CHAMPAGNE SELECTIONS SUMMER 2015

12.8

# CHAMPAGNE selections

for SUMMER ENTERTAINING and THE CELLAR too

The tide has recently changed in Champagne, just as it did in Burgundy in the 1930s when growers Marquis d'Angerville and Armand Rousseau were pioneers to produce their own *domaine* bottled wine, rather than sell their top quality fruit to large *negociants* and *cooperatives*.

A similar change is now happening in Champagne, where the small growers (*recoltant-manipulants*) handcraft their limited quantities from individual villages and parcels where the inherent qualities of the vineyards imprint themselves into the wines.

There is an artisanal culture that is fascinating and distinctive.

Through the growers you can gain a different perspective on the wines of Champagne, based on the land and the vines they know so well, to which they devote themselves. Their wines have character and they describe them beautifully, evoking the distinction of each *cru*.

Here the philosophy of wine production is to express the nuances in the *terroir*.

We've chosen a selection of our favorite grower Champagnes some of the most exciting and innovative producers in the region.



The wines are suave and refined, with a soft mineral character to the fruit. Silky and stylish, rather than vigorous and racy. Oldvine concentration.

The Gimonnet family has been cultivating vines in Cuis, in the famous Cotes des Blancs, since 1750, although for many years they sold their fruit to the *grandes maisons*. It was not until 1935 that Pierre Gimonnet turned to vinifying the wines himself, and they began to demonstrate the character that we see in them today.

Pierre's son Michel set about creating a range of Champagnes which would typify the Gimonnet style. Recognizing the quality of the vineyards at hand, Michel raised the standard of the wines to match, and this has been continued through the next generation who continue to run the *domaine* today; son's Olivier and Didier.

They restrict themselves to working solely with fruit sourced from top vineyards, with twenty-six hectares in total, from *premier cru* vineyards in Cuis and *grand cru* vines in Cramant and Chouilly; the majority being more than 30 years old, with many over 40 years of age.

# PIERRE GIMONNET

#### Pierre Gimonnet Blanc de Blancs Brut Cuis 1er Cru NV

24 bottles available - \$45 per bottle

The current release is primarily from the 2012 vintage; disgorged in March 2015; young, and very promising. The depth and ripeness of the vintage are evident, which makes the wine quite approachable today, but it also shows some nice complexity and could really improve with a year or two in the cellar; a fine wine in the making.

# Pierre Gimonnet Blanc de Blancs Brut Fleuron 2006

24 bottles available - \$65 per bottle

Lovely bouquet of pear, orange zest, freshly baked bread and a touch of *creme patissiere*. On the palate the wine is still fairly youthful, with a solid core of fruit and some brisk acids that provide excellent focus on length. A superb young Blanc de Blancs.

# Pierre Gimonnet Brut Paradoxe 2007

24 bottles available - \$60 per bottle

A blend of 80% Pinot Noir and 20% Chardonnay. Apple, pear, fresh nutmeg, an exotic touch of clove, brioche, and just a faint whisper of oak. Deep and full-bodied, with brisk acids, great focus and grip. A couple of years in the cellar, and this will be a gorgeous bottle once it fully blossoms.

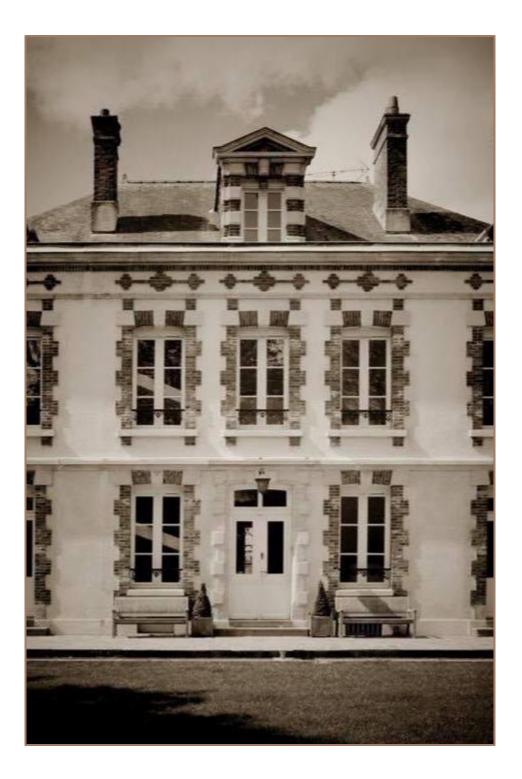
# Pierre Gimonnet Blanc de Blancs Extra-Brut Oenophile 2008

24 bottles available - \$70 per bottle

A young and absolutely beautiful wine in the making, with a deep bouquet of apple, tangerine, some smokiness and a complex base of soil tones. Pure, focused and full-bodied, with great depth at the core and a very elegant mousse; crisp acids and a very long, refined finish.

|    | GRANDS VINS DE CHAMPAGNE  |
|----|---|
| P  | IASSING, Propriétaire   |
|    | à AY (Marne)  |
|    | Prix-Courant  |
| G  | rand Ay extra<br>Cuvée réservée 93 6 fr.  |
| ŀ  | y Grand Mousseux  |
| F  | Y Grand Mousseux  |
| A  | y Grand Mousseux  |
| ŀ  | Ay Grand Mousseux   |
| FF | A partir de 25 bouteilles<br>A partir de 25 bouteilles<br>AIS DE TRANSPORT, RÉGIE ET DROITS D'ENTRÉE<br>à la charge de l'expéditeur |
|    | PRIX SPÉCIAUX POUR LE COMMERCE DE GROS  |
|    | Vins en Cercle<br>et Eaux-de-Vie de Marc de Champagne   |

ch 90.



Focused and refined, Chiquet's wines combine a generous depth of fruit with a pronounced character of place. Chiseled and articulate. Precise, and careful personality.

From vines first planted in 1746, brothers Fernand and Gaston Chiquet founded their own Champagne house in 1919 – the first winemakers to take the bold initiative to keep the grapes rather than selling to one of the *grandes maisons*, and produce their own wine.

By the 1950s, Gaston and his son Claude extended the *domaine's* holdings into Ay and Hautvillers, and today it is the current generation of Antoine and Nicolas who maintain the quality standards of the family's heritage and tradition.

With twenty-three hectares in the heart of the Champagne region, the vineyards are planted to Chardonnay, Pinot Meunier and Pinot Noir according to each individual site, with an average vine age of 27 years.

Nicolas does not employ any oak aging; rather he believes that concentration, fruit maturity and malolactic fermentation impart enough body and texture to the wines, which are refined and elegant.

# GASTON CHIQUET

# Gaston Chiquet Brut Tradition 1er Cru NV

24 bottles available - \$45 per bottle

The current release is a blend of 45% Pinot Meunier, 35% Chardonnay and 20% Pinot Noir from the base year of 2010. Baked apples and hazelnut aromas, with notes of lavender and wheat bread.

# Gaston Chiquet Brut Rose NV

24 bottles available - \$50 per bottle

The bouquet on the new release is bright and lifted, with mix of cherries, pomegranate and rose petals. Deep, full-bodied and still quite youthful, with a refined mousse and excellent grip on the lengthy finish. This is primarily 2010 base wine, and it needs a bit of time to blossom, but it is going to be outstanding a year from now.

# Gaston Chiquet Blanc de Blancs d'Ay Grand Cru NV

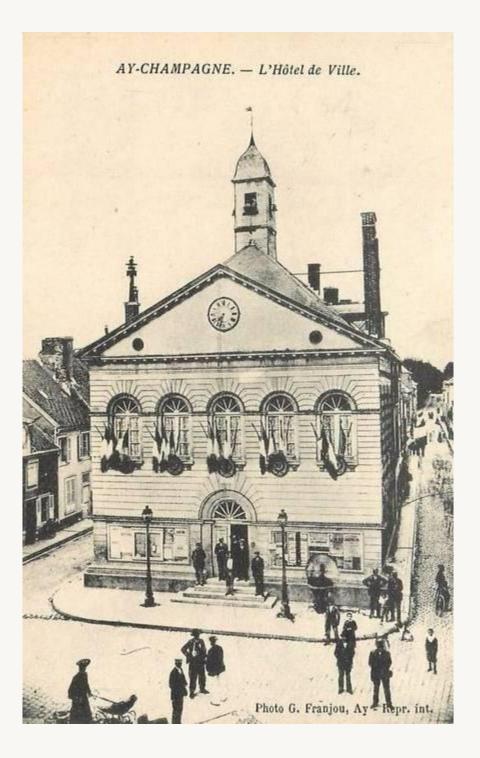
24 bottles available - \$55 per bottle

The south-facing vineyards in this village tend to produce some ripe and youthfully opulent wines, and the current release of the Blanc de Blancs d'Ay (100% Chardonnay, 2011 vintage base wine) exhibits deep aromas and flavors of lemon chiffon, pear, chalky soil tones and spring flowers. Lovely focus and complexity; makes an excellent aperitif Champagne.

# Gaston Chiquet Brut Special Club 2007

24 bottles available - \$75 per bottle

A blend of 70% Chardonnay and 30% Pinot Noir, from vineyards around the villages of Hautvillers, Dizy and Mareuil-sur-Ay. This wine spent a bit more than seven years on its lees prior to disgorgement and is superb, with a complex personality of white peach, pear, brioche and hazelnut. This is going to be lovely, but really deserves a year or two in the cellar to start to develop its secondary layers of complexity on the palate, and should age quite well.





Jean-Paul's wines marry the top Pinot Noir sites of the Vallée de la Marne with Grand Cru Chardonnay sites in the Côte des Blancs. Buoyant and lithe, with deft integrations of minerality and fruit.

Marc Hebrart has been producing wine in the Vallee de la Marne since 1964. On his retirement in 1997, his son Jean-Paul took over the estate and now farms fourteen hectares on different sites in the premier cru vineyards of Mareuil-sur-Ay, Avenay, Val d'Or and Bisseuil and the grand crus villages of Ay, Chouilly and Oiry.

Each parcel is always vinified separately in glass lined stainless steel and ceramic tanks, and is also experimenting with barrel fermentation and indigenous yeasts for some of his older vine parcels.

Hebrart's wines have a broad appeal intellectually engaging; full and generous, without being too weighty; complex and soil-driven. The entire range is of consistently high quality; a great addition to the cellar.

# Marc Hebrart Blanc de Blancs 1er Cru NV

24 bottles available - \$50 per bottle

The current release is excellent: 20% Oiry and Chouilly (*grand crus*) and 80% Mareuil fruit; a blend of vintages 2009 - 2011. Ripe and pedigreed, with aromas of pear, pastry cream, lemon zest and brioche. Pure and full-bodied, with brisk acids and an elegant mousse; long finish.

# Marc Hebrart Brut Reserve 1er Cru NV

24 bottles available - \$50 per bottle

Vibrant and complex, with a distinct Chablis-like flinty chalk aroma to compliment the baked apple and brioche tones. Crisp and focused, with a superb core of fruit. This wine definitely will want a few years in the cellar to blossom, but its constituent components are excellent. A blend of 82% Pinot Noir and 18% Chardonnay.

# Marc Hebrart Brut Rose 1er Cru NV

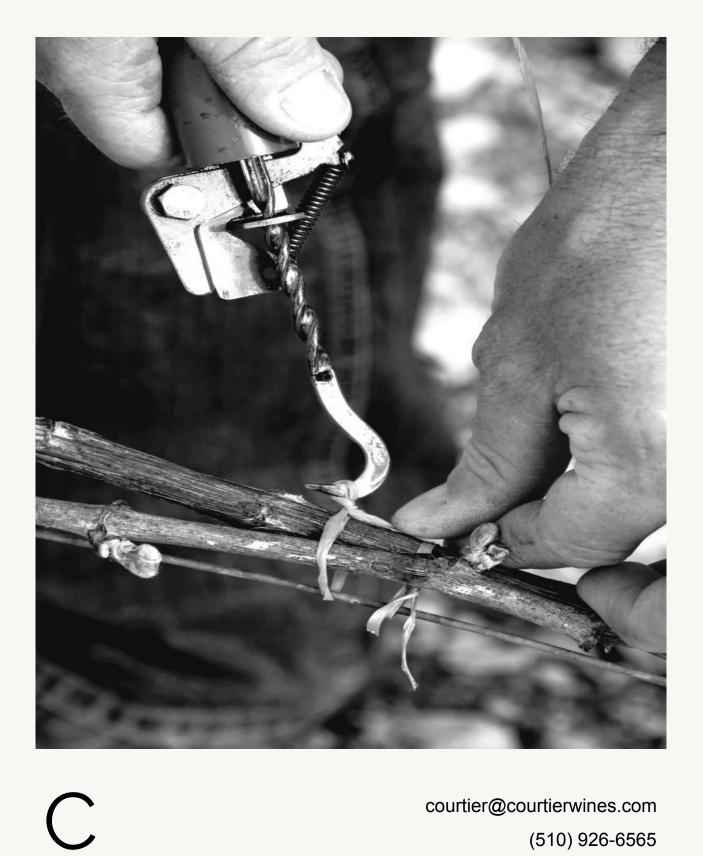
24 bottles available - \$55 per bottle

A beautiful cherry-salmon color. The wine exhibits a superb bouquet of wild strawberries, blood orange, and exotic spice tones reminiscent of saffron and lavender. On the palate the wine is focused, balanced and long on the complex finish. Already drinking well today.

## Marc Hebrart Brut Selection 1er Cru NV

24 bottles available - \$55 per bottle

A blend of 70% old-vines Pinot Noir and 30% Chardonnay; primarily 2010 vintage base wine; disgorged October 2014. This is really a beautiful wine; deep and complex nose of tangerine, fresh-baked bread and gentle smokiness. Pure and full-bodied, with a lively mousse and a refined personality; would love to see with a few years of bottle age.



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