



Rodolphe Raffault reports that he started picking his Cabernet Franc grapes destined for the 2016 Chinon Rosé on October 1. This was about the same time as the 2014, but the current vintage has greater concentration due to a higher level of maturity and lower quantity of juice in the grapes.

Veraison occurred in mid-August but ripening was still advancing too slowly for the season. Sun and warmth returned in the first week of September, setting the stage for an excellent last 6 weeks of the growing season, even with a rainy period mid-month.

J-M Raffault's Chinon Rosé is considered the finest of the Loire Valley. It is made from Cabernet Franc grapes planted on alluvial sand and gravel soils on the former Loire river bed. Raffault picks the fruit dedicated to the Rosé at the start of his harvest period, when it typically has attained one degree less in sugar than that of the Chinon Les Galuches, which is picked next. All the fruit is selected on a sorting table before entering the press by gravity, and is never pumped. To enhance the quality of the Rosé Raffault uses only pressed juice that is selected and vinified parcel by parcel. To ensure that the juice is as pure as possible, Raffault uses minimal pressure and fanatically avoids any possibility of oxygenation. And he uses only the juice obtained at the middle stage of the pressing, eliminating the first and last parts because they are not as pure. One day after the pressing, Raffault thoroughly clarifies the must (*débourbage*) to remove any solids that might diminish the wine's aromatics and taste.

Raffault ferments the Chinon Rosé at low, controlled temperatures (15-17 C) using only the grapes' native yeast until it is fully dry. The constant, cool temperature maintains the wine's natural CO₂ level, one of the keys to the Rosé's vivacity. The low temperature also prevents the start of malolactic fermentation as the Chinon Rosé develops on its fine lees in tank for 5 months. Before bottling in early February, the wine is racked to diminish the level of CO₂, and then lightly filtered to ensure clarity. The J-M Raffault 2016 Chinon Rosé has a brilliant, light