

Stirring the Lees
Domaine Georges Michel

Georges Michel: Here we have our Chardonnay Reserve in French oak barrels. And we are using a kind of rack which allows the barrel to rotate on -- on themselves. so why do we want to be able to turn the barrels? It's to do what we call the lees stirring. After their -- the normal fermentation, the alcoholic fermentation, the wine is kept in barrel, and it's kept on what we call fine lees. And the fine lees are ... stay at the bottom of the barrel. But to put them in suspension on the sort of regular base like every week or so, we have -- we used to open the top of the barrel and then use a -- a wooden stick or -- or a stainless stick and put the lees in suspension that's scratching the barrel. But with this system, you can just rotate the barrel and have these lees coming into suspension into a very even job, and that brings ... doing that on sort of regular base gives -- gives the wine a lot of complexity, a lot of texture and a lot of aging potential.

You'll see the cloud of fine lees going. So you can see the lees now are going down very evenly. And we do that once a week, and by gravity all the lees on the top here in half an hour will be right here. And these fine lees give the texture. You see here the cloud of lees coming up again? And that -- that the best lees-stirring system that you could find today, and now the barrel is getting dark because the lees are just moving around.

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