

## ERIC CHEVALIER CARDINAL CABERNET FRANC 2020/\$21.99



### DESCRIPTION

Éric Chevalier is a rising star in the Pays Nantais of the Loire Valley. For ten years, he sourced fruit for a large *négociant* in the Touraine. In 2005, he decided to return to his hometown of Saint-Philbert de Grandlieu, just southwest of Nantes, and ended up taking over the family domaine the next year. His father, a talented *vigneron* who did not bottle much of his wines and was well-known as a high-quality source of bulk wine, had stopped working the vineyards and the vines were either going to have to be pulled up and replanted, or sold. Éric was anything but enthusiastic. Little by little his passion grew, and today he is proud to be the fourth generation to farm the domaine. As of 2020, the domaine is certified organic—a rare feat in a region known better for intensive farming and the pursuit of high yields over quality. He is also proud to be bottling all of the family's production himself. Éric farms thirty hectares of vines, producing wines of great character and finesse that offer tremendous value. He found his future in his family's past.

The Nantais is a maritime climate, and the vineyards are not far from the Atlantic Ocean. Consequently, there is an interesting variety of sedimentary, igneous, and metamorphic rocks, as this area once was ocean floor. Of the twenty-five hectares he farms, a large percentage of his production is dedicated to the production of Melon de Bourgogne (Muscadet Côtes de Grand Lieu, mostly from old vines in the superb *lieu-dit* of *La Butte*). The soils here are comprised primarily of serpentinite and quartz, with the exception of his ancient granite parcel known as *La Noë*. The other half of his crop (Chardonnay, Fié Gris, and Pinot Noir, among others) goes towards the production of Vin de Pays du Val du Loire, and the soils are rich in granite, sand, and silt. Of these "country" wines, the most notable is Éric's Fié Gris. This grape, pulled out of vineyards for many years to be replaced with the more profitable

Sauvignon Blanc, is indigenous to the Loire. Also known as Sauvignon Rose or Sauvignon Gris, Éric's vines are one of the few remaining strongholds of this elegant and luscious varietal. It makes an impression, with almost an Alsatian exoticism.

### **ERIC CHEVALIER CARDINAL CABERNET FRANC 2020**

This wine is 100% Cabernet Franc grapes grown on 25 years old and 10 years young vines. It grows on a site that is 1.5 hectares (\* "ha"=hectares; one hectare equals roughly two and a half acres) of soil consisting of metamorphic rock. The grapes are slowly and gently crushed by pneumatic press and the juice is transferred underground into glass-lined *cuves* or stainless steel tanks. It undergoes natural fermentation by indigenous yeasts. The wine then ages on the lees for 8-10 months, and lees are stirred regularly.

### **Tasting Notes**

#### **Nose:**

This wine possesses classic notes of herbs & green pepper.

#### **Palate:**

This wine displays notes of red plum, strawberry, crushed gravel and roasted pepper.

#### **Pairing:**

Depending on the style of Cabernet Franc, you can have a wide range of pairing opportunities. The lighter bodied styles from the Loire Valley are great with goat's cheeses, eggplant parmesana, tomato based dishes and light meats, like chicken or turkey.

The fuller bodied styles from Bordeaux and Italy work well with roasted meats such as roasted lamb, wild game, and even works well with rich lentil stews.

The herbaceous nature of Cabernet Franc means it works well with dishes that have fresh herbs too.

**Winery Website:** [Domaine Eric Chevalier - Winemaker in Pays de Retz - 44 \(chevaliervigneron.com\)](http://chevaliervigneron.com)

### **Fun Facts**

Did you know that Cabernet Sauvignon is the child of Cabernet Franc and Sauvignon Blanc? It's true. In the mid-1600s, in the Bordeaux region of France, the red grape Cabernet Franc and the white grape Sauvignon Blanc were crossed to form Cabernet Sauvignon. It's interesting that the red child grape (and wine) is far more popular than the red parent grape (and wine). Perhaps the difference in popularity is due to the fact that Cabernet Sauvignon is bigger and bolder than Cabernet Franc.

Cab Franc is a parent grape of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Carménère and gives them a hint of mint or green bell pepper. It can be lighter or bolder depending on where it's grown.

# Pays Nantais A.O.P., Loire Valley, France

