

2012 Empreinte Brut 1er Cru

Champagne Geoffroy, Champagne Wine Region, France

Product details

Vintage:	2012	Drinking:	
Producer:	Champagne Geoffroy	Alcohol:	
Region:	Champagne Wine Region	Variety:	
Country:	France		

About the producer

The Champagne Geoffroy winery is in Ay, on the north-east edge of Épernay, but the Geoffroy family's heart is a few miles west in Cumières. Since the 17th century, members of the clan have grown grapes in this village on the edge of the Montagne de Reims and the family's parcels of land here still form the centrepiece of its mosaic of 35 plots, scattered across 14 acres to the north of the Marne river.

For centuries, like most growers in Champagne, the Geoffroys sold to négociants. Then, in the 1950s, husband and wife Roger and Juliette took the plunge into winemaking. Sadly Roger Geoffroy died suddenly, far too young. His son took over, changing the name to Champagne René Geoffroy, and expanding the ownership of vines to parcels on the slopes of Damery, Hautvilliers and Fleury la Rivière. The current owner and chief winemaker, Jean-Baptiste Geoffroy, joined his father in the profession in the 1980s and gradually took more control in the 1990s - although he ended the practice of superseding his father's name and changed it to the inclusive Champagne Geoffroy. It is one of Armit Wines most recently forged relationships - in 2016, we became exclusive UK distributor for the magnificent Champagne Geoffroy wines.

The family doesn't adhere to a specific farming code. It is not specifically organic or biodynamic. What Champagne Geoffroy's viticulture is, however, is eco-friendly. The soil between rows is aerated by animal-drawn plough and wild grasses are allowed to propagate. Intervention is kept to a minimum - the team keeps a watching brief on the vines.

In 2008, Jean-Baptiste Geoffroy and his wife Karine decided to relocate winemaking (and commercial operations) to a 19th-century building in Ay. This contains two traditional Coquard basket presses, which quickly and gently release the finest juices. Because grapes are hand-picked and sorted, parcel by parcel, depending on the moment of perfect ripeness, what happens next to the single-vineyard juices is dependent on what Jean-Baptiste and his team deem appropriate to the individual expression of that vine. It could flow into oak barrels, tuns, 600l demi-muid casks or enamelled vats.

Whichever the choice of fermentation vessel, the juice flows into it unforced and naturally through gravity. It is one of the means by which Jean-Baptiste Geoffroy maintains his Champagne's authenticity and vitality - as is the assemblage, which is done entirely by taste. Another method by which he ensures the survival of the original freshness of the wine is to stop malolactic fermentation, maintaining the wine's acidity and avoiding the buttery character often associated with the process. To counter any tartness that this decision might lean towards, all Geoffroy Champagne ages on the lees for a minimum of three years while the acidity rounds out into perfect balance - some bottles are not released until eight harvests have passed.



The resulting wines are Champagnes of great vineyard definition with incredible potential for cellaring; full of flavour with brilliant concentration. They all carry the DNA of the house's hallmark fruity thrill. However, they are expressions of highly individual characteristics. Over the entirety of Geoffroy's holdings, the percentage breakdown of vines is 40% Pinot Noir, 40% Pinot Meunier, 20% Chardonnay. But each member of this great ensemble cast is given its chance in the limelight.

Taking centre stage most often is the non-vintage Champagne Geoffroy Expression Brut Premier Cru is 50:40:10 Meunier: Noir: Chardonnay - the Pinot Meunier giving it a wonderfully expressive bouquet and a veritable macedonia salad of fruit flavours, and Pinot Noir offering structural support. The Expression Brut has an 8g/l dosage, but Geoffroy's non-interventionist policy is expressed even more purely in the aptly named Pureté Brut Nature NV. With the same grape ratios, this non-dosé version makes a perfect apéritif or accompaniment to oysters. It is sleek, fresh and finessed, with a touch of spice.

Chardonnay takes the lead in two vintage expressions. Volupté Brut Premier Cru is full of exotic fruit balanced by a refreshing minerality and hints of buttery pastries. The remarkable Millésime Premier Cru Extra Brut is aged for eight years before dégorgement (and a low 4g/l dosage). Unusually, Geoffroy advises decanting the bottle half an hour before serving and letting the temperature reach 12C to allow the full complexity to emerge. Although Chardonnay has a clear majority here too, on the nose, red fruits from the Pinots playfully jostle with citrus and spice. On the palate, it has creamy depth and richness, with toast, chocolate and coffee adding savoury punctuation.

Although Pinot Noir plays a supporting role in most of Jean-Baptiste's production, it stars in the single-hander Champagne Geoffroy Rosé de Saignée Brut Premier Cru. The bright ruby colour of this non-vintage rosé is achieved by leaching the colour from the skins during maceration, and the summer fruits the hue suggests continue from nose to palate to long tail.

Like all of Jean-Baptiste's wines, the Rosé de Saignée is dedicated to one of the many women in his life... with five daughters growing up around Champagne, he should be confident that Champagne Geoffroy has generations of family ownership to come.

Explore our full selection of Geoffroy Champagnes and buy online today.