

2012 Chevalier Montrachet Grand Cru

Domaine Leflaive, Burgundy & Chablis Wine Region, France

Product details

Vintage:	2012	Drinking:	Now 2028
Producer:	Domaine Leflaive	Alcohol:	
Region:	Burgundy & Chablis Wine Region	Variety:	Chardonnay
Country:	France		

About the producer

DOMAINE LEFLAIVE WINES

In 2015, Burgundy was robbed of one of its greatest winemaking heroes, Anne-Claude Leflaive, who was taken by cancer at the age of 59. Not only did she produce some of the most complex white wines in Burgundy, but she was also a fierce protector of the land of Puligny Montrachet, pioneering biodynamic viticulture in the Domaine. Thankfully, her spirit and determination to protect the terroir and constantly improve the Domaine's wines continues, with her nephew Brice de La Morandière - a hugely successful businessman outside of the world of wine - stepping into the breach to keep the flame alive.

And, early in 2017, Pierre Vincent joined from Domaine de la Vougeraie - another leader in biodynamic winemaking - as general manager to support Brice, taking over from the great Pierre Morey. Armit Wines began importing Domaine Leflaive's wines to the UK over 20 years ago. It was an honour to work with Anne-Claude Leflaive and a pleasure to continue that relationship with Brice.

The story began in 1717 when Claude Leflaive settled in the buildings which remain the heart of the Domaine today. But the plot really picked up pace in 1920, when Joseph Leflaive - an engineer who had worked on construction of the first French submarine - bought 25 hectares of vineyards ravaged by phylloxera. He replanted with root stock which was especially selected to suit each parcel of land, expanded the Domaine and, crucially, began to vinify and market his own wines. Until that point, like the majority of growers in Puligny-Montrachet, Domaine Leflaive sold their grapes to négociants.

Joseph's four children continued to improve Domaine Leflaive wines in the second half of the 20th century, united in an ambition to produce expressions of Chardonnay excellence - aiming to be the best in Puligny Montrachet, Côte de Beaune, even Burgundy. In the next generation, that aspiration was met and exceeded: Anne-Claude Leflaive took the Domaine the level of the greatest white wine estates in the world.

When she first arrived at Domaine Leflaive in 1990, Anne-Claude Leflaive had travelled widely in the world of wine. On returning to Burgundy, she was concerned about the damage caused to soil in the region by decades of usage of fertilisers and pesticides. One scientist who had analysed soil in the region in the 1980s said, "There is more life in the Sahara." Although she feared the effects were irreversible, she made the effort anyway, and tried to persuade others to do the same.

Over a four-year period, she introduced organic methods of controlling pests and compost as fertiliser, reintroduced horses to plough between rows, and adopted biodynamic techniques too - even though she tended to think of them simply as



traditional ways to farm according to the seasons. Her fervent belief was that the quality of a wine is determined by the health of the harvest. To this day, meticulous de-budding and close pruning are regarded as key in the cultivation. By 1997, the whole Domaine Leflaive wine estate was organic and biodynamic. And Anne-Claude spread the word, even founding the Ecole du Vin et des Terroirs to educate winemakers that biodynamic viticulture is not mystic mumbo jumbo but a way to respect the environment and protect the goose that lays the golden eggs (or bottles of golden liquid).

Domaine Leflaive owns parcels of vineyards in the four Grand Crus of Puligny Montrachet: Montrachet Grand Cru, Bienvenues Bâtard Montrachet, Bâtard Montrachet, and Chevalier Montrachet. Domaine Leflaive's bottlings of this Chardonnay have an incredible purity and freshness that speaks of healthy fruit, balancing flint and herb characteristics with the indulgence of a buttery French breakfast. They are not reliant on wood, despite spending a year in 25 per cent new oak before settling and clarifying in steel tanks for another 12 months, and have complexity which only improves with years.

There are a further four Premier Crus from the climats of Le Clavoillon, Les Folatières, Les Combettes and Les Pucelles, which drink slightly earlier but still have ageing potential. And, at the more accessible end of the scale, there is a Domaine Leflaive Puligny Montrachet and an immediately drinkable Bourgogne Blanc.

As Anne-Claude Leflaive intended, the philosophy of Domaine Leflaive winemaking extends beyond the property - and Brice de La Morandière is keen to extend its influence. Leflaive et Associés is the Domaine's négociant business and buys grapes from trusted biodynamic growers in other Côte de Beaune appellations, such as Auxey Duresses Rully. These are vinified by Pierre Vincent and the team and released under the name Domaines Leflaive - with a crucial "s" - which also encompasses the vineyards acquired by Leflaive (and farmed organically and biodynamically) around Burgundy.

Explore our selection of Domaine Leflaive wines online to add to your collection.