



A SENSE OF PLACE

The clear communication of origin is the foundation stone of biodynamic practices – and the wines of Michel Chapoutier exemplify this terroir-first approach

GREAT WINES are often a remarkable reflection of their origin. They paint an enticingly detailed picture of locations, people and culture in a way that seemingly cannot be replicated by another product. When a winemaker succeeds in expressing their unique terroir in a bottle, the tastes and aromas imparted by this liquid will project a hauntingly clear image of the ecosystem into which they were born.

This profound idea – that every wine can and should serve as a reflection of its unique biological origins – is the centrepiece of biodynamic winemaking. While biodynamic winemaking is far from new, in the past few decades it has been adopted by more and more top producers around the world. In 2022, the

share of organic and biodynamic wines sold at auction on iDealwine.com was over 25%, featuring icons such as Domaine Leroy, d’Auvenay and Domaine Leflaive. Additionally, the top 20 organic and biodynamic wines in iDealwine auctions during 2022 garnered an impressive average price of €6,877.

One of the foremost pioneers in biodynamic winemaking is Chapoutier, where biodynamic practices began more than 30 years ago. The company now considers this aspect of the business to be one of its founding principles, and although it is one of the largest producers in France, it has found a way to stretch this philosophy across its enormous amount of land. Pesticides and chemical fertilisers are entirely banned in its

vineyards. Instead, the company uses mineral, vegetal and animal-based matter. Daily farming activities are completely adapted to the needs of the land, and they make no attempts to impact the cycle of nature. These practices inspired by the biodynamic movement are updated, improved and passed down from generation to generation via word of mouth, ensuring that each new winemaker builds upon the experiences of the last.

The focus on biodynamic viticulture at Chapoutier began almost immediately after Michel Chapoutier took over the reins in 1990. The seventh generation of Chapoutiers to run the business, Michel resolutely believes that “the soil should speak louder than the winemaker” as he

auction update – in association with iDealwine

Top five biodynamic bottles of 2023, adjusted to 750ml bottle

Region	Colour	Lot Description	Starting price	Lot selling price	Unit selling price	La Cote iDealwine®	% change	Buyer's profile
Burgundy	Red	1 bottle Romanée-Conti Grand Cru Domaine de la Romanée-Conti 2015	€22,536	€22,912	€22,912	€25,706	-11%	Professional – Italy
Burgundy	Red	1 bottle Musigny Grand Cru Leroy (Domaine) 2011	€22,320	€22,444	€22,444	€22,320	1%	Private collector – France
Burgundy	Red	1 bottle Chevalier-Montrachet Grand Cru d'Auvenay (Domaine) 2007	€14,198	€14,198	€14,198	€19,497	-27%	Private collector – France
Piedmont	Red	1 bottle Montrachet Grand Cru Leflaive (Domaine) 1997	€6,260	€7,262	€7,262	€5,589	30%	Professional – France
Piedmont	Red	1 bottle La Romanée Grand Cru Comte Liger-Belair (Domaine du) 2005	€6,260	€6,260	€6,260	€6,812	-8%	Professional – Switzerland

*For this list, no domaine is listed twice

considers the 1,000-year-old microorganisms found in his French vineyards to be utterly vital to his final product. In speaking about the potential of a wine, Michel has said that “the vineyard decides the height of the ladder and the oenologist tries to get to the top... but he can never go beyond”.

Born into the wine business, Michel is active in many different roles and organisations throughout the industry. In addition to his responsibilities as the head of Chapoutier, he is an active member of the Institut National de l'Origine et de la Qualité (INAO) and the elected president of Inter-Rhône, a professional association for Rhône Valley winemakers and wine merchants.

Shortly before taking over Chapoutier, Michel had spent time in California learning the ways of 'New World' winemaking. His experiences in the US had a distinct impact on his philosophy as a vigneron, and not in the way one might imagine. As if he had approached the opposite end of a magnet, Michel quickly found himself disillusioned with the interventionist-style winemaking practices of the 'New World', wholly preferring the more terroir-driven approaches of his homeland. This difference in winemaking philosophy

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would go on to become the foundation of his interest in biodynamics.

Outside biodynamic winemaking, Chapoutier is also known for its impressively global expanse of vineyards. The company owns land in France, Spain, Portugal, Germany and Australia, with the latter benefitting greatly from Chapoutier's savoir-faire in the realm of Syrah. Within these countries, there are vineyards in renowned appellations and sub-appellations such as Hermitage, Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Ribera del Duero and the Douro Valley.

In 2023 iDealwine auctions, nearly 550 bottles (equivalent 750ml) of Chapoutier went under the hammer, generating over €100,000 in auction sales. The average 750ml bottle sold for €110, tending to vary by appellation. For example, for Hermitage, where the first Chapoutier vineyard was planted, the average bottle price was €206, while the bottles from Roussillon sold for a more affordable €39 per bottle. The highest-priced bottle of the year in 2023 iDealwine auctions was an Ermitage Le Pavillon Chapoutier 1989, which sold for €488.

Within the exceptionally qualitative world of biodynamic wine, Chapoutier represents just one example of what is to be discovered on iDealwine. iDealwine offers the ability to filter its selection by biodynamic, organic, natural and triple A-certified wines, with a consistently growing list of both fixed-price and auction bottles. The selection of fixed-price wines is primarily sourced from a network of over 950 partner producers, which are often targeted not only for their outstanding quality, but also for their admirable dedication to sustainable winemaking practices. db

About iDealwine.com

- Founded in 2000, iDealwine is France's top wine auctioneer and leading online wine auction house worldwide.
- Fine Spirits Auction (FSA) is iDealwine's dedicated spirits platform, launched in partnership with La Maison du Whisky, a French specialist in high-end spirits since 1956. Seven auctions of the finest whisky, rum, Cognac and more take place annually.
- Based in Paris, and with offices in Bordeaux and Hong Kong, iDealwine sources rare bottles from European cellars, private collections and direct from producers before meticulously authenticating and shipping to enthusiasts, collectors and trade customers worldwide.
- iDealwine provides wine and spirits market data and analysis, with over 60,000 price estimates, based on more than 3m auction prices.
- If you are keen to sell your wines or spirits, then check out iDealwine's current auctions, sales and price estimates at www.idealwine.com or at FineSpirits.Auction

