



J. VIGNIER

(J. Vii-niay)

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427 RUE DE LA LIBÉRATION 51530 CRAMANT

www.champagnevignier.fr



Nathalie Vignier is the tenth generation of her family to grow grapes in Champagne, and the sixth in her village of Cramant. In team with her family friend Sebastian Nickel, their substantial estate spans 16.5 hectares, planted exclusively to chardonnay in Cramant, Oiry and Chouilly and the Coteaux du Sézannais, providing for an annual production of around 140,000 bottles (though the four cuvées I tasted each declare a production of only 3500 bottles). Vines date from as far back as 1950 and are tended today without herbicides or insecticides. These are generous champagnes, built around ripe fruit, vinified in stainless steel vats with full malolactic fermentation and aged long on lees, with little need for dosage, and all are bottled at an extra-brut level of 5g/L. Disgorgement dates, base vintages, cépage, dosage and even the number of bottles produced have been declared on back labels since 2018.



J. VIGNIER ORA ALBA BRUT GRAND CRU NV \$\$

87 points • DISGORGED SEPTEMBER 2016 • TASTED IN AUSTRALIA

100% chardonnay from Cramant, Chouilly and Oiry; aged 6 years on lees; 3500 bottles; 5g/L dosage

Vignier turns the reserve concept on its head in her entry cuvée, using younger rather than older vintages in small proportions. With its oldest vintage dominant, this is an unusual recipe, though it makes good sense for a rich and ripe house style in these days of ever-warmer vintages – though the logistics of holding such large parcels for three years prior to blending must be a nightmare. The vintages are undeclared here, but I suspect it's based on 2009, which would make it 65% 2009, 25% 2010 and 10% 2011. A bright, medium straw hue heralds a generous and rich expression of the northern Côte des Blancs. This is a ripe and powerful style, true to the mood of the house and the exuberance of 2009, brimming with honey, spice and gingernut biscuits, even exotic tropical fruit nuances, concluding with the phenolic grip of dry extract.



Cramant, harvest 2014



J. VIGNIER SILEXUS SEZANNENSIS BRUT NV \$\$

88 points • 100% 2011 • DISGORGED SEPTEMBER 2016 • TASTED IN AUSTRALIA

100% chardonnay from parcels of Le Chatet on chalky subsoil in the heart of Sézannais; 100% 2011, though not declared; aged 5 years on lees; 5g/L dosage; 3500 bottles

A bright, medium straw hue announces a blanc de blancs that showcases the dry, grainy structure of the Sézanne, heightened by the challenging 2011 season, with a note of grapefruit-pith bitterness. Almond meal notes of lees age are more prominent than the subtle fruit character of neutral apple and pear. Five years on lees provides a textural creaminess, though helpless to resolve its bitter grip.

J. VIGNIER LES LONGUES VERGES BRUT GRAND CRU NV \$\$\$

89 points • DISGORGED SEPTEMBER 2016 • TASTED IN AUSTRALIA

100% chardonnay from a single plot, Les Longues Verges, of slow-ripening and low-yielding vines on chalk, crossing the boundary between Cramant and Chouilly; aged 4 years on lees; 5g/L dosage; 3500 bottles

A rich take on Cramant and Chouilly, layered with ginger, spice and butter cake. It's full and broad, with oxidative development creating a dry and slightly grainy finish.



J. VIGNIER DEUX TERRES BRUT 2008 \$\$

92 points • DISGORGED SEPTEMBER 2016 • TASTED IN AUSTRALIA

100% chardonnay from two plots, one in Cramant for vivacity, and one in Barbonne-Fayel south of Sézanne for roundness and breadth; aged 8 years on lees; 5g/L dosage; formerly named 'Cuvée 2008'; 3500 bottles

The ripe exuberance of J. Vignier is neatly juxtaposed by the tension of the 2008 harvest. There is a compelling generosity here that contrasts ripe white peach fruit with a panoply of layers of aged complexity: golden fruit cake, fruit mince spice, wild honey and brioche. Eight years on lees has built buttery, creamy structure, well countered on the finish with a touch of bitter grapefruit bite.