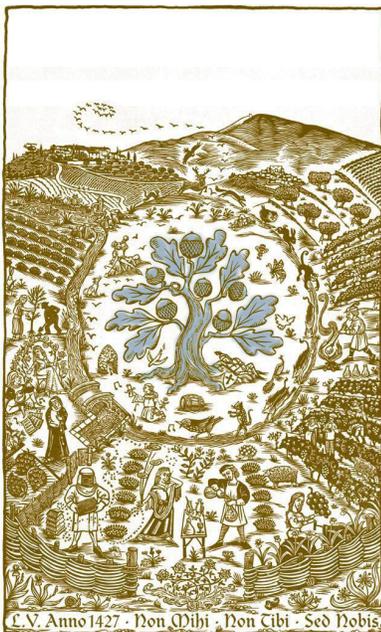




CHÊNE BLEU



TERROIR VS APPELLATION

The juxtaposition of southern latitude, in line with Gigondas, and high altitude (more northern and thus akin to Condrieu), gives Chêne Bleu “one foot in the southern Rhône and one foot in the northern Rhône,” expressing the juxtaposition between concentrated fruit, spice and glycerol from growing in the sun-drenched south, and residual acidity and minerality typically associated with the freshness and finesse of the northern Rhône. The “ying and yang” flagship red wines, Héloïse and Abelard, are shaped around this enticing contradiction.

The decision to step outside of the AOC system but collaborate with a number of traditional and innovative leaders — within the region and well beyond — is key to the ethos of Chêne Bleu. The project fully respects history, heritage and tradition, while at the same time never stopping at the status quo. Every aspect of winemaking is revisited time and time again to stretch the bounds of possibility for expressing a “sense of place” and the quality it can produce.

The Rolet team set out to produce wines of the highest possible international standard, with southern Rhône flavors and aromas but northern Rhône finesse that can be attributed to the altitude. They believe that in many parts of France, terroir and appellation go hand in hand, but that in others, such as these remote areas,

often less scrutinized and with historically less at stake, there are numerous exceptions. They have stepped outside the AOC system to make a family of wines that rise above preconceived notions and the constraints of appellations, wherever they think these are a hindrance to quality and originality.

At times this may involve planting grapes that are not included in the local appellations but might be very suitable for the altitude and thin topsoil. At other times, it might affect the varieties included in a blend. For example, they felt that the finesse of their Viognier would be an asset to the Héloïse, the Syrah blend, as it is in the northern Rhône, such as in Côte Rôtie — this is not allowed in the local southern appellations, but they favored the taste of the wine.

Preferring the challenges and satisfactions of finding their own way rather than staying on the beaten path and settling for the security and limitations of appellation, Chêne Bleu wines are often given broader geographic boundaries, such as Vin de Pays, Vaucluse or AOC Ventoux. This should not be misconstrued, as the wines are always 100 percent estate-grown and bottled. Their choices in the place-of-origin hierarchy have prompted some journalists to refer to them as the first “Super Rhônes” in reference to “Super Tuscans” that were created to be the best that they could be with respect to their terroir rather than to their appellation.

