

A. MARGAINE

Villers-Marmery

CHAMPAGNE
Montagne de Reims

OVERVIEW

An island of Chardonnay in a sea of Pinot Noir creates near Blanc de Blancs giving the most simply delicious Champagnes in this portfolio. A very small estate, 6 hectares producing around 4,000 cases, thus NOT MUCH WINE FOR US. Very reasonable prices! Very pretty packaging! They have their own minerality and tropical fruitiness; they're bigger-bodied than wines of the Côte de Blancs, and to my mind they're just about as pretty as Chardonnay can be. Damn, they could almost be Riesling! After drastically lowering dosage last year (an experiment which yielded, charitably, mixed results) Arnaud seems to have found the trail again. Still, the zeitgeist among the young hip growers, who speak with one another frequently, seems to be to get the Champagnes as dry as possible. So we'll see. My sense is this particular terroir is predestined for flowery feminine Champagne. Margaine's estate is a wee 6.5 hectares, producing 55,000 bottles per year. It's a 95% village for Chardonnay. These are some of the most hauntingly beautiful and original Champagnes you can ever drink. When I first put my nose in a glass of Margaine's Champagne I recall thinking "My god, this is as beautiful as Champagne can ever smell!" I've found very little reason to change my mind in the interim.

Varieties:

90% Chardonnay,
10% Pinot Noir,

Total Acreage:

16 acres

Average Production:

4,600 cases

—Terry Theise

WINES

A. Margaine "Cuvée Traditionelle" Brut NV

This is surprisingly good on so many levels, so close after disgorgement; it's fine, detailed and distinctive, cool fruit and expressive chalk. It's balanced on the dry side, so a nice aperitif or starter-course wine. A long and blatantly chalky finish. Show this to someone who insists you can't taste the chalk! —TT

A. Margaine Special Club 2002

The aromas are still stunning, but this 1/10 disgorgement is quarrelsome on the palate. He did 24% in old barriques. The wood is the most delicate of nuances; it smells like gingerbread baking; the palate is minty and chalky and taut and long, overtly intricate and expressive. —TT

A. Margaine Rose Brut NV

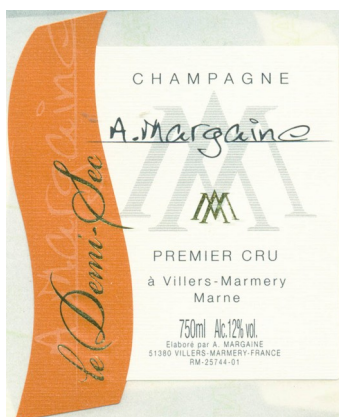
80% Chardonnay 20% Pinot Noir, and 12% still red; the cuvée is based on 2007 and as pretty as always, if a teensy bit more slight than usual. Still, it's hard to find a more charming pink Champagne. —TT

A. Margaine Traditionelle Demi-sec NV

CORE LIST Hardly a fussilade-o-sucrose here, but rather a delicate sweetness. You should sneak in a bottle next time you go for dim-sum. I will! You feel flowers spring up on your palate. Lots of canteloupe, and paradoxically it seems even more refreshing than the dry N.V. I mean, the fizz is delicious. Foie terrines yes we all know, but I rather envision this for *unagi*, for pan-Asian preps involving mango and other exotic fruits, for salads with lots of fruit and salt, maybe canteloupe and lardons — even slaw. This is the same wine as the basic NV and it's immensely attractive and useful, and the finish coats the palate with wisteria and grape-hyacinth. —TT



Arnaud Margaine



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