



Grower Champagne Club  
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## BE IT CREMANT OR CRAMANT, IT'S ALWAYS GRAND

So, prior to becoming an extremely important Grand Cru village within the world of Champagne, there was in fact a sparkling wine from Cramant that was called 'Cremant de Cramant.' Cremant, of course, is what you expect any other sparkling wine to be designated as throughout France that is NOT from Champagne but it's good to know that at one point this very confusing, yet likely delicious alliteration once existed.

The local Cremant style of wine is still produced today by some of the older houses, mainly for local consumption, and the only thing that separates the wine from Champagne is that it has almost half the amount of atmospheres (i.e. pressure and size of bubbles). Modern Champagne *a Cramant* are increasingly worth seeking out and experiencing can provide some of the more ample and richly textured wines to be found that are grown on the original slopes of the Cotes des Blancs.

Cheers!  
Kevin Wardell, Cramant, 2021

## **GROWER CHAMPAGNE NO. 1**

Lancelot-Pienne 'Table Ronde' Extra Brut

Chardonnay

Cramant, Champagne, France NV

### **GROWER:**

Our hero Gilles Lancelot comes from a long lineage of growers in the Cote des Blancs. His great-grandfather planted his own grapes in Cramant after World War I, and worked as Mumm's vineyard manager, and Gilles' grandfather began bottling his domain Champagne after WWII. In 1967, his father married Brigitte Pienne from Chouilly and the two domains merged. Gilles took up the mantle of Lancelot-Pienne in 2005 after studying enology and working alongside his father for over a decade.

Thanks to his family roots, Gilles was able to buy the old Mumm winery in Cramant in the early 2000s. He now farms 22 acres of vines, still based in Cramant, but his 55 parcels are spread along the northern sector of the Côte des Blancs and down into the Côteaux Sud d'Épernay and into the Marne Valley. His "Table Ronde" Grand Cru blend comes from 50 year old vines from 21 parcels in Cramant, (60%) giving the wine creaminess and mineral chalk salinity - Chouilly (30%) for fruitiness and Avize (10%) for its raw, lean acidity.

He ferments and ages in steel tanks, with 20% of the final blend coming from a solera dating back 14 years. Lancelot was notoriously King Arthur's knight-hand-man, and seeing as Gilles married Céline Perceval, and Perceval was another mythic knight, it was true destiny for them to create this Holy Grail bottling.

**TASTING NOTES:** This is a round table forum on the virtues of Chardonnay: there's salt water taffy and nougat on the nose, fresh golden apple and apricot compote fruit core, topped with flecks of creme brulee, and yet it is pure and transparent, brisk and crisp and cutting (as Excalibur?) with the mineral charge of all that Cote des Blancs chalk. The whole package is playful and mythic, and somehow as nostalgic and satisfying as a thick slice of birthday cake.

**FINE DETAILS:** 3.5 g/L, 80% 2015 base wine disgorged Feb 2019, 36 months sur lees, solera since 1998

## GROWER CHAMPAGNE NO. 2

Guiborat 'Prisme' 15 Blanc de Blancs

Chardonnay

Cramant, Champagne NV

### GROWER:

Richard Fouquet had his eye on making Champagne since he was very young, and by the time he was all of 18 years old he had moved to the family domaine at the edge of Cramant and began his tutelage under his grandmother. Richard took over the operation when he was 21, and now runs the show with his wife Karine, farming the family's small 20 acre estate. The estate has been cultivated since 1885, and while the family vineyard has long been a source for Laurent-Perrier, they keep a small amount of their very best Grand Cru fruit to make their Guiborat wines.

The "Prisme.15" is a blend of 3 of the family's oldest parcels that date back to 1946, Cramant (34%) Chouilly (42%) Oiry (24%), all of which have sparse topsoil and pure limestone and chalk.

Only the gentlest pressings are used and malolactic fermentation is blocked. Seven months on lees in 96% stainless steel and 4% in large oak barrels (to be precise) followed by 44 months on lees in bottle plus 12 months ageing post-disgorgement.

**TASTING NOTES:** The label boasts *le terroir révélé*, 'the terroir revealed,' and that's no hyperbole. This is a treatise on chalk soils showing the mind-boggling, Simone Biles-like cartwheeling balance of pure salinity and sweet creme fraiche, bracing acid and exquisite richness. There's only a touch of fruit, and all green at that: tomatillo, lemon lime, fresh pear, all zipped together with a bracing salinity on the finish.

Pairing recommendation: crank Dark Side of the Moon, preferably in a glowing stained glass cathedral or at a burning man installation of prisms in the desert.

**FINE DETAILS:** 84% from the 2015 vintage and the remaining 14% from 2014.

Dosage: 1.5g/l