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Barbara Banke

EXPANDING AN
EMPIRE AT JACKSON
FAMILY WINES

CALIFORNIA
CABERNET 2014
A CLASSIC YEAR
250 AT 90+

150 OUTSTANDING
GLOBAL VALUES
AT \$25 OR LESS



Three Stars of Sauvignon Blanc

THE LOIRE VALLEY'S POUILLY-FUMÉ AND SANCERRE REGIONS
HIGHLIGHT THE MANY EXPRESSIONS OF THIS WHITE VARIETY

BY EMMA BALTER

Pascal Jolivet

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Pascal Jolivet, 55, has the animated energy of someone constantly looking for a new thrill. His namesake brand celebrates its 30th anniversary this year, and the vigneron is showing no signs of slowing down.

Jolivet comes from a wine family. His grandfather Lucien and great-uncle Louis had both been *chefs de cave* at Pouilly-Fumé's Château de Tracy and created their own négociant company in 1926. The young Pascal was working at the Pommery Champagne house when his father, Jacques, suggested he take over a small négoce firm he had bought a few years before. In 1987, at age 25, Jolivet got his feet wet as an entrepreneur in the wine business.

Soon, he wanted his own vines. He built a winery in 1990 and, in 1993, bought a 15-acre vineyard in Bué, just outside Sancerre, from his cousins. He has gradually expanded over the years and now owns around 123 acres, both in Sancerre and Pouilly-Fumé.

He drew on his experience with Champagne's house-style model as he developed his vision for the Jolivet brand, starting with the regular Sancerre cuvée. "Here, we don't have three varietals and one type of soil," he says.



Pascal Jolivet

"It's the other way around: We have three types of soil and one varietal. The Jolivet Sancerre, I imagined it as finding harmony between limestone, silex and clay."

Pascal Jolivet now makes more than a dozen cuvées. The higher-end, single-vineyard bottlings showcase the various *terroirs* of both Sancerre and Pouilly-Fumé. The limestone Sancerre Les Caillottes and clay-limestone Pouilly-Fumé Terres Blanches are both from 40-year-old vines. Two unfiltered cuvées—Sancerre Sauvage from limestone soils and Pouilly-Fumé Indigène from silex—are at the top of the range. The former was the first Jolivet wine to be made organically. The estate makes two other organic wines: Le Chêne Marchand, from limestone in Sancerre, and Le Roc, from a small silex plot also in Sancerre, which is fermented in one-third cement egg and two-thirds stainless steel.

As of this year, Jolivet plans to convert the entire single-vineyard range to organic winemaking, a continuation of his founding philosophy. From the beginning, he has strongly believed in indigenous yeasts, long natural fermentations and minimal amounts of sulfur. The wines age one year on the lees, none of it in oak, and none of the wines go through fining.

Looking around the winery, gravity-operated from sorting to bottling, one will find a cement egg here, an amphora *cuve* there. Jolivet is also in the early stages of trials with biodynamics.

A new face at the estate indulges him in his thirst for experimentation. In 2013, Jolivet's longtime enologist quit suddenly, two months before harvest. Jolivet recalls saying to him, "OK, but you have to help me find someone, and they need to be better than you. And I'm not going to be around forever, so they need to be better than me too." Valentina Buoso, 31, proved to be a perfect match. She had experience in Chile, Australia, New Zealand, Mendocino and Oregon and had completed a thesis on indigenous yeast. She has been with the domaine ever since.