

Pascal Lallement, Brut 1er Cru, Chamery

- Fourth-generation grower Champagne producer in Montagne de Reims
 - Prime vineyards in 1er Cru commune, south-facing hillside bowl
- Organic farming and respect for preserving and celebrating terroirs of Champagne

The Producer

One of the underlying aspects of all French wine is the concept of terroir. More than anywhere on Earth the French believe that the character of the wine cannot be separated from the place where the grapes are grown. The entire French AOC system is built on this concept. The glaring exception to this fundamental principle is Champagne. It is generally accepted that Pinot Noir and Chardonnay are two of the most transparent varieties known for expression of place, yet the entire region of Champagne has only one AOC. The recent trend has logically been to explore the differences in the region through exploration of Champagne's many terroirs. This has seen the rise of the 'grower Champagnes'. Wines that are made by the farmers who grow them, in the tradition of the Burgundy vigneron, demonstrate the diversity of the region and Champagne acknowledges its own terroir.

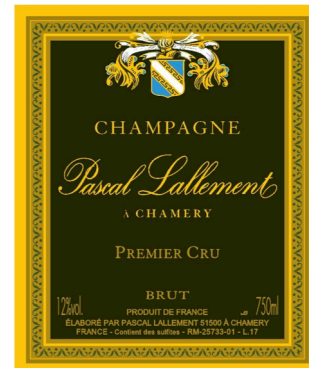
Pascal Lallement is a perfect example of the grower movement. His family has been making wine in Champagne for four generations in the village of Chamery. He farms his vines with care using organic methods always considering the impact on the land. He has been blessed with prime sites in the Montagne de Reims village of Chamery. When viewing the perfect South facing amphitheater of vineyards it's easy to understand why it is rated 1er Cru as the steep bowl looks very much like the Grand Cru of Chablis. The mixture of clay over chalk along with the sunny exposure is ideal for the red varieties Pinot Noir and Meunier which comprise the majority of the blend. Small choice parcels in the neighboring villages of Sermier and Ecuil augment the production.

While the Grande Marques easily have production in the millions of bottles, Lallement's vineyards support a mere 50,000 bottles per year. It is only after spending nearly 5 years on the lees that the wines are disgorged and released. This level of aging is 2 years longer than the requirement for vintage Champagne and similar to many houses' têtes-du-cuvée.

Pascal Lallement not only walks the walk but he also talks the talk. He is an active spokesman for the village of Chamery and for farmer-made wines. Part of the appeal of Lallement is his involvement in oeno-tourism which began in 1996. He welcomes guests to his village with tours of his caves, meals paired with Champagne and rides through the vineyards in his custom 'wine-train'. He feels that by demonstrating what goes into the wines from his quaint village his guests can better understand the relationship of the place to the wines that come from Chamery.

The Wine

Pascal Lallement's Brut Champagne is exactly the wine one would expect from a top village in the Montagne de Reims—a bold Champagne driven by high quality red varieties. The bulk of the wine (75%) is Pinot Noir and Meunier from the hillside bowl of Chamery which gives the wine power and a full round mouthfeel. The remainder comes from Chardonnay whose bright acidity adds freshness and edge to the wine. All vineyards are farmed organically with cover crops and minimal intervention. The Brut NV consists of three vintages (2007-08-09). The wines are made in a reductive style in stainless steel to preserve the freshness of the fruit. Dosage is moderate at 12 g/l. The result is a wine with ripe red fruit wrapped around a core of bright citrus softened by the extended tirage to produce a rich creamy texture and long mineral-driven finish.



Region: Champagne

Appellation: Montagne de Reims, Chamery, 1er Cru

Vineyards: Chamery, Ecuil, Sermier

Soil: Clay over chalk, sandy base in Ecuil

Varietals: 75% Pinot Noir & Pinot Meunier, 25% Chardonnay

Vintages: 2007, 2008, 2009

Planting system: Chablis, Cordon du Royat

Vine density: 4' x 6'

Yield: Average 3 tons/acre

Harvest: Oct 11-21, 2010

Production: 50,000 bottles

Vinification: Fermented in Stainless steel, reserve wines aged in stainless tanks

Aging: 48-60 months on the lees before disgorgement