

THE EXPRESSION OF
THE BIODIVERSITY
FOUND IN THE
LOUIS ROEDERER
VINEYARDS

GUTNER . SOLAR PANEL SERIES



“In the 21st century, the battle is for Nature: respect for the land has never been so vital. It means lending the vine greater resilience, recreating as much diversity as possible, enriching the ecosystem with different species and charting our own course. This quest for a thriving ecosystem and a desire to raise awareness of its beauty led us to the work of Jean-Charles Gutner, who has captured the essence of this renaissance in his photographs.”

—
Jean-Baptiste Lécaillon, Cellar Master





From diversity comes great wealth - a wealth of flavours and tastes, a wealth of expressions, profiles and sensibilities. For over 20 years, Louis Roederer has been working to preserve the diversity of its plant heritage, conserving its genetic variations and thereby the singularity of a unique taste that is part of its champagnes' identity.

Constantly seeking the most accurate expression of its terroirs, Louis Roederer started using sustainable and responsible agronomic practices back in the early 2000s.

As Nature is continually adapting in response to changes in the climate, Louis Roederer created a conservation scheme for its plant heritage, the only one of its kind in France. By monitoring and then selecting the most resilient vines, the Champagne House is continuing the thread of an adaptation process that has been ongoing for hundreds of years.

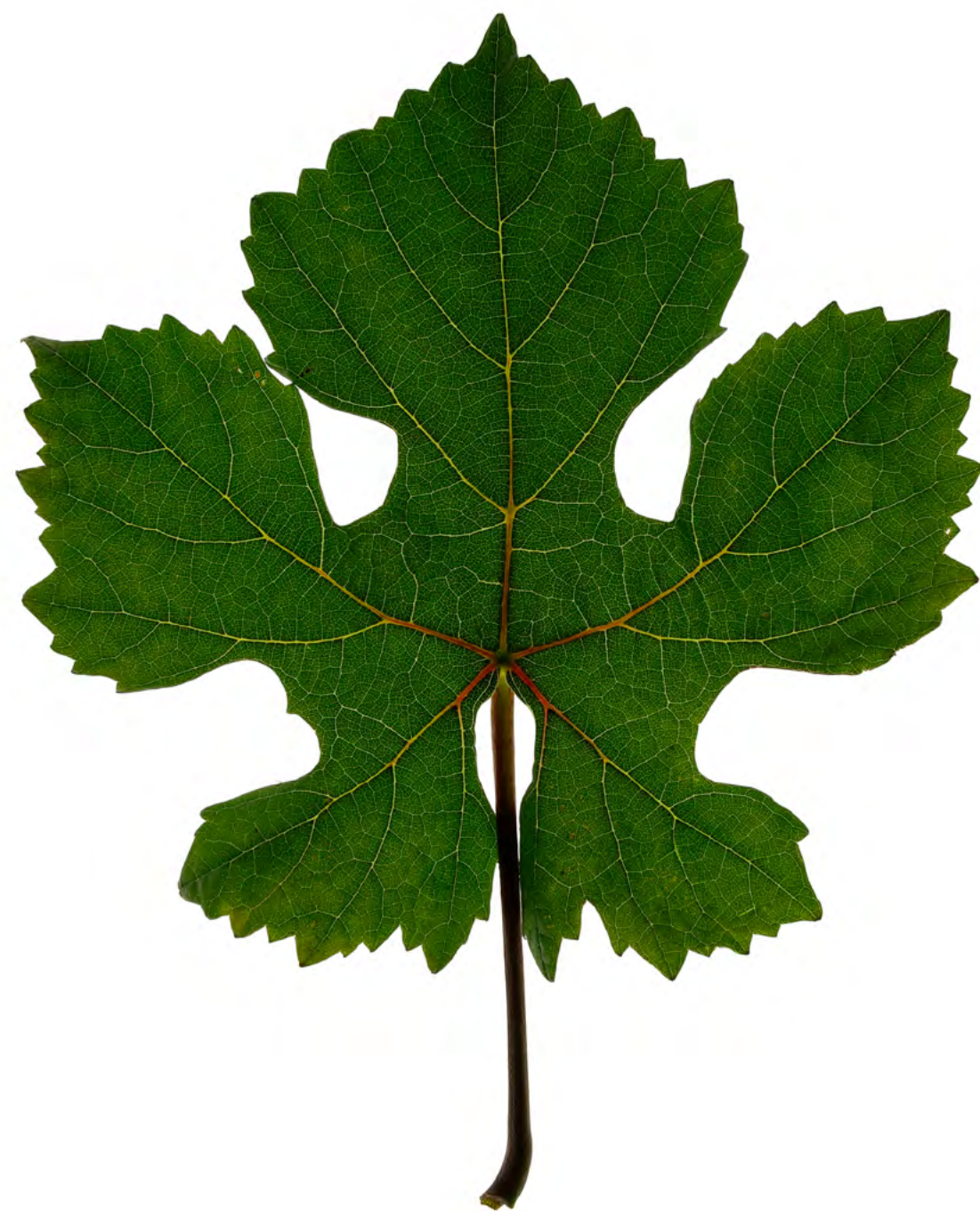


It is precisely this history of an ecosystem that Jean-Charles Gutner's Solar Panel photographic collection captures. It was initiated in 2015 from his sketchbooks as a general ampelographic inventory recording the variations of the same plant, duplicated not identically, but thriving in its widest genetic diversity.

After being exhibited at the Grand Palais Éphémère, these photographs, set against a white background, without any cropping or retouching, and printed on a very special Korean paper (Hanji), are now the subject, of a unique hand-crafted work that expresses this ineffable link between sky and land.



Highlighting the beauty
of the ecosystem
and the plant heritage



Pinot noir - Aÿ

*15 La Côte du Moulin 81
Sélectionné en 2002*

Jean-Charles Gutner's work is the visual expression of the diversity of plant heritage found in the Louis Roederer vineyards, illustrating the variations in leaf shapes and colours, in the style of an ampelographic catalogue or herbarium. The collaboration between the photographer and Louis Roederer was founded on a shared vision, that of placing Nature at the centre of the work. Jean-Charles Gutner started exploring the vineyards in 2015 seeking to capture the most striking matrix, the spring foliage shielding the future grapes.

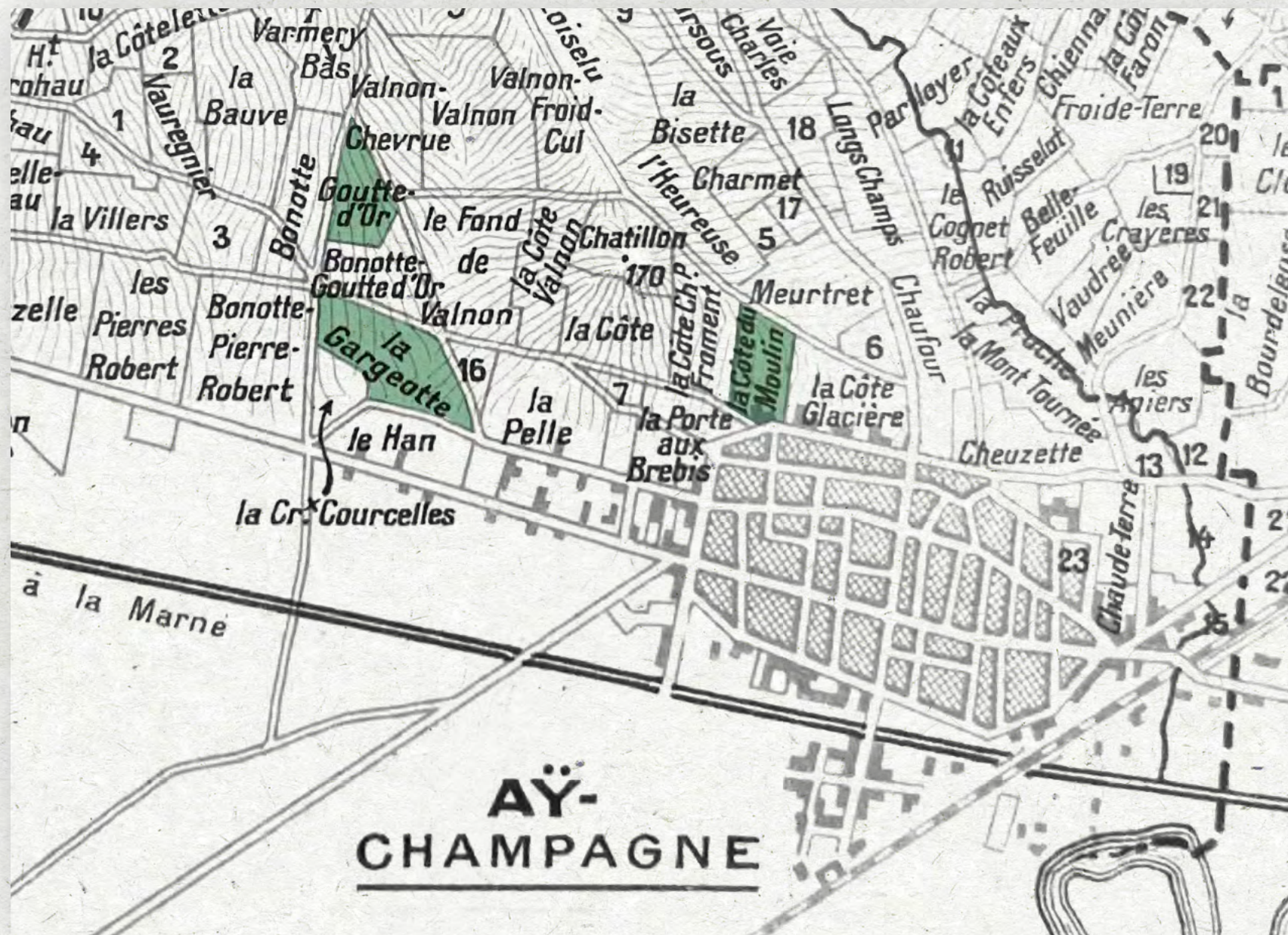
Solar Panel, a photographic work exploring the diversity of the ecosystem and its hidden beauty, was derived from this personal collection. Biodiversity has been at work in the Louis Roederer vineyards for over two decades, ensuring the preservation of an ancestral natural legacy.



To respect the living ecosystem, Louis Roederer lends Nature a gentle hand, using the most respectful practices possible. These practices include the preservation of the vines' genetic diversity through massal selection, the growing of rootstocks - the base plant that receives the vine graft - on the Louis Roederer Estates (a nurseryman's job in its own right!), pruning that respects the sap flow, maintenance of hedgerows and low walls, introduction of beehives, the presence of fruit trees (old varieties of peach, pear and apple trees), rotation of vineyards and fallow land, and the preservation of the vineyard plots as if they were a precious geological mosaic.

It is these elements of the ecosystem that have been captured in Jean-Charles Gutner's work. He photographed the Louis Roederer vines and revealed the beauty hidden beneath the vigorous and variegated spring foliage.

Aÿ



Pinot noir - Aÿ
36 Gargeotte 192
Sélectionné en 2002



Pinot noir - Aÿ
25 Gargeotte 192
Sélectionné en 2002



Pinot noir - Aÿ
4 La Côte du Moulin 112
Sélectionné en 2002



Pinot noir - Aÿ
15 La Côte du Moulin 81
Sélectionné en 2002



Pinot noir - Aÿ
69 La Goutte d'Or 43
Sélectionné en 2002



Pinot noir - Aÿ
15 La Goutte d'Or 274
Sélectionné en 2002

BEAUMONT-SUR-VESLE



Pinot noir - Beaumont-sur-Vesle

*4 La Voie des Vignes 193
Sélectionné en 2003*



Pinot noir - Beaumont-sur-Vesle

*110 La Voie des Vignes 372
Sélectionné en 2003*



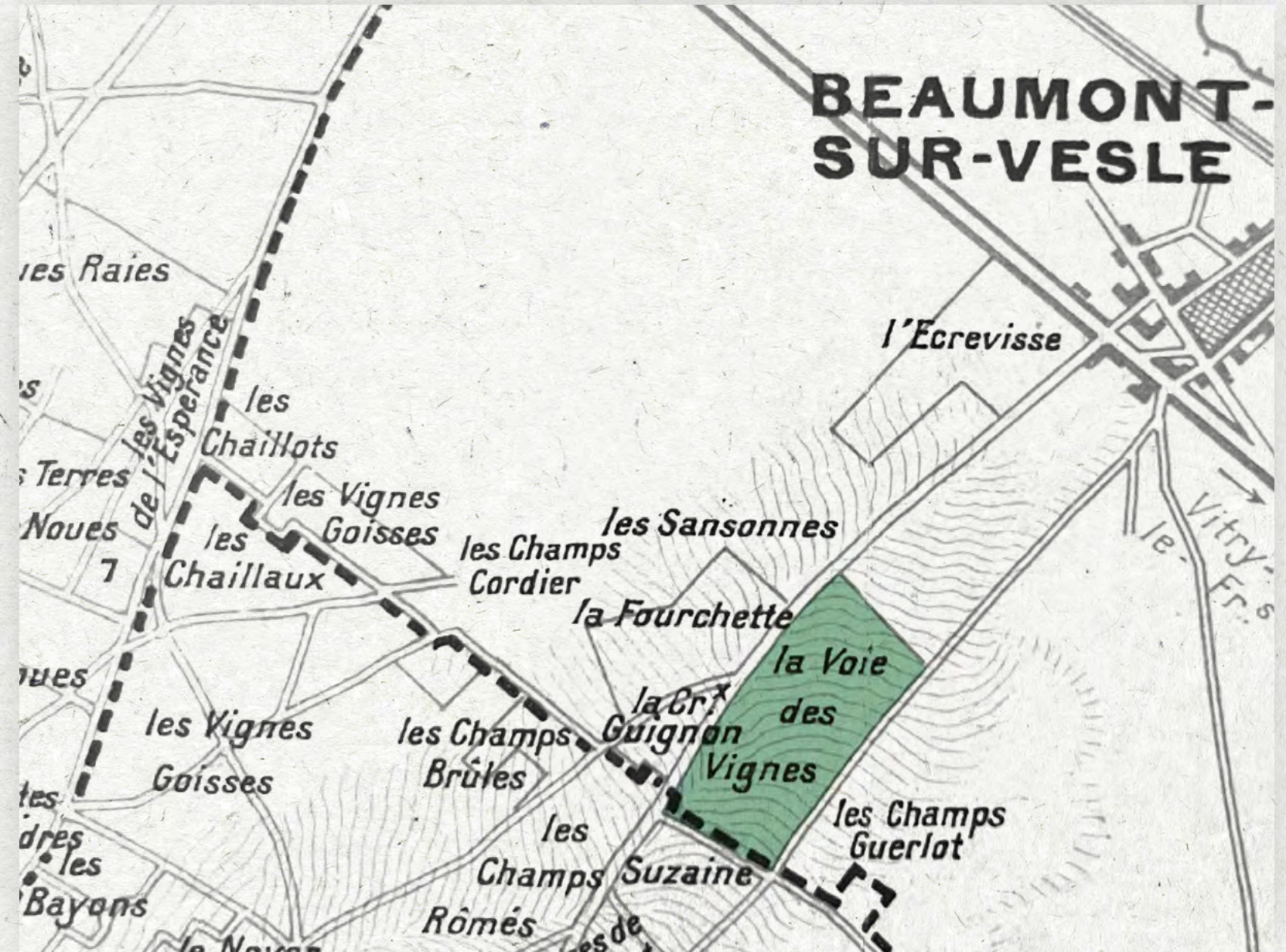
Pinot noir - Beaumont-sur-Vesle

*110 La Voie des Vignes 52
Sélectionné en 2003*

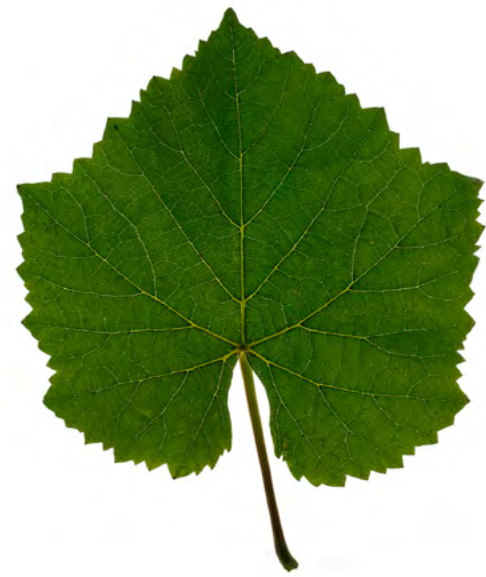


Pinot noir - Beaumont-sur-Vesle

*106 La Voie des Vignes 371
Sélectionné en 2003*



An ampelographic inventory.



This work, which began several years ago when Jean-Charles Gutner first started exploring the vineyards ("this linear space in which man intervenes"), was then continued in an unprecedented aesthetic quest that included sketches and drawings of fruit and foliage and photographic snaps taken on the fly, in the moment of truth. "After a long, careful observation, the subject emerges of its own accord, in the vineyard, on the vine".

An admirer of the work of the Louis Roederer Champagne House and its way of communicating its fascination and attentiveness to Nature, Jean-Charles Gutner met with Jean-Baptiste Lécaillon. Their conversations led to this intimist project in which the photographer would explore the heart of the Louis Roederer Estates in order to reveal the vine in all its genetic diversity.



A very special Korean "Hanji" paper.

Naturally, an appropriate medium was needed to set off these remarkable photographs. South Korea is traditionally renowned for its exceptional paper-making, an art it has cultivated since the 7th century. One family still possesses this unique savoir-faire and grows mulberry trees whose inner bark it harvests to create the paper. Spring water and hollyhocks growing on the property are the other natural ingredients used in the crafting of this handmade paper, which is only produced once a year. Like the creation of fine wine, this is an art form that follows the cycles of Nature and the rhythm of the seasons.

This "Hanji" paper is the work of a Master paper-maker and is officially listed as a national treasure at the Blue House, the former official residence and executive office of the President of South

Korea. The Louvre Museum added it to its stocks of papers three years ago and uses it solely for the preservation and maintenance of highly valuable works of art (notably drawings by Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael or Dürer).

Jean-Charles Gutner supports the work of the Korean association "Mirae Hanji" dedicated to safeguarding the tradition and ancestral know-how associated with the crafting of this paper.

However, due to its light fibres, this exceptional paper is not ideal for the printing of photographs. To print these photographs while preserving the delicate nature of the paper, a special reproduction process had to be developed in collaboration with the Master paper-maker and specialists in photographic printing.



All the prints were then cut again with water - and by hand - in order not to damage the fibres. This cream-coloured 100% natural Hanji paper now records the elements of the living ecosystem in a series of original prints.

The long and careful work of Nature.

This project was based on many long months of reflection, observation, careful and thoughtful execution, as well as transmission. Solar Panel is a reference to Nature but also to eloquence through the use of Korean paper as its medium. It is also a work that is performed only once a year, in the spring for the photography of the vine and in the winter for the crafting of the paper.

This work is a living memory of the Champagne region and inspires our daily reflection, encouraging us to continue along the course we have set ourselves.



The genesis: the quest
for a thriving ecosystem,
by Louis Roederer





Nature-friendly winegrowing practices have always been important at Louis Roederer. At the end of the 1990s, the Champagne House therefore initiated a review of the future direction of its viticulture, which was led by the Rouzaud family and Jean-Baptiste Lécaillon. The regeneration of the soils with the discontinuation of chemical inputs soon led them to question the quality and longevity of the plant material used. The conclusion they reached then still holds true today: the lesser the genetic diversity, the poorer the expression of the wines. Conversely, the more numerous the genetic variations from one plant to another, the more powerful and subtly the resulting wines will reflect the nuances of their terroirs.

The preservation of this jewel, this diverse and outstanding genetic heritage, has been Louis Roederer's battle cry for over 20 years because the domesticated vine is suffering and becoming impoverished, losing its original genetic diversity due to a very limited selection.



To counter this impoverishment of the vine, Louis Roederer embarked on a wide-ranging research and application project, backed up by its many years of observation and the creation of an experimental vineyard on the Bouleuse site, 20 km from Reims, in the Marne department.

“We had to regenerate the plant material and recover some of the singularity of our style through massal selection,” says Jean-Baptiste Lécaillon.

Louis Roederer has been going about this in a very straightforward way since the end of the 1990s, making its own vineyards the bedrock of both its strategy and action plan. The old pre-clonal vines growing in Domaine Cristal, planted before the 1960s, offered the ideal material; the most interesting and healthy vines, those that ripened best and produced the finest grapes, were therefore selected.



The vine conservatory,
a unique genetic
diversity



Preservation of the plant heritage and replanting.

2000 / 1st phase

Cuttings from those vines on Domaine Cristal that appeared to be the most promising in terms of resistance and quality, were replanted in four propagation conservatories (two in the commune of Aÿ, one in Verzenay and the last in the Côte des Blancs). The vines were primarily Pinots noirs, from the terroirs of Aÿ and near Verzy, along with a few Chardonnays from the Côte des Blancs, particularly Avize. This work was carried out in the early 2000s and showed the incredible diversity at work in these vines, visible from the morphological diversity of the leaves, all with very different shapes.

Selection for the collection.

2010 / 2nd phase

From 2010 onwards, a selection of the healthiest young vines, monitored over four years, was carried out. The Bouleuse Collection was then created to accommodate these vines, planted row by row in a protected area, away from the crops, in the Vallée de l'Ardree.



Structuring the collection.

2015 / 3rd phase

In 2015, the collection was finally structured and closed off, protected from spring frosts and bad weather. Today, it includes 112 healthy vines (105 Pinot noir, 5 Meunier and 8 Chardonnay). A conservatory for the other Champagne varieties - Arbanne, Petit Meslier, Pinot blanc and Pinot gris - was started at the same time. This will enable the replantation of the AOC's 7 traditional grape varieties destined for the future Brut Nature cuvées in Cumières.

To preserve and maintain as much genetic diversity as possible, this same work is now being carried out on the rootstocks, the base plant on which the vine will be grafted. These rootstocks are also grown on the Bouleuse site, on 2 hectares of land. Here you will see plantations of vines growing horizontally, trained on "tables" and along long wires. These are phylloxera-resistant rootstocks, which grow in this manner while acclimatising to the Champagne terroir. The wood is harvested in February, cut into sections and then English grafts are produced, in the autumn. It takes a year to create a new vine in this way; a long, tedious process which results in an exceptional quality plant.

Tomorrow,
an entire ecosystem...
“In vinifera æternitas”



"Our work on biodiversity began nearly three decades ago; it continues to make progress and guide our future viticulture to ensure our vines will still be here in 60 years' time. In 30 years, the entirety of the Louis Roederer vineyards will therefore be planted with vines selected entirely by us from our own nursery." Nobody else in the Champagne region is doing this.

*"We must reconnect with our roots, trust in the longevity of our *Vitis vinifera*, and continue writing our story by helping the vine to develop this amazing diversity, which creates nuances and complexity in the wines" explains Jean-Baptiste Lécaillon.*

Some grape varieties have survived a thousand years of climate variations and different types of cultivation: on each occasion, the vine has been able to adapt to its environment. It is this natural resilience that we must foster and preserve. "We must do everything we can to ensure that the vines are as resistant as possible, to encourage this genetic diversity as much as possible and enrich the ecosystem with different typicalities and sensibilities."



The ultimate quest, the purpose of all this work is almost a spiritual quest; "the crusade is in the name of taste". This gentle viticulture is just one way of obtaining it, the most obvious and the most respectful too. "We have to look back at our history, draw on our past and reconnect with the vines that have survived a thousand years of climate variations."

Louis Roederer is thus charting its own course, drawing inspiration from the past with a view to the future. "I want to do even better tomorrow," confides Jean-Baptiste Lécaillon. "The preservation of our historical plant heritage gives us special hope, all the beauty of the ecosystem, its mystery and the diversity of flavours." It is these unique traits that can be found throughout Jean-Charles Gutner's work and offer us great hopes for the future.





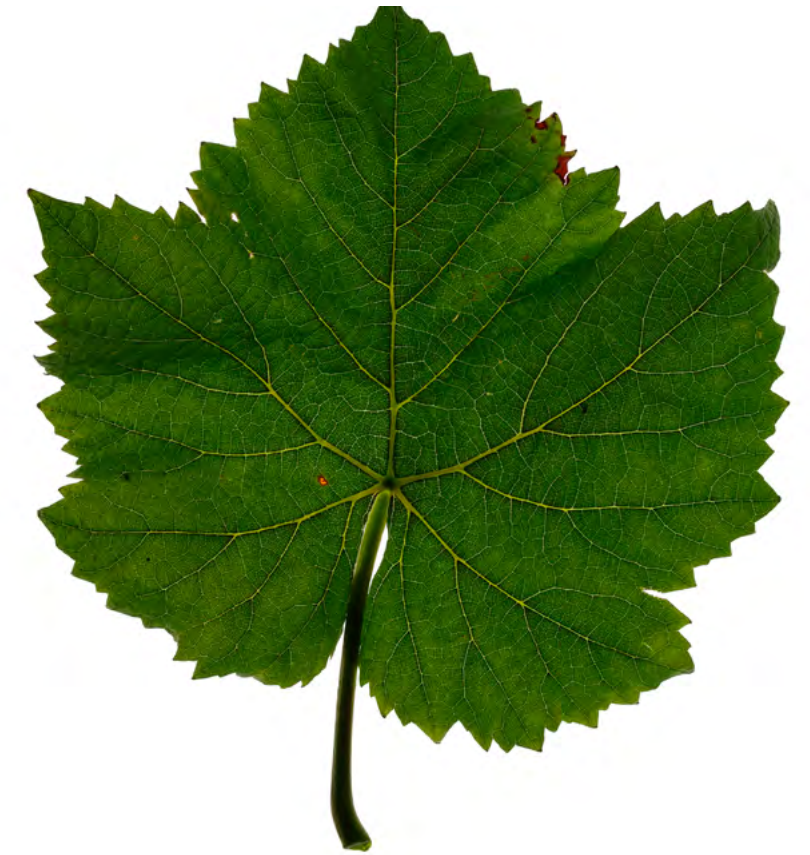
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Pinot noir - Aÿ
15 La Côte du Moulin 81
Sélectionné en 2002



Pinot noir - Aÿ
69 La Goutte d'Or 43
Sélectionné en 2002

Glossary

CLONAL SELECTION

Identical reproduction of a vine plant from a single strain, chosen for its health traits, such as resistance to disease, as well as its genetic potential. It is a cutting: the "daughter" plant is identical to the "mother" plant.

MASSAL SELECTION

Selection of vine stocks with a diverse genetic potential from a diversified population, from which a shoot (graft) is taken and grafted onto a rootstock.

GRAFT

Vine shoot that will bear fruit and that is grafted onto the rootstock.

ENGLISH GRAFT

Cleft grafting by juxtaposition which consists of attaching the graft to the rootstock by means of a bevelled cut.

HANJI PAPER

Generic name for Korean paper, produced once a year and officially a National Treasure in South Korea.

Our Hanji paper is the result of a craft process that had to be specially adapted for Jean-Charles Gutner's work.

ROOTSTOCK

The base plant on which the graft is planted. The rootstock is planted in the ground, left to take root and then the vine that will bear fruit is grafted onto it (since Phylloxera, American rootstocks have been used as they do not carry disease).

MOTHER VINE

A mother vine of rootstocks produces the wood that will be used for grafting.

CUTTING

Propagation of a plant by taking part of the plant and replanting it in the earth; this piece of the mother plant is therefore a clone which in turn produces roots and grows.



Photos credits :

Louis Roederer / Gutner

Louis Roederer / Eric Zeziola

Louis Roederer / Emmanuel & Quentin

Louis Roederer / Marie Flament

Champagne Louis Roederer (CLR) — A limited company ('société anonyme') with a capital of €3,672,000 — N.M. 291-001 - RCS Reims B 335 681 169 00017

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Please drink responsibly.