

CLOS GUIROUILH

Year Founded: 1989

Region: Jurançon, Southwest France

Founder/Winemaker(s):
Jean Guirouilh, his daughter Marie-Françoise and her husband, Luis.

Fun Fact: Jean Guirouilh is part of a line of vigneronns that have been making wine in Jurançon since the 16th century.

Fun Fact Continued: This lineage has remained unbroken even during two world wars, during which the women took over running the estate while the men were involved in the resistance war effort.

-Sustainable, Vegan-

That the family remained in this specific place, in a valley above the village of Lasseube, is a testament to the excellent location they have for making wine. Indeed, the microclimates of Jurançon are particularly complex, strongly influenced by a varied topography and the warm wind out of the south called the Foehn, which blows warm, dry air off the leeward side of the Pyrenees mountains. It is this dry wind which encourages the long, even ripening cycle and creates the conditions which make multiple harvests, extending as exceptionally late as December, possible. These late, rot-free harvests are the key to the amazing concentration in the wines. As such, the best sites are not necessarily in the most obvious places. As the Grand Atlas des Vignobles de France puts it, in Jurançon, "the ideal site for vineyards usually corresponds to the well-exposed amphitheatres at the top of the valleys, which combine all the climatic advantages that the vines need. These are truly natural paradises where exceptional wines are slowly developed." Clos Guirouilh is located precisely in this type of area, around 350 meters in elevation above the village of Lasseube, and it is this terroir that is the key to making the truly distinctive and complex wines that the region is known for. Their 10 hectares of Gros Manseng, Petit Manseng, and Petit Courbu are grown on clay-calcareous soils with lots of yellow sandstone called grès, all directly around the ancient farmhouse that serves both as a winery and home. The vines are all in excess of forty years old and highly trellised to take advantage of the Foehn wind and all of the benefits that great ventilation brings to a vineyard. The soils and elevations contribute to giving the wines their fresh, acidic framework for balance and complexity. The nuanced wines of Jurançon are still a well-guarded secret, as modern wine trends have largely ignored the remote southwest region of France. At Clos Guirouilh, most things are still done as they have been for centuries, with a few updates where those can help improve the wines. The grapes are picked by hand in successive passes well into December. A minimum of three passes are made through the vineyards, but often many more are needed in exceptional years. All of their wines are spontaneously fermented slowly in their ancient, cold cellar with indigenous yeasts and without temperature control. Since the cellar is already cold when the grapes come in, alcoholic fermentation crawls along until spring, when it picks back up again. Nothing is rushed, and there are no concessions to the pace of the modern world. The resulting wines are exactly the Jurançon we had been looking for: deeply rooted in history, uncompromising and majestic.



2018 Clos Guirouilh Jurançon Sec

12/.750L



85% Gros Manseng, 15% Petit Courbu. The grapes for the dry cuvées are harvested first, all manually. The grapes are completely destemmed and gently crushed in a pneumatic press. Fermentation with indigenous yeasts occurs in temperature-controlled stainless steel tanks, where the wine further ages for one year. This cuvée goes through partial malolactic fermentation (around 25%). This full-bodied classic is bursting with flavors and aromas. Citrus, orchard and stone fruits, dried ginger, and spice pair with a beautiful acidity. This is exceedingly food-friendly.