

CLOS CRISTAL

Region: Loire – Saumur Champigny

Information: Since 1928, Saumur Hospital has owned the 10 hectares (25 acres) of vineyard growing Cabernet Franc grapes bequeathed by Antoine Cristal. The Clos Cristal is historically symbolic for Saumur wine growers, not only because its creator was the first to develop red wines in Saumur, but also because in about 1900, he conceived of an ingenious project. He built three kilometers (2 miles) of walls along which, and through which, the vines grow. Close to the walls, the vine takes advantage of the heat accumulated by the stone, which enables a greater level of ripeness in the fruit.



Eric Dubois, winemaker

Vinification is carried out to maximize the natural qualities of the grapes; which means that no yeast, sugar, chemical products, or regulation of temperature is used so that the process remains as natural as possible. There are a minimum of 21 days of maceration. The quality of the wine is allowed to develop as a natural process without any artificial acceleration. Only one filtration is performed, if necessary, and the wines are bottled before the summer to be ready to market in September.

The main objective in the way that the vineyard is run and the vinification is performed is to produce, naturally, a concentrated and expressive wine.

Each year Clos Cristal produces a principal vintage, and another one during the best years only, made exclusively from grapes picked alongside the wall, called “The Wall.”

ANTOINE CRISTAL

The son of a wagon maker, he was originally from the Auvergne region but moved to the Saumur area where he worked as a traveling salesman for a textile merchant, first in Tours and later in Angers. He amassed such a fortune that he was able to buy the company. He began to associate with some of the best politicians of the period, such as Alain Targe, Jules Ferry, Gambetta, and above all, Georges Clemenceau.

In 1886, at the age of fifty, he bought the château at Parnay beside the Loire, and for the rest of his life he devoted himself to his only passion of winemaking. Twenty years later he was supplying the English Court and the greatest restaurants in Paris. Saumur was well known for its white wines but Antoine Cristal had been the first to produce and market the red wine which later became known as Saumur-Champigny.

Unmarried, lonely and gruff, “Pere Cristal” became known as a Republican and a free thinker. On December 24 of 1928 he bequeathed the vineyard of Champigny to the Hospices of Saumur and he passed away on January 24 1931 after having enjoyed an active and prosperous life.

Biodynamic Estate
Winemaker: Eric Dubois



The Wines:



Clos Cristal Saumur-Champigny

100% Cabernet Franc from 40 year old vines. Single 10 hectares (25 acres) vineyard giving low yields. The wine is 100% tank fermented. A landmark in the region, property of the Hospices de Saumur since 1928. Antoine Cristal, founder, was the first to bring Cabernet Franc to the Loire valley.

The dark, black fruit aromas are held in a firmly tannic grip, and the acidity is fresh and lively, and the wine depth and concentration suggest further development.

90 Pts, Wine Enthusiast



Clos Cristal Anjou Chenin Blanc

100% Chenin Blanc. This confidential cuvee made from 25 to 30 year old vines is very elegant with aromas of white fruits, very floral, and a touch of citrus. This wine aged in tank will refresh all your warmer nights and will pair well with seafood, shellfish, white meats or can be enjoyed on its own.

Lusciously apply and quince-like on the palate and with invigorating fresh lime and salt, it finishes with further stimulation of tart fruit skin and brown spices. I suspect – that it will be worth following for 3-5 years if not longer.

88 Pts, Robert Parker's Wine Advocate