

Champagne Lilbert-Fils

Cramant



The Wines:

- *Grand Cru Blanc de Blancs NV*: This comes from all three communes where Lilbert farms vines. Typically, it is made with three consecutive vintages and is aged on its lees for a minimum of three years beginning in April following the harvest. It's also made entirely from the first pressing; Bertrand's second press juice for all three cuvées is sold to Moët.

With the warmer years, Bertrand began to lower his dosages from the usual 6-7 grams to less than 5 grams, beginning with the NV based on 2014. The NV based on 2015 received 4 grams; the NV based on 2016 received 3 grams. The style isn't changing so much as the weather is warming. The non-vintage represents 60% of his production, and the yearly average is 18,000 bottles plus 2,000 half bottles.

- *Perle NV*: This, the house's rarest and most sought-after wine, also comes from all three communes, but is sourced from old Chardonnay vines. Its dosage is now in the 3-4 grams per liter range, and it is bottled with a lower pressure than the non-vintage classic— 4 bars of pressure rather than the normal 6— making it particularly transparent, and almost smoky in its intense chalkiness.

Beginning in 2013, Bertrand began to radically extend the *élevage* of Perle from eight months in tank to two to three years, and consequently shorten the time on the lees in bottle from four years to 18-30 months (first disgorgement is at 18 months, the last is at 30 months, and there can be as many as six disgorgements). The vinosity in the final wine remained the same, while the change in method allowed him to transition from an average production of 2,500 bottles annually to an average of 5,000 bottles.

- *Vintage Grand Cru Blanc de Blancs*: 100% Chardonnay. Since 1995 this has been made entirely from grapes raised in the hamlet of Cramant. The primary source is a parcel on the lower northeast side of the village named Les Buissons, where the Lilbert vines--all nine rows of them--were planted in 1936. The second source is a higher east-facing parcel in Les Moyens on the other side of Cramant, specifically the northwest side and beginning at the village's edge. Les Moyens straddles a ridge, and half faces east, half west, both of which are oddities on this side of Cramant where most vines face either north or south across the road that crosses the Cramant pass and dips down into a valley en route to Cuis. Les Buissons gives powerfully rich fruit that is lifted nicely by the taut fruit of Les Moyens, which makes up around a quarter of the blend.

Like the Perle, this is now bottled with a dosage of 3-4g/l and is only made in good years. Production averages 4,000 bottles plus 1,000 magnums.