



A votre santé!
René Michel

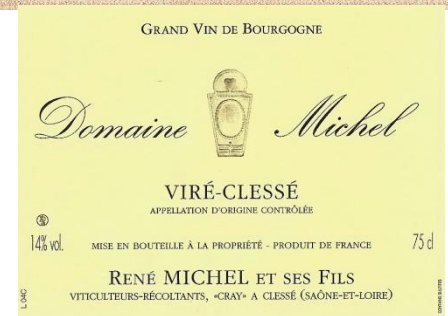
DOMAINE MICHEL



Domaine René Michel

Viré-Clessé

Owner/Winemaker: Franck et Vincent Michel



Estate History

Franck Michel and his nephew, Vincent, took over the domaine from Franck's father, René in 1996. Franck (in his mid 30s) is the cellar master and runs the day-to-day at the domaine while Vincent (27) is in charge of the vineyards. [Vincent's father, Denis, chose to take care of the family's cattle] The Michel family has been producing Mâconnais wines for six generations in the village of 'Cray.' Since 1998, when the Viré-Clessé appellation was created, the Michels have produced a lineup of four Viré-Clessés and a small amount of Mâcon-Villages from vines they own just outside of Viré-Clessé. Their total estate amounts to 37 acres. 100% Chardonnay is planted on clay-limestone soils. The average age of the vines is 50 years.

Blend: All Domaine René Michel wines are 100% Chardonnay



In the vines

Vincent Michel has kept the family's 'lutte raisonnée' [Reasonable Farming] philosophy alive and continues to move toward complete organic farming. (Not certified) Green harvest and pruning are performed to control the yields at harvest. Harvest is 100% manual with a severe sorting both on the tractor and again in the cellar.

In the cellar

All of the wines are treated similarly upon receipt at harvest. Destemming is performed only if necessary and long, low-temp fermentation in steel tank where no commercial yeasts are added give the Michels wines a great start before the aging process on the lees. All of the wines undergo malolactic fermentation.

After vinification, the process is not exactly the same for each wine...

Mâcon-Villages, Viré-Clessé 'Tradition' & 'Quintaine'

- Steel tank aging on the lees (6 months for the Mâcon-Village/12-18 months for the Viré-Clessés) before bottling

Viré-Clessé 'Vielle Vignes' *Sur le Chêne*

- Coming from the lieu-dit called 'Sur le Chêne' (covered with large limestone fragments) this cuvée is aged oak barrel (1 through 5 year old barrels) for 12 months on the lees with battonage. After 12 months the wine is transferred to steel tank for 9-12 months of additional aging where the wine will balance out and the oak will become less present.

Viré-Clessé 'Levroûtée' & 'Heritage'

- Both cuvées come from a lieu-dit called 'La Barre' and are made only in exceptional vintages when there is high amounts of natural sugar before harvest. Both wines age in steel tank for 24-30 months. 2002 and 2006 were the last two vintages to be produced of either wine.

'Levroûtée' is a term used to describe the color the grapes must be before they can be harvested for a wine of this style. The term comes from the rich, golden color of a 'levraut' (baby hare's) coat.

'Heritage' is a wine the Michels will make when they allow the grapes to botrytize. This is a dessert wine. Very rich, deep golden color with approx 50g Residual Sugar/Liter.



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