

2006 Millésime de Collection

Champagne Gimonnet, Champagne Wine Region, France

Product details

Vintage:	2006	Drinking:	2017
Producer:	Champagne Gimonnet	Alcohol:	
Region:	Champagne Wine Region	Variety:	
Country:	France		

Tasting notes

Purity, bright vibrancy and focused definition belie this Champagne's age. This is beautifully crafted, seamless blend of apple and fig, undercut by lemon and pink grapefruit. It has a brilliant brushstroke of chalky minerals which linger on the finish. For something so delicate and nuanced, this has a remarkable character which has benefitted from its magnum bottling.

Presented in a special gift box.

About the producer

PIERRE GIMONNET CHAMPAGNE

The story of Champagne Gimonnet is, in fact, "Pierre Gimonnet et Fils... et Petits-Fils", as the grandsons of the founder, brothers Olivier and Didier Gimonnet are the custodians of this family House in the Côtes des Blancs. The Gimonnet family can be traced back to 1750 growing vines around the village of Cuis, south of Epernay, but it was between the wars that Pierre Gimonnet set up the winery that allowed him to become a grower-producer, specialising in Blanc de Blancs. Pierre Gimonnet was succeeded by his son Michel, whom his sons credit with a hard-working modesty but an obsession with quality of winemaking and a passion for the vines he spent his life walking and working between.

Olivier and Didier worked with their father for a decade until his retirement in 1996 (he died in 2008), and have continued, and improved on, his work for over 20 years. Armit Wines agreed with Olivier and Didier to become the UK importer for the House a decade ago and we are very pleased that the relationship continues to this day.

Michel's understanding of terroir led him to acquire parcels beyond Cuis and into neighbouring Cramant and Chouilly. His sons have continued this principle... expanding into Oger in 2005 and as far south as Vertus in 2008. The House now has 40 separate parcels across 28 hectares - 16ha of Premier Cru and 12ha of Grand Cru - all in the Côtes des Blancs. The one geographical limit they have set is the bounds of the Côtes des Blancs because, unlike most producers in Champagne, Gimonnet Champagne does not cover its bases style-wise. Instead, it is determined to explore the variety of expressions of Chardonnay and achieve excellence in its different characteristics.

Didier and Olivier believe, as did their father, that Chardonnay vines improve with age, among the vines owned by Gimonnet are some in Cramant more than a century old, while over half are 40 years old or more. Massale selection is used to ensure the continuation of good genes when grafting and planting new parcels. At harvest time, grapes are handpicked, traditionally pressed and then vinified in small batches, parcel by parcel, in 25 to 125 hectalitre tanks to create the Gimonnet champagne.



GIMMONET CHAMPAGNE

While Champagne Gimmonnet vinifies a spectrum of fascinating interpretations of Blanc de Blancs, it does have an identifiable House style. Its Champagnes are notable for purity and freshness, elegant fruit and mineral balance, and generous acidity that lends itself to ageing. Dosage is kept to an absolute minimum to achieve this style - indeed, one expression is entirely non-dosée.

In the non-vintage Cuis Premier Cru Brut, the dosage is 8gr/l - but that is not the most remarkable part of the winemaking in the Gimmonnet brothers' main wine. That distinction goes to the way they store the reserve wines before assemblage for second fermentation - not in steel or even concrete tanks but ageing in bottles. The complexity this method engenders is remarkable, and it is magnified by the inclusion of up to five different years of reserves in the assemblage. Purity and vitality flow through this wine from nose to long tail.

The House's vintage Blanc de Blancs is Fleuron, which flies like an arrow between toasty brioche warmth and a citrus clarity, as an ideal apéritif. But it is not Champagne Gimmonnet's only vintage. This is where the specialisation comes in, because Didier and Olivier are always thinking about how to steer Blanc de Blancs down different tracks.

The Brut Gastronomer is vinified from grapes lower in sugar to produce smaller bubbles, making it a less intrusive sparkling wine to accompany food. Because Champagne Gimmonnet aims to have some of the complexity of a vintage Champagne, while maintaining the fresh vitality of a young NV, it works particularly well with seafood. Meanwhile the Oenophile Premier Cru Non-Dosée is specially selected and left for a long time on the lees so that it has no need of dosage - it is referred to as "Champagne without make-up" and is intended to replicate the experience of tasting in the cellar at dégorgement.

It is Gimmonnet Special Club Millésime de Collection which tends to excite Champagne aficionados most of all, however. It is arguably the best Blanc de Blancs there is and one of the great wines of this region. It is what the brothers think of as the "summit of our vintages", the ultimate expression of Chardonnay, with incredible finesse and structure and the potential for lengthy ageing. It comes largely from 80-year-old vines in Cramant Grand Cru parcels, with some Cuis Premier Cru as well.

There is only one stain on all this Côtes des Blancs purity: and it comes from red Pinot Noir skins. The one Champagne that can't be produced from 100 per cent Chardonnay, of course, is a rosé. However, Olivier and Didier have gone as close as possible to doing it, using 88 per cent of their own grapes and buying in Pinot Noir from Bouzy to make up the other 12, essentially for colour. As a defiant note, they call it Rosé de Blancs!

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