



CHAMPAGNE GRATIOT-PILLIÈRE

— à Charly-sur-Marne —

NEWS LETTER - February 2018

Dear Clients and Customers,

It gives us great pleasure to bring you up to date with News from the Maison for the latter part of 2017 and early part of 2018:

A complicated 2017 Harvest

Frost in April, drought in July, hail and torrential rains in August, and to top it all off a farcical month of September, the year 2017 has been rich in disappointments. Starting on September 1, the first cuts of the secateurs are made in the parcels of chardonnay, earlier than usual this year. Our team of faithful harvesters paid special attention to the sorting of each bunch, and even each grape. At the end, a soft and careful pressing helped to extract a promising juice.



The first tasting of the wines after alcoholic fermentation (also called « vins clairs » or "clear wines") suggest an encouraging quality despite the problems encountered this year. The lack of sunshine in the latter months gives a rather discreet aromatic intensity and a shorter length in the mouth.

As a result, we will not be producing a year 2017 « Millésime » (vintage) for our Brut, Blanc de Blancs or HERITAGE. However, the input of Reserved wines from the beautiful years 2015 and 2016 into the blend of the harvest year 2017 will enable us to guarantee a good quality for our TRADITION Cuvées.

In the winter vineyards

The first task after the harvest, PRUNING, begins with the falling of the leaves until late March. Our team of 4 people prune nearly 190 000 vines, one by one through the 5 winter months.

Among the vineyard projects, pruning is the fundamental process, because the quality of the harvest will depend on the precision and reflection brought to the task. It induces vigour, fertility and maturity to the vines. It conditions both development and growth.

Precise definition of the rules in pruning have been in regulation since 1938. It is the only AOC which regulates this area in such a rigorous, detailed and comprehensive fashion.

Each variety of our appellation has its own pruning style, the GUYOT (invented by Jules Guyot in the 19th century) for the Meunier, the CHABLIS for the Chardonnay and the CORDON de ROYAT for the Pinot Noir. Our ancestors invented them to control the vigour of each grape variety.

A more suitable fertilization of the soil

Each year, we conduct soil analyses over 20% of our vineyard, that equates to one analysis every 5 years on each plot. This allows us to better manage the needs of the vine throughout its growth cycle and make adjustments if necessary.

In 2017, we conducted a trial with a new organic amendment (BACTERIOSOL produced by the company SOBAC) consisting of a selection of naturally composted plants on which micro-organisms can develop. These make it possible to restore life to the soil by generating humus content quickly and so improving the structure. The upshot of this process being better rooting for the vines, strengthened resistance, and therefore an improved sustainability of each vine.

For more information visit : <https://www.sobac.fr>

The cuvées to be discovered in 2018!

Brut BLANC DE BLANCS 2011, *crisp and bracing!*

The dry and very hot weather during the month of August 2011, helped ripen the early harvested chardonnays at the beginning of September of that year.

An elegant and discreet champagne with a light aromas of candied citrus. The palate is fresh and direct, characterized by a long and intense lemony finish. Lean towards saline-iodine-mineral pairings: simply prepared shellfish, or with raw or smoked salmon preparations.

Brut HERITAGE 2012: *oaked purity*

In the Newsletter from February 2013, we announced the following with regard to the 2012 harvest: "**small harvest, great vintage.**" A few years later, you have the opportunity to taste this delicious nectar.

The string of fine bubbles underscores an aromatic palette of perfectly ripe white and yellow fruits (plums, prunes, candied citrus). The palate is fresh, coated in a woodland patina that opens up to a lush fruit.

This wine is particularly destined to pair with well prepared and structured dishes: A confit of St Jacques with saffron, crayfish en cocotte, or with creamy characterful cheeses.



Export, a beautiful year 2017!

Wonderful opportunities arose for us throughout the year and materialized successfully for the holidays.

A new distributor in Finland, Bornicon & Salming, offers us the opportunity to present our wines at ALKO online webshop. This Finnish distributor has the monopoly on the retail sale of all alcoholic drinks in the territory. This company is linked to the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs and has around 353 outlets. The webshop was created in 2016. The year 2018 looks promising for our champagnes in this marketplace!

Our presence at the Hong Kong International Wine and Spirit Fair in November, organized by the "Syndicat General des Vignerons de Champagne" opened up some new opportunities for us: we already shipped an order to Taiwan in December and another is underway for the Hong-Kong.

In Japan, a 2nd large order of our complete range confirms our presence in this market in 2017.

We went to the USA in October to participate in the annual tasting with our distributors in Minnesota and Ohio. This was also an opportunity for us to discover and focus on the Florida market where our champagnes are currently distributed. *Top Wine Imports*, our importer, is scrambling to best position our wines in Florida but also in a few other States... (stay tuned for more information).

In England, our presence is growing despite the consequences of the Brexit. We thank Bancroft *Wines* and their loyal customers for their trust.

Follow our news!

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On Facebook : www.facebook.com/champagne.gratiot.pilliere

On Twitter : [Champagne Gratiot@GratiotPilliere](https://twitter.com/ChampagneGratiotPilliere)

On Instagram : https://www.instagram.com/champagne_gratiot_pilliere/

Please do not hesitate to contact us for any further information.

Bubbly wishes,

Olivier et Sébastien GRATIOT