

# CHARTOGNE-TAILLET

Merfy

[chartogne-taillet.typepad.fr/](http://chartogne-taillet.typepad.fr/)

France

CHAMPAGNE  
Montagne de Reims

## OVERVIEW

With Chartogne-Taillet one appreciates the significance of terroir. There is an example of just how wonderful wines can be simply because of how talented and conscientious they are. Their land, while good (Merfy is "84%" on the Echelle de Crus) is not aristocratic, and I'm certain if we could transplant them to, say, Aÿ or Mesnil they'd promptly take their place among the elite. As it is, we have overachievers making some silky, swank fizz articulated with careful diction, "easy" drinking and forthright. These are racy, spicy Champagnes at the low end; sumptuous, brioche-y Champagnes at the top. For some reason, a consistent standout in blind tastings! The basic wine is keen and racy, and the upper-end wines are virtually luscious, they are so brioche-y and creamy. Lovers of old-style Champagnes are encouraged to look closely at these. More recent cuvees have shown a silken complexity that's consistent enough to infer the design of a knowing hand.

Chartogne-Taillet owns parcels in Merfy, and remains the only RM producer in the village. The soil in Merfy is clay, sand and sandstone over chalk, forcing the roots of the vines to "live in two environments" as Alexandre Chartogne puts it. Elisabeth and Philippe Chartogne's son Alexandre, now in charge of the cellars at Chartogne-Taillet, worked with Anselme Selosse in Avize and applies Selosse's ideas in the cellars and vineyards in Merfy. Alexandre vinifies each parcel individually some in stainless steel and a growing number in neutral barrique. The family's holdings in Merfy include the Chemin de Reims vineyard, a site mentioned in viticultural writings from the ninth century. Today, chardonnay from the Chemin de Reims vineyard is used in Chartogne-Taillet's tete du cuvee, Cuvee Fiacre. This cuvee is named for Fiacre Taillet, born in the beginning of the 18th century, who kept records of wine making almost three hundred years ago. This tradition is carried on by Alexandre Chartogne today.

—Terry Theise

## VINEYARD/CELLAR PRACTICES

- Starting to practice limited use of biodynamic methods in the vineyards
- Ferments in both stainless steel and oak barrels.

## WINES

### Chartogne-Taillet Brut Cuvee St. Anne NV

**CORE LIST** No Meunier now, though it could return in the future. This is a year older than any of our other growers NVs. 60% Chardonnay 40% Pinot Noir and the dosage is about half of what it used to be. This is becoming very fine, so watch out; it's entirely different from its old apples-and-butter form, more oyster and chalky and ginger and talc, with the apple-butter thing skulking in the mid-palate. It's racy, on the tensile side. I'd be a lot happier with three more grams of rs, but you won't agree if you prefer a vigorously dry Champagne. —TT

### Chartogne-Taillet Brut Rose NV

**CORE LIST** All the fruit is from 2007. Lovely silvery strawberry aromas, and trusting, creamy fruit, like a child who isn't shy and takes your hand; there's amazingly pure fruit and stylish flowery spice: a lovely Rosé. —TT

### Chartogne-Taillet Cuvee Fiacre Brut

This one rarely shows all its cards in its youth. It's a high-bred critter who needs to be handled deftly. It isn't as easy as the vintage but when it does make friends it makes a lovely friend. Sleek and filigree; orchid aromas like a great Baozhong tea, and a gingery and minty spice; it finds its form in the glass and becomes exceptionally racy, spicy and catwalk-model insouciant. Long, penetrating, minty finish; a rare '02 that's still holding back. This is an old-vines *coeur de cuvee*, 60/40 Chardonnay to Pinot Noir. —TT

**Varieties:** Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier,  
**Total Acreage:** 29.5 acres  
**Average Production:** 6,700 cases



Elisabeth and Philippe Chartogne

Alexandre Chartogne



Chez Chartogne



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