

Champagne Barnaut, Bouzy



Edmond Barnaut was one of the first pioneers in Champagne to create his own brand outside of the controlling centers of Epernay and Reims. In 1874 he set up shop in Bouzy, where he owned vines and where he married Appoline Godmé-Barancourt (there's a name!), heiress to additional vineyards in the village.

Cellars were dug as deep as 15 meters underground, and the first cuvée made of two-thirds Pinot Noir and one-third Chardonnay was launched. And it's still made today, under the Grande Réserve label, with its reserve wine coming from a solera system begun by Edmond himself and maintained through five generations of Barnaut descendants.

Philippe Secondé is the current descendant and arguably one of the more important ones. After earning a degree in enology, he took over the family firm in 1985 and went on to significantly increase the house's vineyards, modernize its cellar, expand production, and move its viticulture footing to the quasi-organic *lutte raisonnée* structure (plowing between rows, using only organic composts, and minimalizing fungicide applications). Today Champagne Barnaut farms 12.11 hectares (30 acres) in the grand cru vineyards of Bouzy and 5.39 hectares (13 acres) in the Marne Valley.

The Bouzy vineyards are composed of 12% Chardonnay and 88% Pinot Noir, and are divided into 22 parcels (what we offer comes from these parcels). All fruit is selected on a sorting table. All the cuvées of wine undergo malolactic fermentation in stainless steel, and fifty percent of each year's crop is saved as reserve wine. The white non-vintage wines spend at least 24 months on the lees before being disgorged, and rest for another three months before going to market. The vintage wine spends around three years on the lees.

With its sister village of Ambonnay, Bouzy lays claim to having the finest vineyard sites for Pinot Noir in the appellation of Champagne. Its 833 acres of vines grow up the rolling foothills of the *Montagne de Reims* and face due south, ensuring the best possibility for ripening every year (Ambonnay's vineyards, following the mountain, begin the turn to the southeast, thus on paper anyway have the potential for more elegance). The result is Champagne's richest and fullest-bodied wines—the Latin counterpart to the Côte des Blancs' Nordic austerity, if you will.

Barnaut's annual production is roughly 120,000 bottles, or 10,000 12-pack cases.

Current Releases

- *Grande Réserve*: This is the original cuvée, and its reserve wine comes from the batch first made by Edmond Barnaut and replenished every year. The blend is approximately two-thirds Pinot Noir and one-third Chardonnay, and represents 65% of the annual production.
- *Blanc de Noirs*: Made entirely from Bouzy Pinot Noir, arguably the most celebrated Pinot Noir in Champagne for its ripeness and richness. As with the Grande Réserve and Vintage, Philippe Secondé looks to avoid heaviness in this wine while harnessing the inherent density and depth of fruit Bouzy offers.
- *Rosé Authentique*: Saignée method rosé from Pinot Noir, with 10-15% Bouzy Chardonnay added for freshness. Powerfully marked by Pinot Noir, this is a rosé Champagne made unapologetically for the table. It spends 18 months on the lees, the shortest length of time *chez* Barnaut, before being disgorged.
- *Vintage 2000*: Made only in the great years, this is a blend of roughly equal parts Chardonnay and Pinot Noir.

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