



Terroir driven wines, *what are we talking about, here?*

Let's start with a quote from Jules Chauvet: "Each winemaker must accept his wines as they are in reality and not as he imagines them to be."

With that sentence, we enter the world of natural wines, not technological wines, not industrial wines, which in reality ought to be defined as we broach the topic. A natural wine is a wine that does not undergo manipulations to transform it into something it wouldn't naturally be. They can be classified into 2 main families. Some wines represent traditions and artisanal practices that are closely tied to their roots (terroir driven wines), and some wines are freed of tradition and terroir as the expression of a particular winemaker and a personal philosophy (we can call them "auteur wines").

Haut les Vins is about **terroir driven wines**. The idea of terroir (in the French sense) cannot be reduced to climatic and geographical considerations. It also includes traditional practices born of constraints specific to their place- and deeply tied to it. The pressure of post-World War II agricultural productivism and food hygienics pushed out those practices in all stages of wine production in favor of technology-backed interventionism: synthetic pesticides in the vineyards, selected microorganisms and additives in the cellar. Viticultural practices and methods of vinification shaped over the course of long centuries have been deeply changed in just a few years. As a result, wines have become standardized: the same varieties, the same techniques, the same additives, and the same choice of microorganisms are used throughout the world.

Terroir driven wines are fundamentally inspired by a rejection of that kind of uniformity: their goal is to return to more nuance and sensitivity and remain closer to the natural character of wine by rejecting the systematic use of techniques championed by agronomy and modern enology.

A sign of the times, it is first and foremost the rejection of techniques for manipulating wine that is seen as the natural wine movement's main objective. **When it comes to terroir driven wines, we see the rejection of those techniques, instead, as a condition for -or even the result of- making natural wine.**

Producing a **terroir driven wine** first and foremost requires great knowledge and great sensitivity at each stage of production, starting of course with work in the vineyard. Terroir driven wines lead all winemakers who produce them to progress from year to year in their understanding and knowledge, faced each time with the new conditions and specific situations that nature provides. They improve or hone their mastery as vine growers, winemakers and tasters.

For us, the winemakers who have come together as Haut les Vins, our objective lies in the demand for precision: to express as best we can all the nuances that nature offers us through terroir, grape varieties and vintage.

The way of achieving that is always to privilege local natural resources, as winemaking tradition had done to perfection before the era of agronomy and modern enology:

- In the vineyard, we will favor the production of grapes that naturally contain all necessary protection against enological flaws and potentially contain all the future wine's complexity and "typicity"
- We will prefer natural agricultural practices without pesticides, and no herbicides as far as conditions allow us (organic certification and biodynamics recommended)
- We will privilege indigenous microorganisms (yeasts, bacteria, soil microorganisms)
- We will at no time make systematic, preventive use of enological interventions and manipulations

Each winemaker shall seek out and follow a freely adopted philosophy in order to express a personal understanding of the terroir's nuances. Our conviction is that no technique, no authoritarian philosophy, can be instituted as an absolute truth.

In that sense, when speaking of **terroir driven wines**, we are talking about culture tied to artisanal traditions.

Haut les Vins