

**Didier Dagueneau**  
**Translated in part from Vallée de la Loire – Grandeur Nature**  
**by James Turnbull**

**A young rebel with convictions.**

Dagueneau owes his success to the strength of his convictions. A local winemaker's son, he set out on his own in 1982. He began using oak barrels for his vinifications a couple years later and wines of great quality were not far behind. Certain traditionalists, however, said that his wines were not “real” Pouilly Fumé.

Dagueneau's non-conformity has helped him more than hurt him: his long tousled hair, his bushy beard, his intense gaze, not to mention his passion for sled dogs have all earned him the nickname “the madman of Saint-Andelain” and made him very popular with the press.

**Authenticiy and perfection**

What does Dagueneau have that the other don't? He is extremely meticulous and possesses a special intuition where winemaking is concerned. His goals are always authenticity and perfection. To obtain grapes of the highest quality, his vineyard workers spend at least three months carefully de-budding even after a severe pruning earlier in the year. And when the grapes are perfectly ripe, the harvest is done by hand, so that only grapes of impeccable condition are picked, the others are either thrown out or left on the vine to be picked later.

His new winemaking facilities, specifically adapted to Dagueneau's techniques, use gravity for moving liquids and allow him to apply his ideas without the slightest compromise. After fermentation, the wines are aged in a beautiful cellar containing big barrels and “cigares” (small, long oval barrels made especially for him). The cellar is kept quite cool to limit interaction between

the wine and the oak, thus avoiding an overly oaky aroma in the wine.

### **Pouilly Fumé Silex**

No other wine born of silex soil has the firm and austere authority of Dagueneau's; an intense and smoky character with a wonderful richness, perfect balance and an impressive persistence. Though very disciplined, it bewitches the palate with its innate charm and the quality of the original material shows through immediately. The magnificent Silex is more than probably capable of improving with age for 20 years or so while at the same time being totally irresistible when young.

**Pouilly Fumé Buisson Renard** is from a single vineyard named Buisson Menard. The name changed after Michel Bettane misprinted it and Dagueneau liked the new name "Fox Bush".

**Pouilly Fumé Pur Sang** is a creamier hedonistic Sauvignon often on par with the Silex, but less mineral driven.