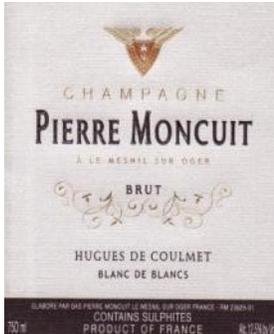


# Champagne Pierre Moncuit Le Mesnil-sur-Oger



In 1889 Pierre Moncuit and his wife, Odile Moncuit-Delos, established the house of Champagne Pierre Moncuit. Since 1977, Nicole Moncuit has managed the vineyards and made the wine, while her brother Yves has managed the sales. More recently, Nicole's daughter Valérie has been actively assisting in the cellar.

Mesnil lies smack in the middle of the Côte des Blancs and is its most celebrated village, in no small part because of the vintages of Salon Champagne and the single-vineyard Clos du Mesnil, owned, of course, by Krug. The wines of Mesnil are known above all for steely elegance and minerality, and those Pierre Moncuit—which has some of the oldest vines along the entire Côte—superbly reflect these qualities.

The house farms 20 parcels totaling 37 acres in the grand cru-rated vineyards surrounding the village. These vineyards face east as they climb the Côte's chalk-infused flank. The majority of Moncuit's vines are 45-years or older, and two parcels, used in the best years for the vintage-dated Cuvée Nicole Moncuit, are just shy of their centennial birthday. In a region known for replanting vines before they reach their third decade to ensure vigorous production, these old vines represent a rare patrimony.

Another unusual bent in the Moncuit way of doing things is that no reserve wine is used in its production. All of its wines are made from a single year, regardless if they are labeled non-vintage or labeled with a vintage. The non-vintage wines spend a minimum of three years on their lees before disgorgement; the vintage wines spend between six and eight years on their lees. After disgorgement, the former age another three months before release while the latter spend another six months in the house's cellar before going to market.

In order to keep focus on purity and minerality, no wood is used during the *élevage*. Malolactic fermentation is the norm here. At bottling, the usual dosage runs between 7-8 grams of sugar per liter, in contrast to the more standard 12 grams employed by the majority of the Côte's growers. Annual production averages 180,000 bottles, or 15,000 12-pack cases, and includes roughly 10,000 bottles of rosé Champagne. No business is conducted with *négociants* either to purchase or to sell juice.

About the bottles themselves, a lavender capsule signifies a good vintage; a gold capsule signifies an exceptional vintage (this as judged by Nicole and Valérie). And the crest on the label is a reference to Nicole and Yves' father, who was an officer in the French Air Force.

[www.pierre-moncuit.fr](http://www.pierre-moncuit.fr)