

DOMAINE HENRI GOUGES

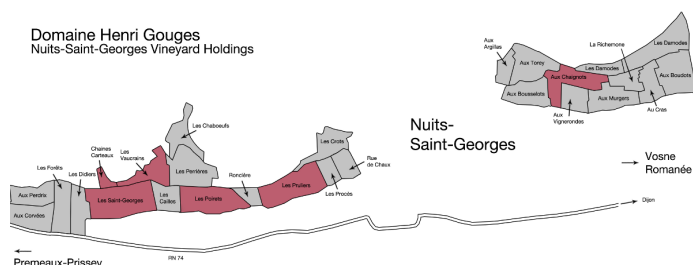
THE HISTORY

The creation of Domaine Henri Gouges was the culmination of 400 years of family grape farmers, and it is, in many minds, the top domaine in Nuits-Saint-Georges. Henri formed the domaine in 1920 but was soon discouraged with selling the fruit to *négociants*. He envisioned a better quality wine, and by 1933 he was producing, bottling, and selling directly. He, along with the Marquis d'Angerville from Volnay, was at the forefront of battles against fraud in Burgundy in the 1920s. In the 1930s, Monsieur Gouges was one of the people charged with the job of delineating the crus in Burgundy for the *Institut National d'Appellation d'Origine*, and he was a member of that regulatory body at its outset.

Since the beginning, the domaine has remained an undivided family property. In 1967, Henri's two sons, Michel and Marcel, succeeded him and added to the holdings of the estate. Each of them handed leadership over to one of their sons to bring the domaine to the next stage. Pierre and Christian began the modernization of the vineyards and the winery, which they have now turned over to Pierre's son, Gregory, and his cousin, Antoine. While the house style has evolved, the main focus is the better reflection of the terroir in the fruit through organic viticulture. They believe that healthy vines produce quality fruit and thus more expressive terroir-driven wines.

THE VINEYARDS

Located in the heart of the Cote d'Or in the village of Nuits-Saint-Georges, Domaine Henri Gouges consists of 36 acres of vineyards. The 30 acres of Premier Cru vineyards has remained unchanged since the 1930s. Apart from a Bourgogne Rouge and Blanc and the Nuits-Saint-Georges Villages, there are seven Premiers Crus: Les Saint-Georges, Les Chaignots, Chênes Carteaux, Clos des Porrets-Saint-Georges, Les Pruliers, and Les Vaucrains, plus the white La Perrière from a mutated Pinot Noir that Henri Gouges noticed growing in 1936 within Clos-des-Porrets and subsequently propagated. The Clos de Porrets-Saint-Georges is a nearly 9-acre triangular *monopole* in Prémieux that was a former quarry. The parcel in Les Saint-Georges consists of 2.5 acres that was planted in 1961 and is located towards the southern end of the appellation. The soil here contains limestone debris over Bathonian limestone bedrock. The Les Pruliers comes from two parcels totaling over 4.5 acres planted in 1960.



THE VITICULTURE

Sélection massale is used to replace vines that are pruned single-Guyot with 8-10 buds left of each branch in winter, reduced to five the following spring. Grégory Gouges prefers limiting the crop by de-budding and clipping off side-shoots, but will conduct a green harvest in July or August if necessary. By 2008, the entirety of the vineyards had been converted to organic viticulture, but the domaine emphasizes that the goal is not for certification but simply using viticultural techniques to respect the terroir and the wine.

THE WINEMAKING

A new pump-free and gravity-fed *cuvée* was constructed in 2007. At picking, bunches are sorted on two sorting tables. The fruit is then completely de-stemmed and after a light crushing is transferred into lined concrete vats, originally installed by Henri Gouges in the 1950s. Technological improvements now allow for a gentle *remontage* and *pigeage* without breaking the cap. The fruit undergoes a brief cold soak and the natural yeast triggers alcoholic fermentation within a couple of days. The wines are fermented at a low fermentation temperature, and the skin maceration period lasts up to 10 days. A pneumatic press is employed for a soft and gentle pressing. The wines are then transferred into barrels with a preference for Tronçais oak. Only around 20% of the barrels are renewed each year. After malolactic fermentation, the wines are racked and blended. The total barrel maturation period is around 18 months before bottling without fining or filtration.



Pierre, Antoine, Christian & Grégory Gouges



The Winery