

JÉRÔME BALMET

BEAUJOLAIS · FRANCE



JÉRÔME BALMET

Before the vines, there was a kung fu school in China. And meditation in Thailand. Jérôme Balmet took a circuitous path to Beaujolais – through martial arts, stillness, and a kind of physical discipline that shows up now in the quiet precision of his winemaking.

When he returned to France, he apprenticed at Domaine Marcel Lapierre under Mathieu Lapierre and at Jean-Claude Lapalu's estate – two pillars of Beaujolais's natural wine movement. His father Bernard was the village postman in Vaux-en-Beaujolais and a part-time winemaker himself. For Jérôme's first four vintages, from 2012 to 2015, father and son shared a tiny cellar and just 1.2 hectares of vines.

The older generation of natural winemakers called young producers like him "trolls." He grew into the reputation. He now holds roughly 3.5 hectares across Vaux and Saint-Étienne-des-Oullières, and he is known locally, without irony, as "the most famous beard of the Beaujolais."

The soils tell two stories. In Vaux, calcareous clay runs through with veins of blue granite – dense, mineral-rich, stubborn ground. In Saint-Étienne, basalt and sand give the wines a different lift. Balmet vinifies with short carbonic maceration in concrete tanks, adds zero sulfur, doesn't fine or filter. The technique is minimal. The attention is not.

His father Bernard still makes wine, semi-retired now, and has watched the village shift around his son's influence. "The old ones all say, 'Oh, well it's the wine we made way back when,'" Bernard notes – a backhanded compliment from neighbors who spent decades adding sulfur and filtering every trace of wildness out of their Gamay.

The beard, by all accounts, continues to grow.

"Since I've been making a little wine in Vaux, I perceive that the other winemakers put a little less herbicides."

WINES AVAILABLE

CUVÉE



Tete de Citron 2023

Vin de France

Gamay

Short carbonic maceration in concrete. Zero added sulfur, unfined, unfiltered. Roughly 3.5 hectares across Vaux and Saint-Étienne-des-Oullières.