

# Champagne Barnaut

## Bouzy



*We appreciate the strength of the Barnaut Pinot Noirs which make possible vinous cuvées of beautiful maturity and energy.*

--Bettane & Desseauve, Guide to Wines 2016



Edmond Barnaut was one of the first pioneers in Champagne to create his own brand outside of the controlling centers-of-power of Epernay and Reims. He farmed his own vines and started out pressing his and his neighbor's grapes for houses and delivering the juice to them in Epernay and Ay, but the stuff kept fermenting before he could always make the delivery, so he ended up letting all the juice ferment in his digs in Bouzy before delivering the goods. In other words, he learned how to make wine. In 1874 he married Appoline Godmé-Barancourt (now there's a name!), heiress to additional vineyards in the village, whereupon he made the leap and set up shop. Cellars were dug as deep as 15 meters underground, and the first cuvée made of two-thirds Pinot Noir and one-third Chardonnay was launched.

And it's still made today, under the Grande Réserve label, with its reserve wine coming from a perpetual cuvée begun by Edmond himself and maintained through five generations of Barnaut descendants. The one big change happened in the late 1950s into the early 1960s, and that was the transition from aging the perpetual cuvée in small barrels to steel tanks. In that era, barrels were kept as long as possible and cleaning them was much more difficult than it is today, resulting in barrels coated in layers of tartaric crystals that effectively did away with any difference between barrels and tanks except in size.

Philippe Secondé is the current descendant and arguably one of the more important ones. He took over in 1985 and soon made a name for himself with his vinous Blanc de Noirs and his strikingly flavorful rosé. He significantly increased the domaine's vineyards, modernized its cellar, expanded production, and moved its viticulture footing to the quasi-organic *lutte raisonnée* structure (very light surface plowing rather than spraying herbicide, using only organic composts, and minimalizing fungicide applications, to the extent that in 2019 the domaine received both High Environmental Value--HVE--and Sustainable Viticulture in Champagne--VDC--certifications, whose agencies will review the practices at Barnaut every eighteen months henceforth).

Philippe's son Guillaume joined the domaine in 2021 as the sixth generation following his winemaking studies. In that year, he started a new cuvée and a perpetual réserve for it from two small plots farmed by his grandfathers. He released it in 2025 as Le Chemin des Goësses.

Today Champagne Barnaut farms 11.27 hectares (28 acres) divided among 32 parcels in the grand cru vineyards of Bouzy, Ambonnay and Louvois. The latter two communes are adjacent to Bouzy and Barnaut's holdings in them represent 5% of the domaine's grand cru totals. In addition, the domaine farms 4.6 hectares (11 acres) in the Marne Valley and sells those grapes to the cooperative that makes the Nicolas Feuillatte brand, while saving some Chardonnay to make a Blanc de Blancs. The average age of Barnaut's vines is 44-years old, with the oldest parcel (just under half an acre of Pinot Noir) surpassing the 100-year threshold.

Pinot Noir makes up a solid 80% of Barnaut's production, with Chardonnay making up the rest. All fruit is selected on a sorting table. All the cuvées of wine undergo malolactic fermentation in stainless steel, and fifty percent of each year's crop is saved as reserve wine. The white non-vintage wines spend 4.5 years on the lees before being disgorged, and then rest for at least three months before going to market. The vintage spends between eight and ten years on the lees, is made only in the best years, and represents only 3% of Philippe's total production. From the beginning, he never wanted to take quality away from his NV wines.

With its sister village of Ambonnay, Bouzy lays claim to having the finest vineyard sites for Pinot Noir in the appellation of Champagne. Bouzy's vineyards begin at 103 meters above sea level and end at 268 meters. Its 923 acres of vines grow up the rolling foothills of the *Montagne de Reims* and face due south, ensuring the best possibility for ripening every year (Ambonnay's vineyards, following the mountain, begin the turn to the southeast, thus on paper anyway have the potential for more elegance). The result is Champagne's richest and fullest-bodied wines—the Latin counterpart to the Côte des Blancs' Nordic austerity, if you will.

The Grandes Marques own nearly one-third of this grand cru commune's vineyards. Barnaut's annual production is roughly 8,300 12-pack cases.

[https://www.champagne-barnaut-bouzy.com/?utm\\_source=gmb](https://www.champagne-barnaut-bouzy.com/?utm_source=gmb)