

DOMAINE DE PALLUS

Year Founded: 1883

Region: Loire, France

**Winemaker and Owner:
Bertrand Sourdais**

**Known for: Producing
uniquely aromatic Cabernet
Franc.**

**Cool Fact: The wines age
in used Chateau Haut-Brion
Barrels.**

**-Biodynamic, Organic,
Sustainable-**

In 2004, France's most respected critic, Michel Bettane, got together with Spain's legendary journalist, Jose Penin, to blind-taste the two countries' thirty-one best wines. Tastings like this often contain a shocker; this time it was an obscure wine from Ribera del Duero made by a little-known French winemaker. The upstart was 2002 Dominio de Atauta "Llanos del Alm-entro," made by the then 25-year-old Bertrand Sourdais, a native of Chinon in the Loire Valley.



Bertrand's winemaking resumé is impressive, to say the least. He left Chinon to attend enology school in Bordeaux, and shortly after graduating in the early 1990s he began working at such famed Châteaux as Léoville Las Cases and Mouton Rothschild

before being named vineyard manager at Château Nenin. He then decamped for Spain where he fell in love with Ribera del Duero and went on to establish two award winning wineries there. But with his father's health failing he returned to Chinon and immediately began to apply his experience to the family domaine. Step one was to convert all the vineyards to biodynamic farming, nursing them back to health and allowing them to produce the healthiest, purest fruit that best translated the classic terroirs of his estate. Step two was whipping the cellar into shape. Bertrand wants terroir transparency, not flavors of old, unclean barrels. His style emphasizes elegance and refinement over rusticity. But, and this is important, he is not seeking to tame the wide array of savory and wild flavors that Cabernet Franc grown on the chalky limestone of Chinon can produce.

Bertrand has brought to the project an insider's sense of tradition combined with an outsider's eye for change. He aspires to test the limits of possibility for the vineyards that 5 generations of his family have worked. The estate holds almost 30 small parcels located in Chinon's heart at Cravant-les-Coteaux. Soils range from heavy, limestone-rich clay, to sand. Bertrand selects from the estate's best parcels to work in "his way," and those form the basis for his Les Pensées. He likes a blend of limestone clay (for aromatics), heavier clay (for power), and sand (for finesse). Bertrand employs a thoughtful adaptation of biodynamics - listening to the vines instead of listening to rote dogma. Bertrand utilizes an extremely long, gentle maceration (over 30 days) to capture the "soul" of his Cabernet Franc. Elevage is similarly unhurried, with a gentle 18 months in second passage barrels purchased from elite Bordeaux estates.



2022 Chinon 'Messanges' Rosé

100% Cabernet Franc. Three months in stainless steel. Messanges is an old Loire Valley name for Cabernet Franc. Bertrand is using this line for a Red and Rosé from his younger vines. Vinified for immediate accessibility, they are the perfect introduction to the Pallus style.



2021 Chinon 'Messanges' Rouge

Primarily from the Clos de Briançon, a sandy site with silex stones that lies near the Vienne river. Fermented at cool temperatures in concrete tanks. Aged in concrete and old 600L-barrels for 6 months.



2017 Les Pensées de Pallus

The fruit is sourced from several parcels of 30+ year old vines in Cravant-les-Coteaux, the heart of the appellation. Soils range from a blend of limestone and clay to heavier clay and lighter sandy soils. Long and gentle macerations are employed (often over 30 days) and fermented in tank using natural yeasts. Aged 18 months in second passage barriques.

92 Points – Vinous

92 Points – Wine Spectator – *“Offers enticing mulled spice and black tea nuances at first while a core of gently steeped cherry and blackberry fruit unwinds, showing savory and chalky mineral details through the finish. Latent length.”*

92 Points – John Gilman

91 Points – Robert Parker – *“Offers a pure, fresh, fragrant and intense bouquet of ripe and concentrated as well as spicy red and dark berries (most of all blackberries and cassis but also cherries) and earthy, mineral and floral aromas. Silky textured, fresh and vital on the palate, this is a full-bodied, juicy but also straight and tight Cabernet Franc with an intense and elegant, fruity texture that represents both layers of the terroir: sand and tuff limestone. This is an excellent, nervy and stimulating Chinon from Bertrand Sourdais.”*