

Champagne Warrior

A brief glimpse at Issue 8; October 2010

Special Web Sample

www.champagnewarrior.com



Jacques Picard



Godmé

*The
Champagne et
Villages
Triple Play!*



Camille Savès



Champagne Warrior Mission

**To provide wine lovers with reliable, accurate,
and descriptive details that will enable an informed
purchasing decision on Champagne and sparkling wine**

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Champagne Warrior™

Issue 8

October 2010

**The Champagne Warrior
is
Brad Baker**

Edited by Megan Bushnell

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Putting Some Skin in the Game



Bottles Sampled for Tasting that Were Actually Purchased from Retailers – Imagine the Concept!

As you could probably guess by now, one of the things I enjoy most about my ‘job’ is sitting down and talking to producers about their wines, their vision, and Champagne in general. I have been granted countless and amazing opportunities in which I have witnessed firsthand the intensity and passion for their labor of love, and for this I am thankful. I also appreciate their insight to the world of wine critics, marketing, and promotion, which is always fascinating to hear from their perspective. In short, I love visiting Champagne and the makers of Champagne.

But the most striking and repeated response that I garner once I visit a Champagne producer is flat-out surprise. Surprise that I rarely ask for samples, surprise that I don’t ask the producer to open up his/her oldest or rarest bottles, and surprise that I don’t make a general nuisance of myself by constantly visiting or requesting visits when there is nothing new to taste or discuss. I admit that it took me a while to wrap my head around these remarks the first few times I heard them. They didn’t quite sink in. After years of hearing them repeatedly, at different locations with different producers, I finally began to ask, “What do you mean?” Part of me was wondering if I was

supposed to be asking for cases of samples and if I was supposed to demand that early twentieth-century corks start flying. Was I doing something wrong? Was I offending the Champenois?

Since the start of my love affair with Champagne I have always been happy to purchase any bottle I wish to taste from the marketplace. If I want to review a wine, I buy it. Certainly, if the opportunity arises to taste a Champagne from the cellar of a generous producer, then that is fine and well, but there isn’t enough time in the day to visit everyone and taste everything out there. And if someone wants to send me samples then great, but I don’t normally go asking for specific wines or certain disgorgements. (The extent of my request for samples is written on the last page of this issue: samples are welcome, but not expected.) Certainly, there have been times when I have asked to try a specific wine from a producer, but, whenever possible, and based on time and location, I try my best to taste the wine either with the producer himself or at the very least I share the bottle with others appreciative of the wine, including others in the industry. I also always offer to pay for any requested samples.

I have learned over time that my approach is not the norm. Apparently, it is quite common for other critics/reviewers/writers to concentrate on asking for samples when a wine is released and then at different intervals throughout the wine's life. I don't necessarily think there is anything terribly wrong with this. As I have already said, I accept and receive samples and have even asked for them, but I don't feel that you should base everything you write on samples. More power to those that do, I guess; I'm sure they are saving money, but it doesn't seem altogether right to me. The reason I feel this way is that, to my mind, an accurate representation of the typical consumer experience can be missed when a reviewer doesn't purchase wines from retail.

There are many reasons a review of a bottle acquired through non-standard distribution channels could misrepresent the wine inside. For instance, one of the biggest problems with Champagne is product damage within the distribution network. (I go into this at length in Issue 5.) Most Champagne tastes great when pulled directly from a producer's cellars, but it can be quite a different story after that same bottle passes through multiple containers, countries, and importer-distributor handoffs on its thousand-mile journey to your favorite shop and eventually your cellar. Some wines also tend to show variation from different batches of the "same" wine. You need to try different bottles from various sources to discover this. It all comes down to the fact that I think the entire supply chain needs to be taken into account when reviewing a bottle of Champagne; writing a tasting note from a winery sample or a controlled importer sample should not and cannot be the only way to go.

To this end, I make it a point to buy as much as I can from the shelves of stores not only locally in Michigan, and not only throughout the US, but around the world. In my opinion, this is the only way to get an accurate picture of a wine that is both truthful and useful to the consumer.

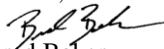
Older vintages also represent a challenge for the unbiased taster. Perfectly stored bottles from a producer's cellar and/or recent disgorgements are not always the truest representation of a wine's character. I do rate and review wines like this, but I make every attempt possible to give my readers an accurate description of a bottle similar to one you might grab from your cellar. I, like many of you, purchase and cellar newer releases for future drinking, and I do this explicitly so that I can sample these bottles (and write notes) as they evolve over the years. When I sample older vintages at a producer's cellar, I also sample them from my own cellar or the cellar of others I know as often as possible. I also purchase older bottles from reliable sources when an upcoming article calls for it. Combined, these experiences become the final note in this newsletter. As much as humanly possible, I try to write notes based upon more than one bottle or tasting.

I also purchase bottles from store shelves for an emotional reason. I believe that spending one's own hard earned money on a bottle of wine results in a much more meaningful and 'real' response compared to tasting a free bottle. When I spend \$30 US on a Champagne that blows my mind, I get a high of epic proportions as I celebrate my wonderful find. Likewise, when I drop \$200 US on a bottle that doesn't move me more than a popsicle on a cold day, I might start fuming. Tasting my own bottles, I experience both ends of the spectrum and everything in between, and it is my hope that it carries through to my writing.

While I certainly believe a person can evaluate wines that he/she didn't pay for, I also believe that one needs to purchase all levels of Champagne from all sorts of sources to accurately convey each experience in context. This is why I feel confident enough to sing the praises of a low-priced, 85-88 point wine at the same time I rail against a \$100+ US prestige cuvee that was given an identical score. (This is why you need to read the notes as well as the scores – to get the full picture and context of the wine.)

Maybe I'm the stupid one for using all of the proceeds from this newsletter (plus a lot more) to purchase Champagne rather than for a night out on the town or a trip for the family to Disneyland. Perhaps I need to do more wheedling and/or demanding, and then sit back and wait for free cases to roll in. Then again, maybe I don't. I really don't fault others for doing so (let's face it, they are probably more profitable for it), but it isn't my way. Despite protests from my wife and helpful suggestions from winemakers and marketing departments that I ask for more samples, I won't do it. I'll just continue to shrug off other critics/writers who think I'm just too dumb to know who to ask or who assume I'm "obviously an unimportant individual to Champagne". I promised myself long ago to do the best I can, and the only way I can do that is to put some skin in the game. I really believe it positively affects the end product, that is, my Champagne reviews. I challenge you to find someone else who will do the same.

Cheers,


Brad Baker
The Champagne Warrior

Partnership with CellarTracker!™

The most common feedback that I received after the release of Issue 1 was to “get the content online”. A steady stream of requests for on-line article hosting and a web searchable database continually arrived in my inbox. There was/is a Champagne Warrior website of course, but it functioned as a portal for subscriptions and a few random thoughts more than anything else. The newsletter is the main product I work hard to put out, and the bulk of my time and energy is spent learning about and tasting Champagne and sparkling wines. Enhanced on-line content was always planned, but it wasn’t in place for the launch of Issue 1.

As I began to draw up a plan and timeline for enhanced online content, it struck me that going the do-it-myself route or hiring a great web designer wasn’t going to deliver the end result I was looking for. I’ve always been a believer in sticking to your core and outsourcing or partnering with those who are experts at things outside of your realm of expertise. My vision was to have full, searchable access available for all Champagne Warrior content, and I wanted it to be done in a user-friendly and acceptable way that did more than just bring up a note. I wanted to give users the ability to easily access notes in the way they wanted with minimal effort.

Being a long time [CellarTracker!](#) user, I have always enjoyed how founder Eric Levine has been able to integrate user and professional notes into his industry-leading cellar management software. When it comes to wine, CellarTracker! has become my “wine homepage”. Among the many incredible benefits CellarTracker! provides are: instant view of my cellar contents including value and location, and professional and other user reviews on both wines I own and am interested in. The more I looked at CellarTracker!, the more I realized that there would be no better way to offer Champagne Warrior online content than through CellarTracker!. So, I talked with Eric and quicker than you can say “Vieilles Vignes Francaises,” my dream partnership with CellarTracker! became a reality.



As such, all Champagne Warrior subscribers who are also paid CellarTracker! subscribers have access to the following searchable online content:

- articles
- tasting notes
- issue content (ability to see all content organized by issue, just like the electronic print version)

In addition, all dual subscribers can instantly see Champagne Warrior reviews of wines in their cellar or wines they search for while using the CellarTracker! database. All subscribers of CellarTracker! can view Champagne Warrior numerical ratings, but the review text is only available to Champagne Warrior subscribers.

Now, this brings up the question of cost. After all, you have to subscribe to not only The Champagne Warrior, but also CellarTracker! to access the online content. This can get expensive. A subscription to Champagne Warrior is \$90 per year and CellarTracker! is at least another \$30. It can start to add up, and if I were a subscriber to The Champagne Warrior, I would expect to receive the online content for my \$90.

The one twist to this is that many of my subscribers are already CellarTracker! users (there are over 70,000 of them). I wanted to find a way to offer up the online content, but I didn’t want to “double” charge those who already subscribe to CellarTracker!. As such, I have come up with the following solution/offer:

- Anyone who subscribes to CellarTracker! can subscribe to The Champagne Warrior for \$60/year, which is a discount of \$30 off of the normal price
- Anyone who subscribes to The Champagne Warrior for \$90 list price (not counting any donations) and then becomes a subscriber to CellarTracker! is eligible to receive a refund of \$30 (minimum recommended CellarTracker! annual subscription rate) from The Champagne Warrior. If you currently fall into this category, please let me know and I will process your refund.

Why am I doing this? I believe that this makes sense and gives you fair value for your money. That said, I’d love to hear what you have to think, so if you have any thoughts (whether good or bad), feel free to let me know by contacting me at bradbaker@champagnewarrior.com.

Jacques Picard

Introducing Berru to the World

So just exactly who, what, or where is a Berru? While you may not be familiar with the term, as a Champagne enthusiast, you have probably heard of Jacques Picard, or, if you have visited Champagne, you may have noticed the mountain to the east of Reims. Berru, which resides on the northern side of this mountain village, is home to the Jacques Picard Champagne house and impressive vineyards, and is probably most well known for the Mont de Berru, which served as a frontline in World War I. Champagne fans remain unfamiliar with the village because most of the vineyards in Berru are either owned by negociants, sourced by negociants, or send crop to the local cooperative. The only practicing recoltant in Berru is Jacques Picard. In fact, the patriarch of the Picard family, Roger Picard, put Berru back on the map in the middle of the twentieth century.



The Vineyards of Berru

This once thriving Champagne village had almost ceased grape growing entirely by the middle of the twentieth century. World War I had destroyed almost all the vineyards of Berru, leaving most of the villagers to give up on farming and move to other occupations. World War II didn't help the area's agriculture either, and by the late 1940's, only two people were still growing grapes in Berru – Roger Picard and his son Jacques. Roger and Jacques knew the history of Berru and recognized the potential of the land. Over time, they convinced others to return to the ancient practice of vine growing, and today it is a thriving Champagne village. Chardonnay is especially successful here, and it is popular with the negociants. In fact, Pol Roger has holdings in Berru, which just so happen to abut the vineyards of the Picard family.

Although Roger Picard started off the family business, it is his son Jacques whose name graces the bottle. The family and their holdings have stayed united together over the years; they still maintain and farm all of Roger Picard's original parcels. The winery continues to thrive

under the third generation led by José and Corinne Livens. Corinne is the daughter of Roger Picard and José is her husband. Both are intimately involved with the winery and lead the teams for viticulture, winemaking, marketing, and sales.



José and Corinne Livens

José is currently the global face behind the winery, which is something he would never have predicted growing up. As a youngster in Champagne, he wanted nothing more than to leave and explore other wine regions. Bored by Champagne, he did work at Veuve Clicquot for a year as a young man, but soon something deep in his soul compelled him to become a traveling winemaker. Numerous clients in Burgundy and the Rhone Valley kept him busy and happy for a number of years, but just when he said he was never coming back to Champagne, he met Corinne Picard, fell in love, and ended up right back where he started: as a winemaker in Champagne. While it wasn't the path he thought he would follow, José is happier than ever and so are his customers.

In the vineyards, José practices *Lutte Naturelle* and *Culture Raisonnée* (natural and reasoned farming practices). He has no rules that determine the age of vines at harvest or expiration, and believes that you should "take what you get when it is best" and "do the right thing at the right time." The house still sorts the grapes in the vineyard itself, which is unusual in Champagne. He also successfully convinced the entire village to move to sexual confusion as the primary method of insect control. This method saturates the vineyards with man-made female insect pheromones which overpower the naturally produced pheromones from the actual female insect. This confuses the male adults (they can't tell where the females are) and leads to less mating and laying of eggs on the vines. The end result is less damage from insects. Just as Roger Picard helped lead the village back to Champagne, the family continues to lead the Champagne movement in Berru.

Everything José does is aimed at making a better wine and assuring him healthier vines. A new cellar was just built, which will increase on-site storage from 100,000 bottles to 200,000 bottles. On-site storage will be much more environmentally friendly, since all the wines are now gravity fed and the facility was designed with fuel and water efficiency in mind. The winery even takes advantage of rainwater by storing it and using it for cleaning equipment. The wines are stored in both steel and oak, depending on the cuvée, and disgorgement occurs when the opportunity is available. Essentially, bottles are disgorged in tranches based on the weather (when you can't work in the vineyards, you disgorge). On average, three to four thousand bottles are disgorged per day, and the different disgorgements are sent to different destinations based on how long the wine will be in transit and the length of storage before reaching the customer. Jacques Picard does not support printing disgorgement dates on the bottle because they feel it causes confusion to the customer. While they do admit that having a general idea of the original cuvée is worthwhile, they have suggested that they wish to avoid consumers questioning two bottles disgorged a day apart.



The New Jacques Picard Winery and Cellar

Berru is a Chardonnay village at heart: the vines are planted to 70% Chardonnay, 10% Pinot Noir, and 20% Pinot Meunier. Nonetheless, some exquisite parcels of Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier are also grown in the village. The Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier grapes on the east facing mid-slope of Mont de Berru receive especially good sun exposure during the morning and cooling shade in the afternoon from the forest on the top of the mountain. Despite the marginal rating of this village (it ranks a good deal below Premier Cru), there is excellent potential across all of the plantings, with some of the best vines flirting with Grand Cru quality. So then, why isn't Berru ranked higher? True, there are some rather poor-quality vineyards in the village, but there are poor-quality vineyards everywhere. It really comes down to the fact that the World Wars almost wiped this village off the Champagne map. Berru is similar to Merfy (which is also ranked as a Cru Normale). Apparently, previous greatness

in quality, once destroyed by war, did not play into the Echelle de Crus' hierarchy first established in 1919. Now that vigneronns have returned to the region, an insider secret has emerged – Berru can yield great wines for a reasonable price!

Outside of Berru, Jacques Picard has holdings in Avenay Val d'Or, and Montbré; interestingly, Avenay d'Or and Montbré are ranked as Premier Crus, yet to my mind, Jacques Picard's Berru holdings are better. This is yet another example of why Champagne's current Cru ranking system could use some updating. Jacques Picard's total vineyard holdings equal 17 ha and result in 170,000 bottles produced per year.



Young Grapes on Picard's Berru Vines

As far as the wines go, the house style is one of fresh fruit and minerality in perfect balance; Chardonnay gives excellent structure and sharp citrus and mineral flavors, while the Pinot grapes tend to offer a fuller, rounder, and fruitier style. When blended, the three grape varieties play off of each other almost effortlessly to create a sum greater than its parts. A part of the house signature is likely due to the fact that malolactic fermentation is only used for the Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier grapes. For the Rosé, the wines are left to macerate with their skins for one week before the juice is removed for fermentation. Before 2000, this technique wasn't used, and the wine was heavier and meatier in style. It is now much more fresh, fruity, and light, and both I and the Jacques Picard team are much happier with it today. José prefers to separate the red wine for use in a Rosé from that used in still red wine, unlike many other producers who just aim to make a good red still wine and then simply plop it into the Rosé. He believes that different vines, viticulture, and winemaking techniques are utilized to make the perfect red wine for either a Rosé red wine addition *or* a still red wine meant to be a final product.

The prestige cuvée Art de Vigne is made every year to showcase the terroir of a specific vintage. It will have its ups and downs with the seasons, but Jacques Picard is of the mind that every year offers a special moment and place in time worth capturing. The current vintage of the Art de Vigne is 2002, and it is the best effort I have ever tasted of this cuvée. Two-thousand-and-four is also very promising, and these two vintages are likely to be the best of this decade, according to the family. What about 2008, the next highly regarded vintage? It could turn out very nicely, but José *et al.* aren't as excited as many others are about 2008. Regardless, I love this wine, and I think it is worth picking up every year. It is a bit like catching time in a bottle and experiencing a portrait of a piece of land and hard work over twelve months, captured together, here and now, just for you.



José Livens of Jacques Picard



The Jacques Picard range of wines:

- **NV Sélection** is normally a blend across three vintages, composed of 60% Chardonnay, 5-10% Pinot Noir, and 30-35% Pinot Meunier. 40-50% of the blend is reserve wine going back four to five years. Only the Pinot grapes go through malolactic fermentation and it is normally dosed at 10-11 g/L. This wine is 80% of Picard's production.
- **NV Demi-Sec** is similar to the NV Sélection only with more dosage.
- **NV Réserve** is a blend dominated by Chardonnay and is aged on the lees longer than the NV Sélection.
- **NV Rosé** is Chardonnay blended with 10-12% still red wine. The reserve wine used is a solera of past vintages. Dosage is 10-11 g/L.
- **NV Blanc de Blancs** consists of 100% Chardonnay from some of Jacques Picard's top vineyards
- **Prestige Millésime** is a blend across various vineyards and grape types; its goal is to show an overall expression of a year
- **Art de Vigne** is a vintage cuvée consisting of 60% Chardonnay, 20% Pinot Noir, and 20% Pinot Meunier. It is aged entirely in oak (350L barrels) and does not see malolactic fermentation unless it carries it out on its own. 3,000 – 4,000 bottles are produced each vintage. This is Picard's prestige cuvee and is meant to show not only the expression of a year, but also terroir.



Jacques Picard Tasting Notes

Vintage	Wine	Type	Rating	Potential	Page
NV	Jacques Picard Brut Sélection - 2006 base	NV Blend	85-87	85-87	12
NV	Jacques Picard Brut Sélection - 2007 base	NV Blend	84-86	84-86	12
NV	Jacques Picard Rosé - 2006 base	NV Rosé	86-88	86-88	12
NV	Jacques Picard Rosé - 2007 base	NV Rosé	86-88	86-88	13
1998	Jacques Picard Art de Vigne	Vintage Blend	84-87	84-87	13
1999	Jacques Picard Art de Vigne	Vintage Blend	86-88	86-88	13
2000	Jacques Picard Art de Vigne	Vintage Blend	84-87	86-88	13
2002	Jacques Picard Art de Vigne	Vintage Blend	87-89	90-92	13
2003	Jacques Picard Art de Vigne	Vintage Blend	86-88	86-88	14
2004	Jacques Picard Art de Vigne	Vintage Blend	NR	88-91	14
2005	Jacques Picard Art de Vigne	Vintage Blend	NR	84-87	14
2006	Jacques Picard Art de Vigne	Vintage Blend	NR	87-90	14

NV Jacques Picard Brut Sélection - 2006 base

Rating	Potential
85-87	85-87

Fairly full-bodied, with wonderful pear and peach flavors to start. A swath of chalk flavor leads into a lengthy finish kissed by sweet, tart citrus. An excellent NV cuvée.

(60% Chardonnay, 10% Pinot Noir; 30% Pinot Meunier; 2006 base vintage mixed with 40-50% reserve wines going back to ~ 2001; Stainless steel; Chardonnay does not go through Malolactic fermentation, Pinot grapes do; Disgorged 2009; 10-11 g/L dosage; \$40-60 US)

NV Jacques Picard Brut Sélection - 2007 base

Rating	Potential
84-86	84-86

Not quite as structured as the 2006-based version, but still quite tasty. Fruity pears, bright citrus, and hints of creamy, earthy peach are very enjoyable. The finish has good length and is full of zippy brightness.

(60% Chardonnay, 10% Pinot Noir; 30% Pinot Meunier; 2007 base vintage mixed with 40-50% reserve wines going back to ~ 2001; Stainless steel; Chardonnay does not go through Malolactic fermentation, Pinot grapes do; Disgorged 2009; 10-11 g/L dosage; \$40-60 US)

NV Jacques Picard Rosé - 2006 base

Rating	Potential
86-88	86-88

Juicy, fresh, ripe, utterly gorgeous strawberries carry this wine toward a soaring finish. Midway, cream and citrus add a welcome detour. For me, this is a fruit-driven wine to drink on the younger side. Amongst the Jacques Picard non-vintage offerings, I'd recommend searching the Rosé out first.

(88% Chardonnay blended with 10-12% red wine; 2006 base vintage mixed with a solera of older vintages; Assemblage; Stainless steel; No malolactic fermentation; Disgorged 2009; 10-11 g/L dosage; \$45-65 US)

NV Jacques Picard Rosé - 2007 base

Rating	Potential
86-88	86-88

Red berries on parade: strawberry, raspberry, and cherry march on through the nose and on the palate. A dollop of cream and a tart, zesty citrus element makes themselves known, but first and foremost this wine is all about the berries. And I love it.

(88% Chardonnay blended with 10-12% red wine; 2007 base vintage mixed with a solera of older vintages; Assemblage; Stainless steel; No malolactic fermentation; Disgorged 2010; 10-11 g/L dosage; \$45-65 US)

1998 Jacques Picard Art de Vigne

Rating	Potential
84-87	84-87

The first vineyard of Picard's prestige cuvée, this particular wine was the brainchild of Jose Livens, who wanted to demonstrate what the best vines could produce. Made very differently from subsequent releases, this wine was fermented and aged in 200-225L barrels rather than the 250L barrels used afterward; as a result of this smaller barrel usage, this vintage feels a bit more brooding and not as focused as those that follow. The highlight of this wine is the rich, almost candied pears on the palate, which coalesce into a long, zesty finish. Kiwi fruit is also notable on the mid-palate, but there is too much bitter acidity throughout the experience for my liking. This is still quite tasty, but not as good as the vintages that followed.

(60% Chardonnay, 20% Pinot Noir; 20% Pinot Meunier; 200-225L used oak barrel from Burgundy; No malolactic fermentation; Disgorged 2010; No dosage; 3,000 - 4,000 bottles produced; \$65-90 US)

1999 Jacques Picard Art de Vigne

Rating	Potential
86-88	86-88

Older 350L oak barrels from Burgundy were first used in this vintage, along with a few 200-225L barrels that were also used in 1998. This wine is much brighter than the 1998 and is very fragrant on the nose, with pear blossoms and sunshine-coated minerals. A hint of sweetness improves the citrus- and pear-led palate. I wouldn't call this extremely complex, but it is very tasty and quite different from the 1998.

(60% Chardonnay, 20% Pinot Noir; 20% Pinot Meunier; 200-350L used oak barrel from Burgundy; No malolactic fermentation; Disgorged 2010; No dosage; 3,000 - 4,000 bottles produced; \$65-90 US)

2000 Jacques Picard Art de Vigne

Rating	Potential
84-87	86-88

Following the general trend of the vintage, this wine appears to act like a brooding, sullen stepchild. There are plenty of pears, a hint of apple liqueur, biscuit dough, and minerality, but the heaviness, especially when compared to other vintages, dominates the encounter. The finish of young, wispy spice notes easily draws you back for more, however, where you are compelled reassess your relationship with this recalcitrant stranger. While good now, I would wait a few years for this to improve and learn some manners.

(60% Chardonnay, 20% Pinot Noir; 20% Pinot Meunier; 350L used oak barrel from Burgundy; No malolactic fermentation; Disgorged 2010; No dosage; 3,000 - 4,000 bottles produced; \$65-90 US)

The Best Jacques Picard Wine I Have Ever Tasted

2002 Jacques Picard Art de Vigne

Rating	Potential
87-89	90-92

Spectacular intensity reigns supreme in this wine. Honeyed pears, vanilla, and intense, creamy, mineral-filled citrus blast through the walls to assault your senses. This is a Picard Arte de Vigne at its finest, and comes highly recommended. In fact, this is the best Jacques Picard wine I have tasted to date.

(60% Chardonnay, 20% Pinot Noir; 20% Pinot Meunier; 350L used oak barrel from Burgundy; No malolactic fermentation; Disgorged 2010; No dosage; 3,000 - 4,000 bottles produced; \$65-90 US)

2003 Jacques Picard Art de Vigne

Rating	Potential
86-88	86-88

Open, creamy, toasty, and downright delicious; this wine might not be complex or intellectually stimulating, but it does have plenty of fluffy, creamy fruit. Apples, pears, and a few peaches all come out for a day in the sun inside this "ready to go now" wine.

(60% Chardonnay, 20% Pinot Noir; 20% Pinot Meunier; 350L used oak barrel from Burgundy; Malolactic fermentation occurred naturally; Disgorged 2010; No dosage; 3,000 - 4,000 bottles produced; \$65-90 US)

2004 Jacques Picard Art de Vigne

Rating	Potential
NR	88-91

Very full-bodied and quite spicy, this is going to be a spunky one when released. Cinnamon-dusted pears and apples mix with yeasty, lightly toasted dough to create a plethora of flavors in this young, but potentially inspired Champagne. After the 2002, this is my favorite Art de Vigne and definitely one to watch out for.

(60% Chardonnay, 20% Pinot Noir; 20% Pinot Meunier; 350L used oak barrel from Burgundy; No malolactic fermentation; Disgorged 2010; No dosage; 3,000 - 4,000 bottles produced; Not yet released)

2005 Jacques Picard Art de Vigne

Rating	Potential
NR	84-87

Compared alongside other vintages of this cuvée, this possesses more acidity and is a bit thinner in the mouth. It does display spiced pear flavor and a dose of toasty dough, but these attributes quickly fade, leaving a simple apple and citrus mix. More time on the lees will certainly help this along, but I don't feel this will ever be a standout Art de Vigne.

(60% Chardonnay, 20% Pinot Noir; 20% Pinot Meunier; 350L used oak barrel from Burgundy; No malolactic fermentation; Disgorged 2010; No dosage; 3,000 - 4,000 bottles produced; Not yet released)

2006 Jacques Picard Art de Vigne

Rating	Potential
NR	87-90

Still just a baby, but oh, so delicious already. Bright, creamy, earthy peaches and juicy pears lead the way on this bright, tart, and fruity youngster. Time should bring out some spice and cream notes that will lift this up further. I can't wait for 2013-2014 to see what the finished released wine will taste like.

(60% Chardonnay, 20% Pinot Noir; 20% Pinot Meunier; 350L used oak barrel from Burgundy; No malolactic fermentation; Disgorged 2010; No dosage; 3,000 - 4,000 bottles produced; Not yet released)



Champagne Godmé

Deserving of So Much More Attention



Situated on the northern slope of the Montagne de Reims is Verzenay, and in Verzenay, overlooking most of the village itself, is the house of Godmé. Godmé started growing vines in the late nineteenth century and began to produce their own wines in 1930, when Joseph Godmé took the helm. His son Bertrand followed in Joseph's footsteps, and today the children of Bertrand and their families manage the house. Hugues Godmé is responsible for the winemaking and vineyard care and Sabine Guillaume travels non-stop for sales and marketing. All together, five generations of Godmé have been involved with Champagne, though only the last three have actually been making wine.

The Godmé family owns a little less than 12 ha of land, which is divided among their hometown of Verzenay (Grand Cru), Beaumont-vur-Vesle (Grand Cru), Verzy (Grand Cru), Ville-Dommange (Premier Cru), and Villers-Marmery (Premier Cru). These holdings account

for 100,000 – 120,000 bottles produced per year. The overall division of grapes is 55% Chardonnay, 30% Pinot Noir, and 15% Pinot Meunier. It is this balance of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir that creates the signature taste of Godmé in bottle.

Godmé's wines are all about the battle of power vs finesse, fruit mixing with acidity, and baked bread interlaced with minerality. The wines are extremely complex and develop very well. In fact, the Champagne that Godmé reminds me most of is the one and only Dom Pérignon. Both manage impeccable balance between Chardonnay and Pinot Noir and each develop slowly and blossom over time. Whether you agree with me or not, I think you should take this as the compliment it is, especially when considering the price of admission – you can buy multiple bottles of Godmé's vintage wine for the price of one bottle of Dom.

What makes the wines of Godmé stand out from the pack? The commitment of the family is first and foremost. Sabine and Hugues are tireless workers in the vineyard and on the road. It is rare to find such dedication in the sales and marketing department backed up by a quality product, but Godmé does it. I still recall the first time I met Sabine and she invited me to the domaine for a tasting – her positive personality and devotion to the family business were addictive, but there was no way that the wines could measure up to her presentation, I thought. I was wrong. Turns out she not only talks the talk but walks the walk, and I found the range to be stunning across the board, including both new and library releases.

As Sabine gathers new fans for the brand, Hugues works his magic in the vineyard and winery. They work the vineyards as naturally as possible, keeping an eye on tradition at the same time they allow the winery a modern bent. The vineyards are all treated organically (no insecticides have been used since the turn of the century) and they are a part of the growing movement towards *Culture Raisonnée* (reasoned farming practices). Godmé was also one of the first producers (big or small) to move towards ISO certification in order to establish a repeatable and traceable quality and improvement system with their wines.



Sabine Guillaume of Godmé



Godmé's Millésime – A Bargain Every Year

Godmé is always interested in “what they can do next” in winemaking. They strive for a wine that is not only balanced but is intrinsically sweet and fruity without relying upon dosage, so expression of the grapes is emphasized. The wines are aged in both steel and oak depending on the cuvée, and malolactic fermentation is also used at times, depending on grape variety, wine, and vintage or blend. It is this inherent flexibility that I think contributes to the success of their wines; Hugues and Sabine aren't afraid to try something new as long as they can learn from it.

In terms of new releases from Godmé, you should be on the lookout for an upcoming series of single-vineyard wines. Godmé has access to a few very special vineyards, and they are finally getting ready to share them with the consumer. Verzenay, Villers-Marmery, and Ville-Dommange all are sites where Godmé already excels, and soon, these vineyards will have their own specially-labeled Godmé wines. The first wine in this series is from their favorite vineyard, Les Alouettes Saint Bets, and it will be a Blanc de Blancs hailing from Villers-Marmery, set to debut with the 2004 vintage.

My favorite thing about Godmé is that the wines are still reasonably priced, and back vintages are available upon request (get your hands on some 1995 if you can!). Certainly other wine labels currently demand more attention than Godmé, but I don't think this will last forever. As more and more wine lovers discover these wines, demand is bound to go up. Godmé's range isn't the easiest to find, but with some searching you can probably track down what you are looking for. Right now is actually the perfect time to do this, before a wider audience is clued into just how good these wines are and how awesome they will become.

The Godmé range of wines:

- **NV Brut Réserve** consists of 50% Chardonnay, 15% Pinot Noir, and 35% Pinot Meunier. It is blended from at least three vintages and is dosed around 7 g/L.
- **NV Demi-Sec** is identical to the Brut Réserve, but is given a dosage of 15 g/L.
- **NV or Vintage Blanc de Blancs** is 100% Chardonnay from Villers-Marmery. Dosage is around 7-8 g/L. This is sometimes released as a vintage wine, but can also be a blend of multiple vintages.
- **NV Brut Intégral** is 40% Chardonnay, 30% Pinot noir, and 30% Pinot Meunier. This wine sees some oak, has only partial malolactic fermentation, and does not have any dosage.
- **NV Brut Blanc de Noirs** is 100% Pinot Noir from Verzeay and Verzy. Some of the wines in this blend see oak. Dosage is 6 g/L.
- **NV Brut Rosé** is 15% Chardonnay and 85% Pinot noir (of the Pinot Noir, 15% is still red wine). The still red wine is aged in oak and dosage is 7-8 g/L.
- **NV Extra Brut Grand Cru** is 40% Chardonnay, 60% Pinot noir. It is made up of three to five vintage and all of the wine sees oak; it ages on the lees for at least five years and is dosed at 2 g/L. This is Godmé's prestige cuvée.
- **Brut Millésime** is 65% Chardonnay, 35% Pinot noir and over half the wines see oak. Dosage is 7-8 g/L.
- * *Godmé will also be releasing a single-vineyard wine, **Les Alouettes Saint Bets Blanc de Blancs**, from what they consider to be their best vineyard. This 100% Chardonnay wine hails from Villers-Marmery and sees two- to five-year-old oak barrels for fermentation and aging. Other single-vineyard bottlings from Verzenay and Ville-Dommange will follow this premier release.*



The View of Verzenay from Godmé

Godmé Tasting Notes

Vintage	Wine	Type	Rating	Potential	Page
NV	Godmé Blanc de Noirs - 2004 base	NV BdN	83-86	83-86	18
NV	Godmé Brut Réserve - 2005 base	NV Blend	87-89	87-89	18
NV	Godmé Brut Rosé - 2005 base	NV Rosé	87-89	87-89	18
1990	Godmé Millésime	Vintage Blend	84-87	84-87	19
1995	Godmé Millésime	Vintage Blend	90-92	91-94	19
1996	Godmé Millésime	Vintage Blend	85-88	85-88	19
1998	Godmé Millésime	Vintage Blend	84-87	84-87	19
1999	Godmé Blanc de Blancs Millésime	Vintage BdB	85-87	85-87	19
1999	Godmé Millésime	Vintage Blend	85-88	85-88	20
2004	Godmé Les Alouettes Saint Bets Blanc de Blancs	Vintage BdB	85-88	89-92	20
NV	Godmé Blanc de Noirs - 2004 base	NV BdN	83-86	83-86	18
NV	Godmé Brut Réserve - 2005 base	NV Blend	87-89	87-89	18

NV Godmé Blanc de Noirs - 2004 base

Rating	Potential
83-86	83-86

Rich red berries mix with vanilla and a shot of citrus. Towards the middle of the palate, a bitter, sharp character tarnishes the citrus, but the wine quickly recovers with a red berry, citrus, and mineral finish. An enjoyable wine, but I normally prefer the rest of Godmé's range to this.

(100% Pinot Noir; 50% 2004, 20% 2003, 20% 2002, 10% 2001; Some oak fermentation; Disgorged 2009; \$45-65 US)

A Spectacular Introduction to Godmé

NV Godmé Brut Réserve - 2005 base

Rating	Potential
87-89	87-89

Rich, juicy pears shine through in this tasty cuvée that I could drink all day long. This Champagne could be a lesson in the perfect balance of sweetness/acidity, fruit/spice, juicy/mineral, and boldness/elegance - each are represented but no character is overpowering and the sum is much greater than its parts.

(50% Chardonnay, 15% Pinot Noir, 35% Pinot Meunier; 50% 2005, 30% 2003, 20% 2002; Stainless steel; 7 g/L dosage; \$45-65 US)

NV Godmé Brut Rosé - 2005 base

Rating	Potential
87-89	87-89

I really like this wine and find it to be incredibly consistent each release. As always, this example shows a forthright core of red berries and baking spices that slowly merges into a long, red citrus finish. Excellent for drinking now, this will surely hold up very nicely with time too.

(10% Chardonnay, 80% Pinot Noir; 10% Pinot Noir still red wine addition; 50% 2005, 25% 2004, 25% 2003; The still wine is aged in oak; Disgorged 2009; \$45-65 US)

1990 Godmé Millésime

Rating	Potential
84-87	84-87

Beginning to show its age, this wine reveals a cherry, sherry-laced cream element that combines with lime-led citrus to form its core. Upon opening, aromas are reticent and the Champagne almost seems boring, but with some air in the glass it finds itself nicely. This is especially apparent on the long, creamy, mouth-coating finish.

(65% Chardonnay, 35% Pinot Noir; Slightly more than half the wine is aged in oak; Disgorged 2010; Non dosage; \$85-125 US)

You Gotta Get This Wine!

1995 Godmé Millésime

Rating	Potential
90-92	91-94

Oh wow, this is a winner - as close to a dead-ringer for 1995 Dom Perignon as you can find. Cream of wheat, honey, and clean linen draw you in on the nose, while smoothened, almost chewy citrus mixes with honeyed mushroom and zesty, spiced herbs on the palate. This is a spectacular wine that you should most definitely try to track down - divine.

(65% Chardonnay, 35% Pinot Noir; Slightly more than half the wine is aged in oak; Disgorged 2010; Non dosage; \$85-125 US)

1996 Godmé Millésime

Rating	Potential
85-88	85-88

The palate is extremely powerful here, with an explosion of citrus and minerality. Similar to other 1996s, the rest of the wine doesn't quite match its hyperactive acidity; it tastes of drying citrus, cherry biscuit, and exhibits sherry notes that are in complete opposition to its young, acidic core. Time to aerate and increase in temperature definitely helps a glass out, but the wine acts a bit too mature for its age and at times seems to be sparring within itself.

(65% Chardonnay, 35% Pinot Noir; Slightly more than half the wine is aged in oak; Disgorged 2010; Non dosage; \$85-125 US)

1998 Godmé Millésime

Rating	Potential
84-87	84-87

A bit one-dimensional, this wine offers dry biscuits and intense acidity. There is a good citrus core, but the palate is thin and lacks a juicy, zesty, or bright element. With warmth, some toasty apples improve the experience some, but, overall, this wine is harsher than I would like.

(65% Chardonnay, 35% Pinot Noir; Slightly more than half the wine is aged in oak; Disgorged 2010; Non dosage; \$60-90US)

1999 Godmé Blanc de Blancs Millésime

Rating	Potential
85-87	85-87

Here we have a non-dosage example of pure Villers-Marmery Chardonnay. Drinking very well right now, this cuvée delivers bright orange and toasty minerals with a kiss of sweet honey blossom on the finish. This example showcases the 1999 vintage very well, given its sunny personality and inherent simplicity. This is not a wine in which to look for depth or complexity, but one to happily consume on the deck on a summer afternoon.

(65% Chardonnay, 35% Pinot Noir; Slightly more than half the wine is aged in oak; Disgorged 2010; Non dosage; \$60-90US)

1999 Godmé Millésime

Rating	Potential
85-88	85-88

Wide open and firing on all cylinders, this cuvée is full of red citrus and lemon cream. A bit of sweet, juicy peach emerges as it warms, leading into a biting, zesty finish. The palate shows a full array of flavors and is very enjoyable right now, but you can cellar it too - this will continue to drink well over the next five to ten years.

(65% Chardonnay, 35% Pinot Noir; Slightly more than half the wine is aged in oak; Disgorged 2010; Non dosage; \$60-90US)

2004 Godmé Les Alouettes Saint Bets Blanc de Blancs

Rating	Potential
85-88	89-92

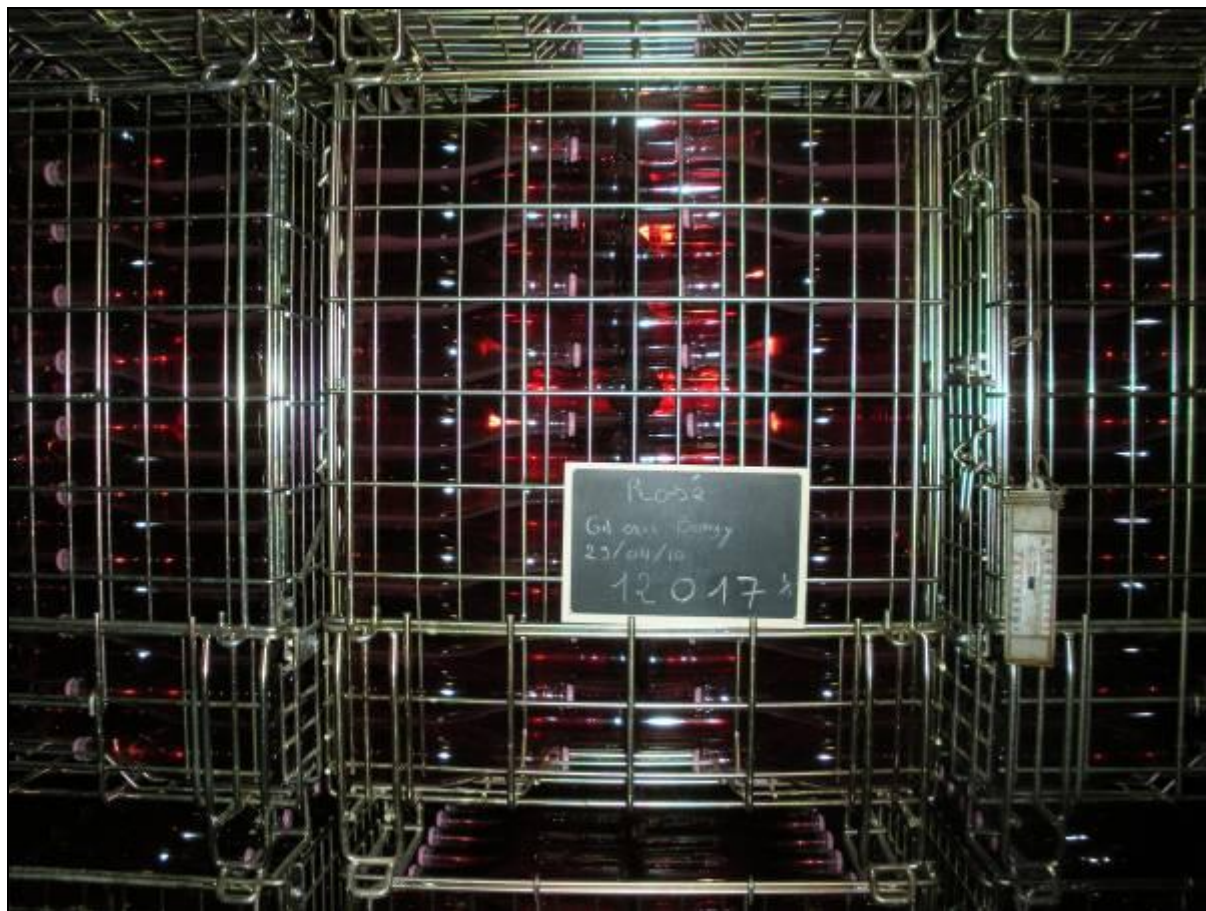
This is a new, single-vineyard release from a ½ ha plot in Villers-Marmery that Godmé has always considered to be their best vineyard. This is a creamy, full-bodied Chardonnay that needs a lot more time in the bottle to fully express itself, but when it does, watch out. Orange cream, minerals, dough, apples, and honeysuckle appear in this potential-packed wine that finishes off with piercing minerality. Be on the lookout for its release and try a bottle or two, but I suggest letting most of your purchases age.

(100% Chardonnay, Single Vineyard Les Alouettes Saint Bets in Villers-Marmery; Aged in 2-5 year old 225L oak barrels; Disgorged 2010; Non dosage; 4,000 bottles produced; Not yet released)



Camille Savès

A Lot More than Just Great Rosé Champagne



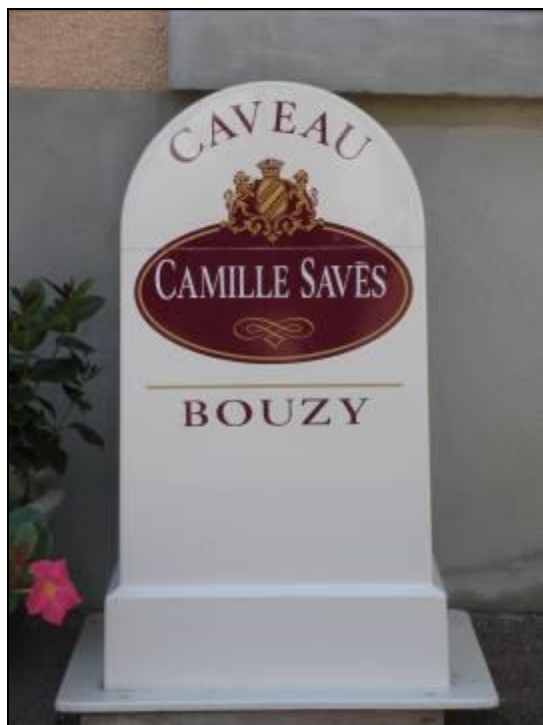
2009-based Camille Savès Rosé Aging on the Lees in the Cellar

The great Pinot Noir villages in the Montagne de Reims start and end with the alphabet. On the south side you have the A's and B's - Ambonnay and Bouzy - and to the north, you tail off into the V's - Verzy and Verzenay. Each of these Grand Cru villages has its own signature personality and is home to some of the top producers and vineyards in Champagne. Camille Savès, a house that makes its home in Bouzy, is one of these top producers offering a plethora of outstanding wines.

The domaine of Camille Savès began in 1894, when Eugène Savès married Anaïs Jolicoeur whose family had vines in Bouzy. With their marriage, the couple entered into the business of vinegrowing, but soon saw potential in making and selling their own wines. Thus, the recoltant label of Savès was created. Eugène and Anaïs' son Louis followed in their footsteps and his son Camille did the same – it is his name on the current label. In 1982, Camille's son Hervé began his involvement in the business, and still runs the house today, almost thirty years later.

Camille Savès really began to excel under Hervé's watch, due to a number of recent changes. Hervé's first move was

to stop the practice of malolactic fermentation; not only does Camille Savès not initiate it, they will actually stop it if it starts on its own. While I enjoy wines that do and do not undergo malolactic fermentation, the wines of Camille Savès typify the non-malolactic style and are all the better for it in my opinion. The next move Hervé made was to focus on vineyard improvement. Similar to many other top growers and producers, Camille Savès vineyard management is as natural as possible. By respecting the earth, they ensure that strong vines with flavorful grapes flourish and that their land is not only preserved but improved for the next generation. Another of Hervé's changes that I find very impressive is his installation of climate control across the entire portion of the winery that is not underground. This provides optimal conditions for the grapes and wine at all times: once picked and taken to the winery, any place grapes may travel is completely regulated. Even the garages for the vehicles are kept cool. This practice certainly isn't common in Champagne (especially amongst smaller producers) and it shows the dedication the family has towards their work.



Camille Savès manages around 10 ha of vineyards spread out over a number of villages on or surrounding the southern slope of the Montagne de Reims. Their largest holdings are in their hometown of Bouzy where they own 6 ha. The other villages in which they own land are the nearby Montagne de Reims villages of Bouzy and Tauxières, and the Marne Valley village of Tours-sur-Marne, which is situated right where the Montagne de Reims region ends and the Marne Valley starts. Only Pinot Noir and Chardonnay are grown, and across all of their holdings the vines average thirty-five years of age. They produce about eighty to eighty-five thousand bottles a year. Almost everything that is grown is utilized in house-made wines, with one exception: Bouzy Rouge (the still Pinot Noir wine from Bouzy) is in high demand to be used as red wine for Rosé Champagnes, and Hervé makes some of the best in the village. As such, he sells off a small amount to a few producers who, naturally, are known for their high quality Rosés: Alfred Gratien, Gosset, and Billecart-Salmon.



Camille Savès Prime Bouzy Vineyards

All of the wines are currently fermented in enamel-lined steel tanks, but after fermentation, they may go into steel tanks, oak barrels, or a combination as they age. Steel is by far the most popular vessel used, but Hervé is experimenting more with oak to see how it affects his wines. All of the Bouzy Rouge is stored in oak as are some of the reserve wines, some of the Chardonnay, and a small amount of Pinot Noir. As with most producers, hand-riddling of the Millésime and the high-end Brut Prestige and Cuvée Anaïs Jolie Coeur is standard practice.

If you haven't heard of the Cuvée Anaïs Jolie Coeur, it has just debuted with the 2004 vintage. Named after Hervé's great-grandmother who helped start the family business, this wine is a departure from the rest of the range in that it is the first attempt to make a 100% oaked wine. Before this wine was created, oak use was limited to reserve wines and some Chardonnay. With the Cuvée Anaïs Jolie Coeur, made up of 90% Pinot Noir, a very different expression of the domaine has been achieved. This is not only due to the oak, but also the high Pinot Noir content, which is greater than anything else Camille Savès makes. This is definitely a wine worth seeking out, but production is quite limited (only 1,000 bottles).



Cuvée Anaïs Jolie Coeur

To me, the wines of Camille Savès are all about minerality and fresh, biscuit-laced red fruit. The lack of malolactic fermentation gives the wines an extra dimension of citrus and minerality that deftly cuts through the fruit - this gives the wines amazing finesse while still maintaining an underlying fruity power. This isn't an easy combination to pull off, as it is much easier to go too far to one side or the other and wind up with a wine that is too blousy or too sharp. In the United States, their Rosé is the most popular wine in the range. In fact, Hervé says they could produce twice as much Rosé, ship it all to the United States, and still not satisfy demand (if you have had this wine, you probably can understand why). Along with Henri Billiot's and Billecart-Salmon's NV Rosés, this is one of the benchmarks for what an affordable Champagne Rosé can and should be. Release after release, Savès' Rosé is a winner and is highly recommended - it simply over-performs for its price point. Another personal favorite in

the range (and I love the complete range) is the Millésime. It drinks well as a youngster and ages spectacularly too. The current release is the 2002 and it is downright superb; easily their best effort since Hervé's debut release in 1982 and a wine that you should buy by the case, especially considering the price. I'm not just saying that either - I have purchased more of this wine than any other 2002 vintage wine released to date.



Hervé Savès - Winemaker Extraordinaire

The Camille Savès range of wines:

- **NV Carte Blanche** is a blend of 75% Pinot Noir from Ambonnay, Bouzy, and Tours-sur-Marne with 25% Chardonnay from Tauxières. It is normally a blend of two vintages and is mostly steel-aged. It normally sees at least three years of age before disgorgement and is dosed at 10-12 g/L. Production is around 40,000 bottles a year.
- **NV Carte d'Or** is a pure expression of Bouzy with 75% Pinot Noir and 25% Chardonnay. It is normally a blend of two vintages and is mostly steel-aged. It normally sees at least four years of lees-aging and is dosed at 9 g/L. Production is around 12,000 bottles a year.
- **NV Rosé** is 100% Bouzy with 60% Pinot Noir, 28% Chardonnay, and 12% Bouzy Rouge. It is normally a blend of two vintages and is mostly steel-aged. It normally sees at least four years of lees-aging and is dosed at 9 g/L. Most of this wine ends up in the United States where it is extremely popular. Production is over 10,000 bottles a year.
- **NV Brut Prestige** is 100% Bouzy with 35% Pinot Noir and 65% Chardonnay. It is normally a blend of two vintages and sees a good amount of both oak and steel. It undergoes at least four years of lees-aging and is dosed at 9-12 g/L. Production is around 9,000 bottles a year.
- **Brut Millésime** is 100% Bouzy with 80% Pinot Noir and 20% Chardonnay. The wines see a mix of steel and oak and comes from vines thirty-five years and older. It is aged on the lees for at least five years before disgorgement and is dosed at 8-9 g/L. Production varies according to the vintage.
- **Cuvée Anaïs Jolie Coeur** is a brand-new vintage wine debuting with the 2004 release. It is 100% Bouzy with 90% Pinot Noir and 10% Chardonnay. The wine is completely oak-aged and is limited to around 1,000 bottles per release.
- **Bouzy Rouge** is 100% Bouzy Pinot Noir that is aged in oak and released at four to five years of age. The vines this comes from are normally over forty years old.



Camille Savès Tasting Notes

Vintage	Wine	Type	Rating	Potential	Page
NV	Camille Savès Carte Blanche - 2006 base	NV Blend	86-88	86-88	24
NV	Camille Savès Carte Blanche - 2007 base	NV Blend	86-88	86-88	24
NV	Camille Savès Carte d'Or - 2004 base	NV Blend	87-89	88-90	24
NV	Camille Savès Cuvée Prestige - 2004 base	NV Blend	86-88	87-89	24
NV	Camille Savès Rosé - 2007 base	NV Rosé	89-91	89-91	25
NV	Camille Savès Rosé - 2005 base	NV Rosé	88-90	88-90	25
NV	Camille Savès Rosé - 2006 base	NV Rosé	89-91	89-91	25
1982	Camille Savès Millésime	Vintage Blend	91-94	91-94	25
1995	Camille Savès Cuvée de l'An 2000	Vintage Blend	88-90	88-90	25
2002	Camille Savès Millésime	Vintage Blend	89-91	91-93	26
2004	Camille Savès Bouzy Rouge	Still Red	NR	NR	26
2004	Camille Savès Cuvée Anaïs Jolie Coeur	Vintage Blend	87-89	87-89	26

NV Camille Savès Carte Blanche - 2006 base

Rating	Potential
86-88	86-88

This is a great value and one of the best entry-level non-vintage Champagnes on the market. It's full of baked bread, hints of spice, pie crust, juicy apple, and citrus. If you like fruit and pastry (and who doesn't?), then this is a wine for you.

(25% Chardonnay from Tauxières; 75% Pinot Noir from Ambonnay, Bouzy, and Tours-sur-Marne; 2006 base with 2005 reserve wines; Stainless steel; 40,000 bottles produced; \$45-60 US)

NV Camille Savès Carte Blanche - 2007 base

Rating	Potential
86-88	86-88

This wine offers an incredibly satisfying expression of fruit, with pears, red apples, and peaches that eventually fade easily into biscuity dough. I find this incredibly easy to drink and easily paired with food. A tip-top NV with just one downside – you need to buy it in quantity because the bottles disappear all too quickly.

(25% Chardonnay from Tauxières; 75% Pinot Noir from Ambonnay, Bouzy, and Tours-sur-Marne; 2007 base with 2006 reserve wines; Stainless steel; \$45-60 US)

NV Camille Savès Carte d'Or - 2004 base

Rating	Potential
87-89	88-90

Red citrus, biscuits, pastry dough, kiwi fruit, minerals, tropical fruits and citrus contribute to the most distinct of the Camille Savès non-vintage range, which is also the most interesting. Still young, this wine will only get better, so, tough as it is, keep your hands off for at least another three years.

(25% Chardonnay, 75% Pinot Noir; 2004 base vintage with 2003 reserve wines; Bouzy; No malolactic fermentation; 12,000 bottles produced; \$50-70 US)

NV Camille Savès Cuvée Prestige - 2004 base

Rating	Potential
86-88	87-89

Peachy and floral on the nose, this shows more weight and heft in the mouth than the rest of the Camille Savès non-vintage range. Slightly spicy apples, doughy pears, and elegant minerality form a tasty package.

(35% Chardonnay in oak, 65% Pinot Noir in steel; 2004 base vintage with 2003 reserve wines; Bouzy; No malolactic fermentation; 9,000 bottles produced; \$50-70 US)

NV Camille Savès Rosé - 2007 base

Rating	Potential
89-91	89-91

Simply put, this release is a world-class wine that just happens to have bubbles - it tastes a lot like a top red Burgundy blessed with the added elegance of secondary fermentation. In the glass, this shows intense concentration of flavor, with baking spice-laced cherries, red citrus, strawberry, and raspberry perfectly balanced by a bold and elegant backbone. The biscuit notes are still hidden in this new release, but give them a year and they will make their expected appearance. A must-buy NV Rosé.

(28% Chardonnay; 60% Pinot Noir with 12% Bouzy red wine; 2007 base with 2006 reserve wines; Assemblage; Bouzy; Stainless steel fermentation for all wines; oak aging for reserve wines; No malolactic fermentation; \$45-65 US)

NV Camille Savès Rosé - 2005 base

Rating	Potential
88-90	88-90

Spicy berries, fresh citrus, doughy biscuits, and a kiss of minerality are not only attractive on the nose, but tasty on the palate as well. A couple years of age has done little to change this wine, except for perhaps a slight softening. And yet, it is as good as ever. Drink this on release or a few years later - it will always be fantastic stuff.

(28% Chardonnay; 60% Pinot Noir with 12% Bouzy red wine; 2005 base with 2004 reserve wines; Assemblage; Bouzy; Stainless steel fermentation for all wines; oak aging for reserve wines; No malolactic fermentation; \$45-65 US)

NV Camille Savès Rosé - 2006 base

Rating	Potential
89-91	89-91

An explosion of red berries on the nose and in the mouth, this is fast becoming a benchmark Rosé Champagne. Pink grapefruit, spiced pastry dough, red citrus-coated minerals, and a brilliant, long, mouth-wetting finish all make for a superstar wine. This is the top selling Camille Savès wine in the United States and it is absurdly easy to see why.

(28% Chardonnay; 60% Pinot Noir with 12% Bouzy red wine; 2006 base with 2005 reserve wines; Assemblage; Bouzy; Stainless steel fermentation for all wines; oak aging for reserve wines; No malolactic fermentation; \$45-65 US)

A Spectacular 1982 Champagne

1982 Camille Savès Millésime

Rating	Potential
91-94	91-94

A mesmerizing wine that is overflowing with heady aromas and wonderful flavors. Grilled multi-grain bread, honey, white peaches, flowers, and butter whisk you away to a Champagne oasis where the stress of the everyday grind drops away like a beach towel onto sand - this wine is good enough to transport even the most hardened soul to a better, more relaxing place. Interestingly, this was Hervé Savès' first vintage and the one that changed the direction of Camille Savès toward what we know and love today. A great wine, this is the best Savès I have tasted to date.

(20% Chardonnay; 80% Pinot Noir; Bouzy; No malolactic fermentation; \$100-150 US)

1995 Camille Savès Cuvée de l'An 2000

Rating	Potential
88-90	88-90

Honeyed oranges, pastry dough, lime, and a hint of minerals are all still kicking in high gear and ensuring that this special Millennium release can and will stand on its own. Currently, this is drinking about as well as it ever will, although it is in no danger of fading anytime soon. It is definitely likely to change over time, but it will continue to drink at a very high level.

(50% Chardonnay; 50% Pinot Noir; Bouzy; No malolactic fermentation; \$80-100 US)

This May Be the Best Bargain in 2002 Champagne

Rating	Potential
89-91	91-93

2002 Camille Savès Millésime

Vintage after vintage, this wine delivers at an extremely high level, and 2002 is no different. This vintage is filled with rich biscuits, citrus, minerals, and a few red berry notes. A wave of cream melts into the finish to lift this wine even higher. Already delicious now, this wine is built to age and will further improve with time.

(20% Chardonnay; 80% Pinot Noir; Bouzy; 35+ year old vines; No malolactic fermentation; \$55-80 US)

Rating	Potential
NR	NR

2004 Camille Savès Bouzy Rouge

This is a wine made up of cherries, strawberries, and a hint of sweetness. It tilts to the lighter side, as tannins, while present, are minimal. Personally, I like the Camille Savès red wine better when blended to make a Rosé Champagne, but this is still a refreshing Bouzy Rouge.

(100% Pinot Noir; Bouzy; Oak; \$35-50 US)

Rating	Potential
87-89	87-89

2004 Camille Savès Cuvée Anaïs Jolie Coeur

This is the debut vintage of this wine, which is named after Hervé Savès' great grandmother, who was part of the first generation of Savès to make their own wine. This is also the only Camille Savès wine that is aged completely in oak, and it has the highest Pinot Noir content (90%) of any wine in the range. On the palate it is extremely lively, where doughy citrus and pastry crust dance and tickle the tongue. Creamy, red berry-citrus notes become more prominent with time and the berry aspect is most noticeable on the finish. Hints of vanilla are currently present, but time should see them fade. A very well-made wine and a great first effort. Kudos.

(10% Chardonnay, 90% Pinot Noir; Oak; No malolactic fermentation; 1,000 bottles produced; \$75-90 US)



A Candid Conversation with Régis Camus of Charles/Piper-Heidsieck

Régis Camus is the chef de caves for both Charles Heidsieck and Piper-Heidsieck. He has an incredibly difficult job in that he must oversee two completely different wine lineups, each with their own style and fan base. I recently had the chance to sit down with Régis and discuss his vision and philosophy for Champagne. Assisting with some of the translations in our conversation was Charles Heidsieck/Piper-Heidsieck's International Communications Director Christian Holthausen.



Régis Camus (Chef de Caves) on the left, and Christian Holthausen (International Communications Director) on the right

- **How difficult do you find it to oversee two completely different wine brands?**

At first, it was very challenging as we had two very different wine styles and customer bases, each of whom expected the wines to be very different. We wanted each wine to excel and express itself in its own unique way. Each wine needed its own identity, which meant that we had to learn to think in two different directions at the same time. All of the wines for both Charles Heidsieck and Piper-Heidsieck are vinified together and we have to determine which wines go into each brand every year. While certain wines normally swing one way or the other, we start each year with a clean slate. You know, the more I do this, the more I enjoy making both wines. I view them as two train tracks that never cross each other, but instead run side by side.



- **To you, what are the differences between Charles Heidsieck and Piper Heidsieck?**

The most obvious distinction is that Piper-Heidsieck is the larger brand, by a good margin. We produce around eight million bottles of Piper-Heidsieck compared to two million of Charles Heidsieck. The NV Piper-Heidsieck is a fresher wine that is built from younger wines and bright citrus. The reserves in a NV Piper-Heidsieck can fall as low as six percent and tend to be fairly recent. In contrast, Charles Heidsieck is more complex and built upon a minimum of forty percent reserve wines stretching back well over a decade; it is full of creamy, dough based notes and hints of vanilla and nuts. These basic profiles go through the entire range of each brand to some degree. It offers consumers two very clear choices and wines that match beautifully to a wide array of food.

- **Charles Heidsieck has always had a philosophy of using a large amount of reserve wines in the NV Brut Réserve. Why and how did this come about?**

This was the brainchild of my predescesor, Daniel Thibaut. The classic non-vintage Champagnes have always been built around a large amount of reserve wines spanning a decade or more. Daniel was given the opportunity to create his dream wine and that is how the NV Brut Réserve was born. Daniel insisted on at least forty percent of reserve wines and made sure that the non-vintage blend took precedence over all else. I completely agree with this direction and have continued this trend as it leads to a very high quality non-vintage Champagne.

- **The NV Brut Réserve is really the staple of the Charles Heidsieck house and has been praised for many years. How has it remained consistently good for two decades?**

As I have explained, we are dedicated to this wine above all other wines that we make. A non-vintage wine is often seventy to ninety percent of your sales and the benchmark of your brand, so it has to be good. Even before the NV Brut Réserve Mis en Cave series was launched, the Brut Réserve (sans Mis en Cave) was a complex wine with forty percent or more of reserve wines. It is key to use a good amount of high quality reserves and to give your non-vintage wine first choice of whatever wine or grapes it wants.

- **What wines have been the most challenging for you to make?**

It is always the non-vintage cuvees. A good vintage wine can take care of itself, but to make a good non-vintage wine year in and year out takes a lot of effort and can be a difficult job. In a way, we are lucky because we have a large stock of reserve wines. This helps to make a consistently good non-vintage wine, but is also challenging from a blending perspective.

- **You used to clearly list the base vintage and disgorgement on the NV Brut Réserve, but have now changed directions on this. Why?**

I was and am a strong supporter and believer in the Mis en Cave (base vintage) labeling and the clearly written disgorgement date. Unfortunately, the market found both confusing and in the long run, it was not the best move for business. We still list the disgorgement date on the neck foil of each bottle (rather discretely), but have dropped the base vintage designation. Consumers can still write us with their lot number and we will tell them whatever information they wish to know. If it didn't cost us sales, we would be all for listing more information.

- **How did Charles Heidsieck and Piper-Heidsieck find their way back together again after so many years apart?**

Both Charles and Piper (along with Heidsieck & Co. Monopole) started from the original Heidsieck brand. We all went our separate ways in the nineteenth century, but Rémy Martin brought Charles and Piper together again. Rémy-Cointreau (which was known as Rémy Martin at the time) purchased Charles Heidsieck in 1985 from Henriot right before Veuve Clicquot took over Henriot. Rémy then purchased Piper-Heidsieck in 1989 from the d'Alaun family and combined Charles and Piper-Heidsieck into one strong Champagne group.

- **I really enjoy the Blanc de Millenaires, but have never found it to be the true heart and soul of Charles Heidsieck in that it doesn't call on strong Pinot Noir; is Champagne Charlie ever going to come back?**

People love Champagne Charlie. It is amazing to me that a wine that was only made from 1979 – 1985 can invoke so much passion. I have always liked the wine and we may one day bring it back, but for right now, it isn't a wine we release in new vintages (though we do sell older vintages that we store in our oenotheque). It would be nice to see a prestige Charles Heidsieck cuvée with a good amount of Pinot Noir, but I don't think our current prestige cuvée, the 100% Chardonnay Blanc de Millenaires (which debuted in 1983), is too shabby.



- **What's the story with Piper-Heidsieck Rare going from vintage to non-vintage to vintage again?**

When Rémy purchased Piper-Heidsieck in 1989, Piper had its prestige cuvée called Rare. At this same time, Rémy also owned Krug and wanted to focus on making sure Krug had the "prestige" spotlight. As such, the Rare cuvee was discontinued after 1990 so as not to compete with the Krug line. When Rémy sold Krug to LVMH in 1999, things changed and we were asked to do a Piper prestige wine. With little time to get something on the market and no past planning, the first few releases were non-vintaged in order to make the wines of high quality and still be able to get something out for the consumers. As we had time to plan for a vintage version of Rare starting in early 1999, we could set aside some of the best wines from 1998. Starting with the 1999 harvest, we were able to completely plan for it. It should be no surprise then that the "new" vintage Rare debuted on the market with the 1998 vintage.

- **Are there plans to release a 1996 Charles Heidsieck Blanc de Millenaires?**

I can never say 100% to anything, but there will likely be a small release of this wine in the coming years. The wine is still in need of more time to mature since the 1996 vintage was very strong with a lot of acidity, but the wine will be beautiful. Whether the release will be 2011, 2012, or 2013, we don't know yet. You will just have to stay tuned. When it is ready, we will release it. Look at the 1995 right now, it is fifteen years old and is very, very enjoyable. We want the 1996 to be this good or better – so we will wait for the right time.

- **I know that Florens-Louis was once a vintage prestige cuvée of Piper Heidsieck, but it is now a non-vintage wine. What exactly is the current version of the Florens-Louis?**

Florenz-Ludwig Heidsieck, aka Florens Louis Heidsieck (the French re-naming of a German name), founded the Heidsieck house in 1785 that eventually splintered into the three Heidsiecks. In honor of our founder, Piper-Heidsieck created their first prestige cuvée called Florens-Louis. It was a vintage wine, but was discontinued at the end of the 1970s in favor of the Rare cuvée. We have recently brought it back as a non-vintage wine that has a similar makeup to the basic NV Brut, but is aged longer on the lees and has a lower and different dosage. It is not found in all markets



- **Piper-Heidsieck was once known as a non-malolactic wine, but it now goes through full malolactic fermentation; why was this change made?**

I don't think anyone can truly say that Piper-Heidsieck was always a non-malolactic wine. It certainly didn't always go through malolactic, but there were times when it did so naturally – at least to some degree. I think the reputation it had as a non-malolactic wine stems from the fact the wines were not forced to undergo malolactic. We made the change in 1998 to put the wines through malolactic fermentation because we thought it made the end product better. While the lack of malolactic fermentation may not have been a big deal on the vintage wines, the non-vintage cuvees are what the house is known by and Piper-Heidsieck's non-vintage range is released on the young side and so doesn't incorporate a large amount of reserves. Avoiding malolactic is not always the best recipe for success, especially when many consumers buy your Champagne shortly after release and plan to drink it the same day. We also do not think going through malolactic fermentation has cost the wine anything in terms of aging.

- **I know Piper-Heidsieck has experimented with different wines in the US market. What is the story behind this?**

Piper-Heidsieck and many other Champagne houses have always paid attention to their biggest growth markets and through the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970's, the United States was a key market. A vintage Rosé called Piper Pink was made specifically for the US market and it was different from the normal Millésime Rosé that we released throughout the world. From the 1950s until the 1970s, we also created a US market vintage cuvée called "Goût de l'Ambassadeur" or "Taste of the Ambassador".



- **You have had the unbelievably hard job of following in the footsteps of legendary winemaker Daniel Thibaut. What was it like to work with him and eventually take over from him?**

It was an honor and a thrill. Daniel brought me over to Charles and Piper-Heidsieck in 1994 to assist in achieving his vision. He was a tireless worker and taught me a lot about winemaking and his philosophies on blending. It is very sad that he is not with us anymore (Daniel Thibaut passed away rather unexpectedly in 2002), but he was smart enough to make sure we had a good continuity plan in place and I am doing the same. None of us will last forever and we need to make sure that the next generation understands what we did, has a library of wines to learn and study from, and has the freedom to make their own choices.

~~Un~~solved Mysteries: Jacques Picard

I'm a big fan of the wines of Jacques Picard, and I enjoy tracking their evolution over time in my cellar. Unfortunately, following the progress of these wines can be difficult - it is hard to tell how old a particular non-vintage cuvée is since there are no clearly printed disgorgement dates on the bottles. However, Jacques Picard does throw us a bone by giving us a small code on the bottom of the front label with some disgorgement date information.



The code on the lower left of the Jacques Picard labels is LX## where:

L: Means “Lot”

X: An identifier of the wine type. For example if X = 1, it signifies the NV Sélection Brut.

##: This identifies the year of disgorgement. So, if ## = 09 then the wine was disgorged in 2009.
If ## = 10 then the wine was disgorged in 2010.

With the above information, you can now tell the disgorgement date of your favorite Jacques Picard cuvée.

Coming in Issue 9

- Rene Geoffroy’s New Home in Aÿ
- Spending Time with the Goutorbe Family
- The Fantastic Wines of Henriot

- Top Holiday Champagne Picks
- Over 150 Tasting Notes on Champagne and Sparkling Wines

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