

CHAMPAGNE BOLLINGER

Known around the world for powerful, polished Champagnes that are among the greatest of both Non-Vintage and Vintage Champagnes produced, any of the fundamentals to their approach and production would be special, but when taken altogether are utterly unique.



La Grande Année 2012

Champagne, France

ESTATE

Bollinger is an icon in Champagne, all the more remarkable because its reputation rests entirely on the quality of its extraordinarily distinct Champagnes. Very simply, Bollinger is the outlier. The rigorous, obsessive attention to detail and preservation of artisanal, almost absurdly labor-intensive practices, makes Bollinger both a guardian of the past and, as we see with each passing year, the beacon of the future.

WINE

La Grande Année: The Great Year. This Champagne is the embodiment of everything that makes Bollinger the producer that stands apart in Champagne. La Grande Année symbolizes the word "hand-crafted" so strongly that an overused word suddenly becomes the appropriate definition. La Grande Année is only produced in the most outstanding of vintages, where ripeness and acidity reach a perfect balance and aging potential is excellent.

VINEYARD

The fruit is sourced from 18 different Crus — the majority of the Pinot Noir comes from Aÿ and Verzenay, and the Chardonnay from Le Mesnil-sur-Oger and Oiry. *Farming*: Sustainable wine growing by grassing over the ground, using biological pest control, reducing the use of herbicides, recycling pruning waste and planting hedges and orchards to encourage biodiversity.

WINEMAKING

Variety: 65% Pinot Noir, 35% Chardonnay

Fermentation: All wine is vinified in small neutral barrique. Bollinger is the only remaining Champagne producer with a cooper on staff who repairs in excess of 300 barrels per year. *Aging*: Cellar aged for more than twice the time required by the appellation. Second fermentation takes place for more than 8 years on the lees in bottles with natural corks. Riddling and disgorging are performed entirely by hand.

Dosage: 8 g/L

Alcohol: 12%

VINTAGE

After an unexpectedly gloomy summer which left countless vineyards destroyed from frost and hail damage, the weather made a drastic change for the better, with steadily warm temperatures in August and September. During harvest, temperatures cooled, yielding grapes with perfectly preserved acidity and ripeness. Although yields were far lower than usual, the fruit harvested had exemplary structure, with especially outstanding Pinot Noir across the region.

Wine Spectator

97

"This goes from zero to 60 right out of the gate, with an intense spine of acidity driving tightly meshed flavors of crushed black currant, ground coffee, candied grapefruit peel and toasted almond. The profile expands on the palate, carried by the fine, raw silk-like mousse. Richly aromatic and expressive from start to lasting, spiced finish." - ALISON NAPJUS

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Wine Enthusiast

96

Wine & Spirits

95

Wine Advocate

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