

# Champagne Lancelot Pienne

## Cramant



### The Wines

- *Instant Présent Extra Brut NV: Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, but today is a gift, that's why it's called present.* The perfect apéritif wine. In considering the range of Lancelot-Pienne's Blanc de Blancs, Instant Présent is the widest ranging, encompassing vines from four zones, and as such represents the first of four ever-narrowing concentric circles. The wine is made predominantly from vines in the Côteaux Sud, in the commune of Monthelon, where Julien's grandmother came from and whose parcels these once were. Here clay is the leading geology. The second source is grand cru vines on the northern end of the Côte des Blancs, mostly in Cramant, which belonged to Julien's grandfather. The terroir is chalk. The third source is their parcel on the limestone hill of Bisseuil, overlooking the Marne and technically on the Montagne de Reims. Instant Présent is a blend of clay (fruitiness), chalk (salinity and texture) and limestone (lightness and lift) terroirs from these three distinct zones. Aged on its lees for 30 months before disgorgement; production averages 2,000 cases.
- *La Table Ronde Grand Cru Extra Brut NV: Chardonnay.* The second concentric circle of Blanc de Blancs, narrower than that of Instant Présent in that Table Ronde comes only from Grand Cru vines growing in the northern end of the Côte des Blancs. Cramant leads the way with roughly 60% of the blend for its dominant expression of creaminess and mineral chalk salinity; then Chouilly at more or less 30% for fruitiness and elegance, and lastly Avize at roughly 10% for steely acidity and freshness. The vines come from 25 parcels averaging 50 years of age, and 80% of the wine comes from one vintage with the remainder from a perpetual cuvée of the domaine's grand cru Chardonnay. It's bottled in July after the harvest and rests on its lees for approximately three and a half years before disgorgement. Dosage is 2.5 grams and production averages 1,000 cases.

The name comes, of course, from the tale of the knights of King Arthur's court, of which Lancelot was prominent. In real life, Gilles Lancelot married Céline Perceval, and Perceval was another legendary knight in the myth, so it seemed fitting for them to have a Holy Grail wine. Such is The Round Table.

- *Accord Majeur NV: 80% Pinot Meunier, 10% Chardonnay, 10% Pinot Noir.* The wine comes from 40 parcels with an average age of 55 years. It's an accord ("major agreement") between three grapes and three terroirs—Chardonnay and Meunier from the Côteaux Sud, and Pinot Noir from the hills around Boursault in the Marne Valley. The wine is bottled in July after the harvest and aged for five years on the lees before disgorgement. It's dosed at 5 grams and production is just under 700 cases.

- *Marie Lancelot Grand Cru Extra Brut Vintage*: Chardonnay. The third concentric circle of the Chardonnay wines, this only from Grand Cru Cramant vines. First made by Gilles and named for Julien's older sister, this is a highly acclaimed rendition of Cramant, a terroir with considerable complexity: its vines descend off the ridge both to the east (toward Avize, Oiry and Chouilly) and the west (toward Cuis), and face every exposition. They have 15 different parcels to choose from, but normally the choice for this cuvée narrows down to six (see the bottle's back label for specifics). Fermentation and élevage are done in a mix of steel and *demi-muids* for ten months, and aging *en tirage* in bottle on the lees goes for at least 42 months. Dosage is kept under 3 grams and production averages 1,500-2,500 bottles. *With its bold, ripe fruit and long, elegantly chalky build, it's a classical representation of Cramant, and a joy to drink.* Peter Liem, Champagne. *With its bold, ripe fruit and long, elegantly chalky build, it's a classical representation of Cramant, and a joy to drink.* Peter Liem, Champagne. Production averages 2,400-3,000 bottles.

- *Les Gouttes d'Or Grand Cru Extra Brut Vintage*: The fourth and smallest concentric circle in Lancelot's Chardonnay range (a circle shared with Le Mont Aigu below), Les Gouttes d'Or is a wine from a single-plot within Cramant. It's also labeled Lancelot Perceval in tribute to Julien's mother and a nod to the King Arthur legend (her maiden name being Perceval). The vines were planted in 1969, 1971 and 1990 and grow on a spur coming off the eastern side of the main ridge but still relatively quite high in Cramant's elevation. Exposition is east/southeast, total land surface is just under an acre, and farming is with cover crops followed by light plowing for weeding and bio-controls for warding off disease (if disease pressure is overwhelming, as it was in 2024 with non-stop rains throughout the season, synthetic fungicides will be used to save the crop). This is Cramant: extraordinary creaminess and texture aligned with tension and precision.

Élevage lasts 10 months in steel tanks followed by 62 months of aging on its lees in bottle before disgorgement. Dosage is minimal (see back label for specifics) and production averages a few hundred bottles.

- *Le Mont Aigu Grand Cru Extra Brut Vintage*: Chardonnay. The first single-site wine made by the domaine at Julien's initiative and, like Les Gouttes d'Or and La Dame du Lac, labeled Lancelot Perceval in tribute to his mother and a nod to the King Arthur legend (her maiden name being Perceval). Mont Aigu is a lieu-dit of Chouilly, a village just north of Cramant that bookends the northern end of the Côte des Blancs' ridge from the plain. Immediately north of Chouilly flows the Marne River, giving this commune a relatively warm microclimate and making for riper wines underpinned by chalk minerality. Le Mont Aigu is Chouilly's top vineyard site, southeast of the village on a small knoll under the forest of the Butte de Saran and quite close to Cramant's vines spilling off the ridge. Dosage is minimal (see back label for specifics) and production averages a few hundred bottles.

- *La Dame du Lac Extra Brut Rosé Vintage*: Chardonnay with Meunier. Julien's creation, named for his mother and labeled Lancelot-Perceval in further tribute to her and to the King Arthur fable (her maiden name being Perceval). The aim with this wine is gastronomic; it's meant for the table. Chardonnays from their clay, chalk and limestone terroirs buttress the powerful aromatics of the old-vine Meunier from the Malfois lieu-dit in the Côteaux Sud d'Épernay village of Monthelon. Dosage is minimal and production averages 2,000 bottles.