champigny “Terres Chaudes”

- 100% de-stemmed
- Fermented in cement tank for 18 to 22 days
- Light pumpovers during fermentation—meant to infuse the grapes not extract them
- Aged on fine lees in 6000L or 1200L *foudre* for 12 months
- Commune: Chacé
- Sourced from the *lieu-dit* “Les Poyeux”



THIERRY GERMAIN (continued)

Saumur-Champigny “Marginale”

- 100% de-stemmed
- Fermented in *foudre*
- Light pumpovers during fermentation—meant to infuse the grapes not extract them
- Aged in 228L (2 – 3 year old) barrels, 1200L *foudre*, and 2500L *foudre* for 18 to 24 months
- Only made in great vintages
- Communes: Chacé and Varrains

Saumur-Champigny “Franc de Pied”

- 100% whole cluster fermentation
- Fermentation in *foudre* for 8 to 10 days
- 1 punchdown per day
- Aged in 1200L *foudre* for 12 months
- Commune: Saumur

Saumur-Champigny “Clos de l'Echelier”

- 100% de-stemmed
- Fermented in conical tanks
- Fermentation lasts 10 to 15 days
- Light pumpovers during fermentation—meant to infuse the grapes not extract them
- Aged in 1200L *foudre* and 600L *demi-muid* for 12 months
- Commune: Dampierre sur Loire
- Vineyard is an actual clos, surrounded by a wall built 300 years ago

Saumur-Champigny “Mémoires”

- 100% de-stemmed
- Fermented in conical tanks
- Fermentation lasts 10 to 15 days
- Light during fermentation pumpovers—meant to infuse the grapes not extract them
- Aged in 2500L *foudre* for 12 months
- Commune: Dampierre sur Loire



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THIERRY GERMAIN (continued)

Saumur-Champigny “Outre Terre”

- 100% de-stemmed
- Fermentation and macération for 8 months in 800L Georgian amphora
- No punchdowns or pumpovers
- Aged for 12 months in barrel
- No sulfur
- Bottled in the cellar directly from barrel to bottle
- Commune: Saumur

Saumur-Champigny “Bavardages”

- Grapes are 100% de-stemmed
- Aged in old barrels for 6 months
- No sulfur
- The name of this cuvée comes from the french *bavarder*, for a wine meant to accompany long conversations over a wine of this style
- The wine is vinified by Thierry’s daughter, Jeanne

Saumur-Champigny “La Foulée”

- Fruit come from three separate parcels in the communes of Varrains, Chaintre, and Saumur
- Grapes are de-stemmed entirely or partially depending on vintage
- Aged in old 2500L *foudres* for 8 months
- No sulfur
- The name of this cuvée is a nod to warmer vintages when grapes are treaded (*foulé* in French) by foot.
- The wine is vinified by Thierry’s daughter, Jeanne

Saumur “L'Insolite”

- Fermentation in 1200L *foudre* for 2 months
- Aged on fine lees in 1200L *foudre* for 12 months
- Commune: Saumur, *lieux-dits* Les Cerpes and Saint Vincent

Saumur “Clos Romans”

- Fermented in 400L barrel for 2 months
- Aged on fine lees in 400L barrel for 9 months
- Commune: Parnay
- Vineyard is an actual clos, surrounded by a wall built in the 9th century



THIERRY GERMAIN (continued)

Saumur “L'Echelier”

- Fermented in 600L (1 year old) *demi-muid* for 3 months
- Aged on fine lees in 600L *demi-muid* for 9 months
- Commune: Dampierre sur Loire
- Vineyard is an actual clos, surrounded by a wall built 300 years ago

Saumur “Clos de l'Ecotard”

- Green harvesting, leaving only 4 to 6 bunches per vine
- Fermentation in 400L barrels for 1/3 of wine, 228L (2 year old) barrels for 2/3
- Aged in 1200L *foudre* for 8 months
- Commune: Courchamps, *lieu-dit* Clos de l'Ecotard

Saumur “Les Pentes du Clos de l'Ecotard”

- Fermented in 2500L *foudre* for 6 weeks
- Aged in 2500L *foudre* for 8 month
- Commune: Courchamps, *lieu-dit* Clos de l'Ecotard

Saumur “Le Clos du Moulin”

- Fermented in 600L (1 year old) *demi-muid* for 3 months
- Aged in 228L barrels for 8 months
- Commune: Parnay

Saumur “Terres”

- Fermentation and macération with skins for 8 months in 400L Italian amphora
- Aged for 12 months in barrel
- No sulfur
- Commune: Saumur

Saumur “Bulles de Roche”

- Sparkling wine
- Aged for 3 months in 228L barrels, then bottle aged, *sur latte*, for 9 months
- No dosage
- Commune: Saumur



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THIERRY GERMAIN (continued)

Saumur “Solera”

- The wine is made from base vintages 1997, 1998, and 1999 aged in a 400L barrel without topping up until 2003. In 2003, they began topping up the barrel, then bottled off small quantities until 2014, replacing the wine in barrel. In 2023 the entire 400L barrel was bottled after 26 years of combined ageing of several vintages.
- The Germaines collaborated with sommelier Eric Beaumard to envision this project.