

Champagne JM Sélèque

Pierry



The Wines

- *Solessence*: Solessence represents nearly half of the total house production, coming in around 4,200 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 domaine's younger vines, which average 45 years of age (that, it must be said, would constitute the old vine selection for most Champagne properties!) Half the blend comes from a perpetual reserve, so-named because 50% of this older wine goes into the blending tank with the new harvest, and then 50% of that new blend is returned to the 20-hectoliter *foudre* to replenish the perpetual reserve. The new wine is made primarily in steel with some in wood, and then time on the lees depends on the bottle size: the 750mls are aged for 2 years on the lees before disgorging; 4 years for magnums; and 5 years for 3-liter bottles. The wine is bottled without fining or filtration. The lot number on the back label is the base vintage.
- *Solessence Nature*: This is the same wine as Solessence NV but aged for three more years for a total of five years on its lees (for the 750mls), and it's bottled with zero dosage. Jean-Marc makes this for shellfish, seafood, and sushi. The aromatics are provocative, the body is broad and creamy, and the finish is decidedly dry. The lot number on the back is the vintage. The wine is aged 5 years on the lees before disgorging, and beginning with the 2019 vintage this aging is done under cork rather than crown cap (Solessence Nature, along with Partition and the Soliste range, are all aged under cork). No fining or filtration; production averages 400 cases.
- *Solesence Rosé*: An unusually complex rosé made with a blend of reds--Meunier from his parcel of Les Charmes macerated over two days and Pinot Noir still wine from Les Gayères--blended into the Solessence cuvée along with 40% reserve wine. The lot number is the base vintage. The 750mls are aged for 2 years on the lees before disgorging and 4 years for magnums. Production averages 600 cases.
- *Soliste Chardonnay Vintage*: The 2016 was the first release of this cuvée, completing Jean-Marc's palette of four Pierry single site, single varietal, single vintage wines under the Soliste label. Like all the Soliste wines, this is fermented entirely in oak barrels, and aged under cork (rather than crown cap) on its lees--in this case, for four years before disgorgement. The grapes come from two adjacent south-facing plots named Les Tartières and Les Porgeons, whose current vines were planted in 1990 and 1985 respectively. They grow in the heart of the Pierry slope, right in the middle, with Tartières stretching above Porgeons. The higher site grows in five feet of clay over Campanian chalk, whereas the layer of clay in Porgeons tapers up to a level of less than one foot. This is a great example of what the Côteaux Sud can do with Chardonnay: one with ample body and fruit, coupled with superb tension. Production averages 130-150 cases.

- *Soliste Pinot Noir Vintage*: Pinot Noir planted in 1975 from *sélection massales* in Les Gayères, a mid-slope site on the windy Pierry hillside noted for deep clay and flintstones on top of Campanian chalk. It faces east, veering to the southeast, and is a late ripening site, giving a Pinot Noir with great freshness and minerality. The site is plowed by a horse in the spring. The wine is made in barrel and subsequently aged on its lees in bottle under cork for four years. No fining or filtration. Production averages 100-125 cases.
- *Soliste Meunier Vintage*: This blanc de noirs comes from a Pierry premier cru hillside vineyard named Les Gouttes d'Or planted with *selection massales* primarily in 1951, with subsequent plantings in 1953, 1968, and 1971. The topsoil is an ochre clay with significant flint deposits on top of the Campanian chalk, elevations are in the lower-slope range of 100-110 meters, and the parcel is plowed by horse. This may be Jean-Marc's finest parcel of Meunier, growing in a site historically known for the varietal, making a wine with great elegance and precision.

This is raised in 300-350-liter barrels without malolactic fermentation. The cold stabilization is completed naturally, and there is neither fining nor filtration. The wine is aged under cork on its lees in bottle for four years before disgorgement. Annual production averages 150 cases.
- *Soliste Meunier Rosé Vintage*: This was formerly called Soliste Infusion Meunier Rosé. A rosé of Pinot Meunier from a parcel of Les Charmiers located upslope of Pierry's hillside on a very windy ridge facing southeast. These *sélections massales* vines were planted in 1964 in topsoil that lays a foot and a half deep on top of the chalk. The grapes were de-stemmed, macerated without crushing for 24-hours (like making tea, Jean-Marc says), then pressed. What goes into this bottle are those vats of the best juice from the pressing. Raised in barrel then put into bottle under cork to age on its lees for five years. This is a rosé for the table. Production is some 100 cases annually.
- *Quintette*: Jean-Marc's blended Blanc de Blancs from five mature plantations in the Marne Valley, the Côte des Blancs, and the Côteaux Sud. Fruit from Pierry gives body and structure; Dizy gives richness and aromatic complexity; Mardeuil gives bright flavors; Epernay gives tension; and Vertus gives purity and finesse. Approximately 30% of the wine is raised in steel while the rest is raised in barrel. The cold stabilization is completed naturally, and there is neither fining nor filtration. In July, after a long, gentle aging following the harvest, the wine is blended with around 20% Chardonnay from a solera (unlike the perpetual cuvée, the solera is replenished strictly with the new harvest) and rests on its lees under cork until it is disgorged. The 750mls are aged for 3 years on the lees before disgorging and 5 years for magnums. The lot number on the back is the base vintage. Annual production averages 420 cases.
- *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. With each vintage, the score on the label changes to a different song to reflect something that happened that year. Millésime 2012, for example, has Jimi Hendrix's *Changes* (different from Bowie's song), because Jean-Marc instituted a series of changes in how he worked that year. The 2013 is Dusty Springfield's *Son of a Preacher Man*; the 2014 is The Animals' *House of the Rising Sun*.

Partition is Jean-Marc's creation. Seven barrels from seven vineyard sites, always the same sites each year. *Les Frileux* in Epernay gives Chardonnay; *Moque-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).

The 750mls are aged for 5 years on the lees before disgorging and 8 years for magnum. 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. 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 150 cases.

- *Partition 2ième Lecture (2nd Reading)*: This is the one late-disgorged wine that Jean-Marc does, and it began with the 2008 vintage of Partition. The 2011 'second reading' saw ten years of aging on its lees under cork before disgorgement in January 2021. It was given a dosage of 1.5 g/l. Production: 476 bottles.