



François Écot (L'insolent Négoc)

Vigneron: François Écot

Location: Mailly-le-Château, Burgundy

Size of Domaine: 0.9 Ha + Négoc

Terroir: Clay, Granite & Limestone

Viticulture: Minimal Intervention (Uncertified)

François Écot is one of the original rule breakers when it comes to playing fast and loose with the conventions of French winemaking. An accordion tuner and jazz pianist who worked in bars, he learned to drink natural wine in its pre-moniker era: yet unnameable, not yet 'natural'. Frequenting Le Baratin in its early days, to spend time at the bar discovering the then-unknown producers who have since become legends of natural and biodynamic winemaking. Soon after François found himself in New York, following a love for Jazz, to discover the land of the musical giants which had influenced him since childhood. It was there that François made his decision to make his love for wine a career and it was then that he co-founded the vanguard import business (Jenny + François Selections) that would discover first French – and then European and US – natural wine for New York.

It was in 2000 that François took the inevitable leap and moved back to his family home, to follow a passion for winemaking. In his grandfather's house, in Mailly-le-Château, a village in north-eastern Burgundy which once was at the centre of one of France's largest winemaking regions. Phylloxera killed not only the vines but the industry here. François is now isolated, a single winemaker farming a small plot, resting on a slope that edges on the corner of Chablis. It is here that he has planted six varieties of indigenous grapes, Pinot Noir, Gamay, Pinot Beurot, César, Pineau d'Aunis, and Abouriou, grafted from the vines of the legendary producers Dominique Derain, Marc Pesnot, and Christian Chaussard. When the vintage allows, François vinifies one special and rare cuvée from this parcel in his small garage-like vat room that was a stone barn in another life. Here he uses a combination of oak, concrete, and amphora to create his magic.

Out of necessity, with such a small plot of his own, François has always had a focus on his négociant winemaking. A project produced under the name L'insolent, which accurately describes his attitude towards his cellar work, where he throws aside the traditional Burgundian winemaking techniques and often even the grapes that Burgundy is known for.