

# GOOD AS GOLD

DOMINIQUE GIROUD SHARES  
WITH JEN SHEK VOON THE  
SECRET OF HIS AWARD-WINNING  
GIROUD VINS WINES

**D**ominique Giroud is a member of the fourth-generation Giroud family, who founded Giroud Vins. Its history goes back to the early 20th century when his great-great-grandfather embarked on viticulture in Chamoson. Giroud partnered his father, Francois, to continue the family winemaking legacy in the management of 60ha (45ha owned and 15ha on rentals) of vineyards.

Giroud Vins won the special Vintality Nation 2010 prize awarded to producers from countries with at least 14 entries and received the highest score according to the sum of the assessments related to their best three Giroud wines (Arabesque, La Danse des Etoiles and Constellation). It is one of five wineries worldwide to get the Special Mention diploma. Not a first-time win, Giroud Vins was awarded Best Swiss Winery in 2004. The Fendant de Chamoson and the Petite Arvine de Chamoson wines both received Grand Mentions and Giroud Vins' wines have been receiving Grand Mentions every year to to the 2010 Special Mention award.

"We always had good winemakers," says Giroud when asked about the recipe for success. And he gives the greatest credit to Philippe Corthay, a professor at the Agroscope Changins-Wädenswil research station (ACW) in Switzerland, for raising the standards at his winery. "Other factors which contributed to the Special Mention diploma were the opening of the new cellars in 2008, development of the production process in its spacious premises using the latest technology (monitoring temperatures of fermentation, soft pneumatic presses to gently macerate the grapes without injury to the skin of the marc, thus avoiding extracting astringency), coupled with the timing and special selection of grapes from the different parcels of vineyards," Giroud adds.

It is the first vineyard in Switzerland to use a new technology, the QR Code. "It is a two-dimensional barcode, which enables users to download a free Giroud application via their mobile phone, and to access digital content on Giroud Vins QR Code on its labels, simply by photographing it. Thus, all bottles of Giroud Vins are now equipped with a built-in intelligence," explains Giroud.

Using grape varieties native to Valais, the Petite Arvine and Humagne Blanche is pivotal to the wine brand's success. The reputation of Petite Arvine is so awesome that others have tried to grow it outside of Valais but failed. Due to its low yield and susceptibility to disease, the Humagne Blanche has almost completely disappeared in the 20th century. Giroud Vins uses cloned Selection Valais and rootstocks 5Bb and 3309.

Today, Giroud has created a magnificent ode to viticulture in Valais. His new cellars at Zion, designed by architect Hansruedi von Rickenbach, features the most beautiful art, and, its walls and vaults of the wine cellars reflect ballet dancing in the glass. Seeing is believing! ▣

