

# Champagne J-M Sélèque Pierry



## The Wines

- *Solesence NV Brut*: This cuvée represents nearly half of the total house production, coming in at some 2,500 cases. It also roughly mirrors the house plantations, originating in all seven communes where Jean-Marc grows vines and being a blend based on Chardonnay, then Meunier, followed by Pinot Noir. The grapes for this wine come from the domain's younger vines, which average 35 years of age (that, it must be said, would constitute the old vine selection for most Champagne properties!). Half the blend is reserve wine from the previous year's Brut, and roughly 20% of that is aged in barrel. The new wine is made predominately in steel and ages on its lees for 20 months. Jean-Marc's father used to age this wine for 15 months; and Jean-Marc may extend the ageing period to 24 months, but not longer because the goal is to retain freshness. The wine has an unusually fine mousse and terrific plump fruit and elegance, underpinned by stony salinity. The lot number on the back label is the base vintage.
- *Solesence NV Brut Rosé*: The Solesence Brut with around 10% of the Meunier infusion plus 5% of still Pinot Noir. Reserve wine makes up roughly 40% of the blend. It has the same class and sophistication as the Brut with a core of red fruit. The lot number is the base vintage. Production averages 600 cases.
- *Le Quintette NV Extra Brut*: Jean-Marc's only blanc de blancs, coming from five mature plantations in the Marne Valley, the Côte des Blancs, and Pierry. Half the wine is raised in steel with natural malolactic fermentation, and half is raised in older barrels without ML. The cold stabilization is completed naturally, and there is neither fining nor filtration. The wine is aged on its lees for a minimum of 36 months. The lot number on the back is the base vintage. Annual production averages 325 cases.
- *Les Solistes NV Extra Brut*: This comes from a Pierry premier cru hillside vineyard named Les Gouttes d'Or planted with *sélection massale* in 1951 and 1953. Given the exposition and ground (significant flint deposits in clay on top of chalk), plant material, and age, this may be Jean-Marc's finest parcel of Meunier.  
  
Half the wine is raised in concrete egg with natural malolactic fermentation, and half is raised in older barrels without ML. The cold stabilization is completed naturally, and there is neither fining nor filtration. The wine is bottled with cork and aged on its lees for a minimum of 36 months before disgorgement. The lot number on the back is the base vintage. Annual production averages 150 cases.
- *Les Solistes Infusion Rosé NV Extra Brut*: This is all Pinot Meunier from a hillside parcel of Les Charmiers in the premier cru commune of Pierry, macerated on its skins for two days and aged in older barrels. If you want a rosé to pair with fish cooked in red wine, this would be the ticket. The lot number is the vintage.

- *Cuvée Partition*: Music is central in the Sélèque family; Jean-Marc grew up playing guitar while his father continues to play piano. The treble clef on the Partition label is indeed inverted—to make the S of the family name.

Partition is Jean-Marc's creation. Seven barrels from seven vineyard sites, always the same sites each year. *Les Frileux* in Epernay gives Chardonnay; *Maque-Bouteille* in Dizy gives Chardonnay; *La Justice* in Vertus gives Chardonnay; *Basses Ronces* in Mardeuil gives Chardonnay; *Les Porgeons*, *Les Gouttes d'Or*, and *Les Gayères* in Pierry give, respectively, Chardonnay, Meunier, and Pinot Noir. The blend is dominated by Chardonnay, with Meunier and Pinot Noir (specifics for a given year are on the back label).

Ageing on the lees is for four to five years. Significantly, beginning with the 2010 vintage, this ageing is done *tirage sur liege*, or in bottle with a cork closure rather than with the typical beer cap closure (Jacquesson also ages on cork). A cork allows more of an exchange of oxygen in the beginning before the secondary fermentation begins, but once that begins and the pressure builds up within a bottle, a cork becomes less permeable than a cap. In Jean-Marc's words: "This is something important for me, to continue the winemaking with oxygen inside the bottle. It results that the wine with cap is bright and fresh, chiseled and straight when young (24 to 36 months) and gets more evolved after 4 years. But the wine with cork is rich, textured, more complex with a soft bubble, and keeps its freshness longer in the cellar. Though it is a hard and long job to bottle with cork and also to disgorge, because you have to taste the foam of each bottle to see if there is any cork taint."

Partition is bottled without fining or filtration. Production is 125 cases.