

Gaston CHIQUET

Dizy

gastonchiquet.com



Nicolas Chiquet



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France

CHAMPAGNE Valee de la Marne

OVERVIEW

"I think if you asked me to sum up Chiquet's wines in one pithy phrase, I'd have to say either "delicious and articulate" or "articulate and delicious" depending on which you preferred. (Maybe "salacious and ticklish," in a pinch . . .) I myself tend to peg Nicolas Chiquet's wines as "innately lovable" and so it always surprises me to rediscover just how focused and precise they are, as if the prose of E.B. White were rendered in the form of Champagne. They taste effortless, tactful, yet attractive. What I'm tasting are wines of pure terroir. They are, in effect, anti-varietal. Even the celebrated Aÿ Chardonnay isn't so much a variant on Chardonnay as it is another dialect of Aÿ. Chiquets are both the chalkiest and most succulent of all my Champagnes. This is a 23-hectare estate, which means we can get some wine to sell! Which is lucky for us, because these are sensually gorgeous, hedonistic wines that everyone can cozy up to.

Nicolas Chiquet farms 23 hectares in the Valle de la Marne in the villages of Ay, Dizy, Hautvillers and Mareuil-sur-Aÿ. All of the fruit (including that which is used in the non-vintage cuvee) comes from premiere and grand cru grapes. Nicolas does not employ any oak aging at Gaston Chiquet; he believes that concentration, fruit maturity and malolactic fermentation impart enough body and texture to make aging in barrel unnecessary.

The vineyards are planted to equal (forty percent each) parts Chardonnay, Pinot Meunier and twenty percent are planted to Pinot Noir. Gaston Chiquet also produces a vintage dated chardonnay from 5 parcels on the western side of the Grand Cru village of Aÿ. Usually recognized as a Grand Cru village for Pinot Noir, these vines of Chardonnay were planted in Aÿ in the 1930s. "

—Terry Theise

VINEYARD/CELLAR PRACTICES

- Blends contain a larger proportion of Pinot Meunier than is common
- Their base wines always undergo malolactic fermentation
- Dosages tend towards the low end

WINES

Gaston Chiquet Brut "Tradition" NV

CORE LIST As always, 45% Meunier, 35% Chardonnay and 20% Pinot Noir.

A classy, fine, nutty aroma; raw rye-bread dough also; It's still as silky as always but man, this really is a semi-solid blob of vinosity. But this is also because much of the usual juice for Millesime went in here. —TT

Gaston Chiquet Brut Blanc de Blancs d'Aÿ NV

This is one of only two all-Chardonnay Champagnes made from Aÿ vineyards. The vines were planted in 1935 by Nicolas' grandfather, who may have been the first to plant Chardonnay in this bastion of Pinot Noir. The first time I tasted it I got a lesson in terroir I haven't forgotten. There was an aroma I'd come to associate with other Aÿ influenced Champagnes, Gosset, Bollinger, a couple of small growers I know, an Aÿ aroma that actually overcame the Chardonnay aroma. Fruit runs to quince rather than Chardonnay-apple. —TT

Gaston Chiquet 'Special Club' Brut 2002

As always it shows its meso-terroir, and now its evolving a deep green pool of sorrel and balsam and green tea to go with the talc and chalk and mirabelle and pistachio and apple-beignet; it's showing the embryo of its mature flavor (as many 2000s do), and a Chablis-like brotiness. Often this wine strikes me as comparable to Clos de Goisses, albeit not as splendid. But it's pure terroir, not about the proportions of the varieties. —TT

Varieties: Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier

Total Acreage: 56.8 acres

Average Production: 21,000 cases