

CHAMPAGNE DUMANGIN

Over the past few decades Adrienne and I have often taken the scenic drive over the Montagne de Reims in Champagne. Starting at Montchenot we'd wind our way to Verzenay and Verzy before heading down to Trepail, Ambonnay and Bouzy. On the way we'd pass through the charmingly-named Chigny-Les-Roses, a village which, we always noted, seemed full of champagne producers.

One of those champagne producers visited Australia very recently, and I had the pleasure of a thirty minute one-on-one with him while tasting his wines. Gilles Dumangin is a fifth generation winemaker who believes in making champagnes that are individuals, expressive of their origins. "On the Montagne the pinot noir is more delicate than it is when it is grown in the Valley of the Marne near Ay - more fragrant," he explained.

Another feature of Gilles' champagnes is that they are at the drier, rather than sweeter, end of brut. There is no attempt to "enhance" the flavour of the grape for commercial purposes – or cover up its deficiencies – with comparatively high dosage levels. Gilles makes champagne of high quality, as my reviews testify.

NV Dumangin Cuvée 17 This is a fresh, rich champagne with some brioche autolysis character, a delightfully creamy mousse and lively acidity. What more could you want? (\$237.00/case of 6) ★★★★★
This cuvée is based on 2011 material, but also includes reserve wine from a solera.

NV Dumangin l'Extra Brut 1^{er} cru The nose is quite floral and musky, suggesting a leaning towards the pinots, especially meunier. This champagne almost bursts with flavour and, as the label suggests, it's decidedly dry, but, in terms of elegance, it's not the pick of the range. (\$268.85/6) ★★★★★
The base of this wine is the 2010 vintage

NV Dumangin Rosé 1^{er} cru The rosé is not only my choice of the four, it's one of the better rosé champagnes I've tasted. The colour is delicate pink and the bouquet is equally delicate, quite floral, without the muskiness of some champagnes with a significant amount of pinot noir. The palate is fine, long, dry and creamy. (\$255.40/6) ★★★★★☆
2009 base wine with 2008 red (pinot meunier) wine. 4 gm/litre dosage.

2004 Dumangin Vintage A beautifully mature champagne which is very fresh yet shows toasted brioche notes. The palate is intense but decidedly dry, almost austere. This well-crafted expression of the Montagne isn't for everyone, but purists will enjoy it. (\$409.02/6) ★★★★★☆
54% chardonnay 46% pinot noir 2 gm/litre dosage.

Dumangin champagne is available from inland@inlandtrading.com.au

Lester Jesberg

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