

# Billecart-Salmon

**REGION** - Champagne, France

**APPELLATIONS** - Chouilly; Avize;  
Le Mesnil-sur-Oger

**WINEMAKER** - François Domi

**FARMING** - Sustainable with organic practices

**WEBSITE** - [www.champagne-billecart.fr](http://www.champagne-billecart.fr)



## HISTORY

In 1818, Nicolas François Billecart and his wife Elisabeth Salmon founded the house of Billecart-Salmon in Mareuil-sur-Aÿ, which now stands as the oldest continuously family-owned and operated house in Champagne. The estate is currently managed by the family's seventh generation, brothers François and Antoine Roland-Billecart, while the cellars lie in the hands of renowned "chef de cave" François Domi.

## VITICULTURE

Billecart-Salmon owns a total of 30 ha of vineyards. Eleven of these lie in the Vallée de la Marne split between 4 ha of Grand Cru in Aÿ and Premier Cru in Mareuil-sur-Aÿ, along with 7 ha in the village of Damery. In the Côte des Blancs the family owns 4 ha of Grand Cru vineyards in the villages of Chouilly, Avize and Le Mesnil-sur-Oger. In addition, Billecart-Salmon leases 60 ha of vineyards across the region and also buys fruit from 40 growers with whom they have close, long-term relationships.

The house operates on the philosophy that an early harvest yields more elegant, delicate Champagnes. They look for strong acid structure rather than alcohol as a preservative, and therefore, never harvest at higher than 10° potential alcohol. They strive to carry out their harvest with minimal grape handling and transit time by utilizing four press houses on the property.

## VINIFICATION

The Billecart House vinifies each parcel separately and then blends them together to maintain precision based on acidity, maturity and potential. Borrowing an idea from François and Antoine's maternal grandmother, a brewer in the North of France, the house uses a natural technique of double-cold settling to avoid oxidation while retaining freshness. The unique process involves a primary cold settling of the pressed juice for a period of 12 hours when the heaviest of the must solids fall to the bottom. The juice is then racked into clean tanks where it is chilled down to 36°F for another 48 hours. This second, much colder settling eliminates any wild yeasts and additional heavy elements without the use of enzymes, filtering or centrifuge. After the second racking, fermentation is initiated by adding dried yeast and then maintained at a long, slow pace for up to five weeks in order to preserve as many delicate fruit aromas as possible.

Malolactic fermentation is legally allowed but may be blocked in certain years if vintage conditions warrant it. Since 1987, the family has reserved a certain percentage of their wines for vintage cuvée Champagnes in barrel. In these instances, malolactic fermentation is always prevented.

Antoine Roland-Billecart believes that dosage should be minimal, saying, "Dosage is almost like makeup. If you have to use a lot of makeup, then you have something to hide, right?"

***"In Champagne it is not always easy to distinguish marketing hype from genuine commitment...But I sense the commitment of these varied heirs is genuine, and it is surely no coincidence that some of the best Champagnes are made by houses dominated by single families....the Billecarts own Billecart-Salmon, some of Champagne's most delectable wines."***

- Stephen Brook, MW



## **Billecart-Salmon Non-Vintage Brut Réserve**

40% Pinot Meunier, 30% Pinot Noir, 30% Chardonnay from Vallée de la Marne is made up of 3 vintages with up to 50% reserve wine. It is produced completely with first press juice. The wine undergoes a long, low temperature vinification to preserve freshness and aromas and ages 3 years on the lees to ensure perfect quality upon release. Very low dosage: 7g/L

## **Billecart-Salmon Non-Vintage Brut Rosé**

50% Chardonnay, 30% Pinot Noir, 20% Pinot Meunier referred to as a Champagne Rosé that uses Chardonnay for added lightness and elegance with no skin contact during maceration. Pinot Noir is blended in as a red wine for the light, unique color and red fruit flavors. It consists of three vintages with up to 40% reserve wines. Very low dosage: 7-8g/L

## **Billecart-Salmon Non-Vintage Extra Brut**

40% Pinot Meunier, 30% Pinot Noir, 30% Chardonnay was launched following a request from three-star chef in France, Guy Savoy, who was seeking a purer expression of Brut Réserve to easily pair with his wide array of dishes. The cuvée ages 4 years (1 year more than the Brut Réserve). Zero dosage

## **Billecart-Salmon Non-Vintage Demi-Sec**

40% Pinot Meunier, 30% Pinot Noir, 30% Chardonnay from Vallée de la Marne is made up of 3 vintages with up to 40% reserve wine. It is produced completely with first press juice. The wine undergoes a long, low temperature vinification to preserve freshness and aromas and ages 3 years on the lees to ensure perfect quality upon release. Dosage: 40g/L

## **Billecart-Salmon Non-Vintage Blanc de Blancs Grand Cru**

100% Chardonnay from 25 parcels in the chalky soils of the five grand cru vineyards of the Côte des Blancs: Avize, Chouilly, Cramant, Oger and Mesnil-sur-Oger. Partial malolactic fermentation is completed depending on each wine's acidity levels followed by up to 5 years of aging. The cuvée is a blend of four vintages. Very low dosage: 5-6g/L

## **Billecart-Salmon Non-Vintage Brut Sous Bois**

1/3 each of Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier. Launched in 2010, this unique cuvée is both 100% fermented and aged in neutral oak barrel at a low temperature. Each variety ferments and ages separately in 6- to 12-year-old light to medium toasted barriques from Burgundy for a few months with the Pinot Meunier and up to 8 months for Pinot Noir and Chardonnay followed by 5 years aging in bottle, with no malolactic. The cuvée is a blend of four vintages. Dosage: 6g/L

## **Billecart-Salmon Vintage Extra Brut 2007 Grand Cru**

75% grand cru Pinot Noir from Montagne de Reims and 25% grand cru Chardonnay from Côte des Blancs. The richness of flavors from this vintage expresses a body, power and depth that is balanced enough to produce an attractive Extra Brut. 100% stainless steel fermentation. No dosage. The wine ages for 7 years before release.

## **Billecart-Salmon Vintage Blanc de Blancs 2004 Grand Cru**

100% Chardonnay from the three grand crus of the Côte des Blancs: Avize, Chouilly and Le Mesnil sur Oger. 70% of the wine undergoes malolactic fermentation followed by 8 to 9 years of aging with 15% of the blend fermented in barriques.

## **Billecart-Salmon Cuvée Nicolas François Billecart 2002 Grand Cru**

60% Pinot Noir from Montagne de Reims and 40% Chardonnay from Côte des Blancs. This cuvée was created in 1964 as a tribute to the co-founder and respects the original recipe from 1837. The blend remains the same every vintage with 20% of the wine fermented in barriques and 10 years of aging. Can age well in bottle, up to 20 years. Dosage: 8g/L

## **Billecart-Salmon Elisabeth Salmon 2006 Grand Cru**

50% Pinot Noir and 50% Chardonnay cuvée created in 1988 as a tribute to the co-founder. Most of the Pinot Noir comes from Ambonnay, due the complexity from its older vines, averaging 50 to 60 years old. Between 8% to 10% of additional Pinot Noir is added during vinification as a red wine to add color. 20% of the blend is fermented in barriques, and the cuvée ages 10 years on the lees before release.

## **Billecart-Salmon Le Clos Saint-Hilaire 1999 Grand Cru**

100% Pinot Noir from a single hectare clos (enclosed vineyard plot) in Mareuil-Sur-Aÿ planted by Jean Roland-Billecart in 1964 as a tribute to the patron saint of Mareuil's church. Vines are farmed using biodynamic practices and thrive in chalk soils that allow the roots to grow deep through silt, clay and limestone. Its southeast exposure provides precise maturity and complexity. The exceptional wine is fermented entirely in barrique with good aging capacity of 20-50 years. Only four vintages released – 1995, 1996, 1998, 1999. Dosage: 4-5g/L (Limited Release – 3000-5000 bts depending on the vintage)

