

## Domaine de la Folie, Côte Châlonnaise



This graceful 16th century estate sits on top of the Montagne de la Folie, a long, high ridge considered in ancient times to be the playground of fairies and goblins, and a place where mortals dare not tread. The estate has been in the care of the Noël-Bouton family for over two centuries. It has long been considered a leading producer in Rully.

The domaine is unique in the Rully appellation in that it is the northernmost in the AC and its 33 acres of vines are the highest in elevation. Moreover, all but two of these vineyards are *monopoles* (a fact that leaps out in the context of Burgundy). Lastly, unlike the main body of vineyards in the central part of Rully to the south, this northern end of the Montagne de la Folie sits on the same vein of limestone as the commune of Puligny-Montrachet, just over three miles away.

Immediately west of the domaine, the ridge's flank falls steeply down to the village of Bouzeron, noted for Ali-goté. To the east, the flank is a little more forgiving and it's on this side that the domaine's two premier cru chardonnay vineyards grow (it's often said that virtually all of the world's greatest vineyards face east). They overlook the old route to Cluny and a twelfth-century farmhouse that once provided shelter for pilgrims walking to Santiago to pay homage to Saint-Jacques de Compostelle, a.k.a. the Apostle Saint James. Folie's top premier cru vineyard is named after him.

Jules Etienne-Marey, the great-grandfather of current proprietor Jérôme Noël-Bouton, took advantage of the domaine's hilltop perch to construct circular stone platforms in the 1890s on which to mount his revolving camera gun, a precursor to the motion picture camera. Those platforms still exist, suitable now for any mischievous little goblins that live in the pine forest that's grown up around them. Marey was a professor at the College of France, and his contribution to society earned him a square and a statue in Beaune.

Befitting such history, the wines of Domaine de La Folie are decidedly classical in profile. Its whites always put freshness and minerality front and center (as opposed to overtly ripe modern examples), while the reds showcase fruit and structure rather than oak. The domaine is also locally renowned for its well-made and aged *Marc de Bourgogne*.

Since the mid 1990s, the domaine has followed the principals of *lutte raisonnée* (reasoned fight) in its farming practices, plowing rather than spraying herbicides, forgoing the use of chemical fertilizers, and being conscientious in its applications of fungicides.



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## The Wines:

- *Rully Clos La Folie blanc*: This walled vineyard occupies the northeast facing slope in front of the house. The current 4.7 acres of vines were planted in 1972 and share the *clos* with a parcel of cassis and a small orchard of cherry trees. The wine is made in tank.
- *Rully 1er cru Clos du Chaigne blanc*: Chaigne is one of the domaine's two flagships. Its eight acres of vines were planted in 1971 and grow to the side of its sibling Clos Saint Jacques but higher up the slope. Consequently, its wine is racier, finer, and takes longer after bottling to become comfortable in its skin. Like Saint Jacques, this is made and raised in tank (two-thirds) and oak (one-third, new and older barrels).
- *Rully 1er cru Clos Saint Jacques blanc*: Clos Saint Jacques's 4.2 acres were planted in 1952 in a postage stamp of a vineyard that faces due east on a steep slope (this enclosed vineyard should not be confused with Rully's larger Les Saint Jacques vineyard to the south). The wine is replete with old vine intensity, finesse, and length. Year in and year out it is one of the appellation's finest whites.
- *Rully Bellecroix Cuvée Marey rouge*: The Bellecroix vineyard grows down on the slope that ends at the town of Chagny. Chagny was besieged centuries ago by one of the many marauding bands of mercenaries that ran around Europe in the Middle Ages, and a battle took place here that lifted the siege. Presumably, a beautiful cross once stood on the site to commend the victory, giving name to the vineyard. The domaine makes two reds from its 11.8 acres, planted in 1962: the classic Bellecroix, made traditionally with punch downs; and the Cuvée Marey, which is made by an old method of holding the cap down during the *cuvaison*. This latter method rounds out the tannins and emphasizes the fruit.
- *Marc de Bourgogne*: This is an out-of-fashion brandy made from the pomace of the domaine's grapes by a distiller. The process is the same as for Italian grappa, but grappa traditionally never sees the inside of a barrel (time was when Marc de Bourgogne far outsold grappa in America, but then the Italians discovered fancy bottles...). Folie's marc—the word rhymes with *car*—is made up of several lots, the youngest of which has aged for a minimum of 15 years in barrel before bottling. This extended ageing, coupled with the care of the distillation process, makes for an aromatic, complex, and rugged *eau de vie*.

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