

first press

by Karen Moneymaker

FOR MANY SOMMELIERS, passionate collectors, and savvy consumers, there is nothing better than Bourgogne. One does not “dabble” in the luxury of red Bourgogne, culled from the tiny clusters of Pinot Noir that dot the vines of some of the most sought-after vineyards in the world. And don’t get us started on the almost transcendental experience that can occur when tucking into a glass of expertly-crafted white Bourgogne. It only makes sense, then, that the sparkling wines of this region would be carving a niche for themselves amongst the consumers and buyers in the know.

While the history of Crémant de Bourgogne dates back to the early 19th century, it wasn’t officially recognized as an AOP until 1975, when it was regulated for production of white and rosé sparkling wine. Although the Châtillonnais—a 250-hectare (618-acre) area situated 45 miles northwest of Dijon and a scant 50 miles from the southernmost border of Champagne—is the self-declared “kingdom of Crémant,” Crémant de Bourgogne is produced throughout the whole region of Bourgogne.

“From the chalky soils and cool climate in the very north of Bourgogne, to the granitic soils and moderate climate in the south, the possibility for expressing great complex-



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARY JOHN BAUMANN

ity and sense of place here is significant,” explains Mary John Baumann, a certified WSET wine educator at the International Wine Center in New York. “During a recent visit to Bourgogne, I had the great pleasure of spending an afternoon with the UPECB, the union of producers and growers of Crémant de Bourgogne. A broad tasting of these fantastic sparkling wines revealed that they are unquestionably the best values in terms of quality-to-price ratio for traditional method sparkling wines.”

As the second-most imported French sparkling wines to the U.S., Crémant de Bourgogne is enjoying a continued upswing

in popularity here in the States. According to French export figures, there was a 23.5% increase in Crémant de Bourgogne shipped to the U.S. in 2017 from the same time period in 2016 (BIVB).

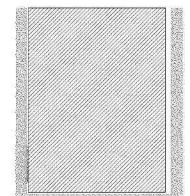
“Crémant de Bourgogne belongs on any serious beverage director’s wine list,” says Baumann. “I believe that as quality continues to improve through sourcing from multiple parcels, meticulous blending, and extended lees aging, the future of Crémant de Bourgogne is quite bright. With the help of an enthusiastic community of sommeliers, wine educators, and wine journalists, we are certain to see continued growth.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARY JOHN BAUMANN

“Crémant de Bourgogne wines ARE PARTICULARLY DESIRABLE IN WINE BARS DUE TO THEIR AFFORDABILITY, AND FOR ANY BY THE GLASS PROGRAM. THE CRISP ACIDITY MAKES IT A WELCOME, PALATE-CLEANSING OPTION FOR PAIRING.”

—MARY JOHN BAUMANN, CERTIFIED WSET WINE EDUCATOR AT THE INTERNATIONAL WINE CENTER IN NEW YORK





PHOTOS: BIVB / GÉRALD MONAMY



DIVING INTO THE DETAILS OF *Crémant De Bourgogne*

- Crémant de Bourgogne is exclusively blanc or rosé, produced in the *méthode traditionnelle* (*méthode Champenoise*).
- AOP established in 1975.
- Approved varieties are Chardonnay, Pinot Blanc, Aligoté, Melon de Bourgogne, Sacy, Pinot Noir, Pinot Gris, and Gamay. With a minimum of 30% combined Chardonnay, Pinot Gris, Pinot Blanc, and Pinot Noir, and a maximum of 20% Gamay.
- Manual harvesting is mandatory, with most of the picking occurring in the early hours of the morning to preserve freshness and acidity.
- Crémant de Bourgogne wines must have a minimum nine months of lees aging prior to *dégorgement*, and may be released 12 months from the date of *tirage*.

Production of Crémant de Bourgogne follows the méthode Champenoise in the production of their sparkling wines—blending after primary fermentation, followed by the addition of liqueur d'expédition to facilitate secondary fermentation in the bottle.

STYLES OF CRÉMANT DE BOURGOGNE

Blanc de blancs can be 100% Chardonnay or Aligoté, or a blend of these two grapes. They are generally floral and citrusy with minerality that is matched in the mouth by freshness and elegance. With time, it will develop a toastiness with notes of pitted-fruits, such as apricot or peach.

Blanc de noirs often exude aromas of cherry, blackcurrant, and raspberry with a long and persistent mouthfeel. Time adds charm and warmth, with aromas of dried fruits and, perhaps, honey, spices, or nutmeg. Produced from black grapes only.

Rosé is predominantly made from Pinot Noir grapes (sometimes with a portion of Gamay) and is rose gold in color. These wines are delicate with subtle aromas of red fruits.



Crémant de Bourgogne Blanc de Blancs, Brut, NV, by Parigot & Richard

The Parigot family has been making sparkling wine in Savigny-les-Beaune for five generations. Situated in the heart of the Côte de Beaune region, Crémant

de Bourgogne from this area expresses classic traits of its terroir; where Pinot Noir and Chardonnay rule supreme.

This wine opens with a nose of lemon zest, oyster shell, and brioche. On the palate, green apple and a chalky minerality with a laser-focused, clean finish.



Crémant de Bourgogne, Blanc de Noirs, Brut, NV, by Louis Bouillot

Louis Bouillot was founded in 1877 in Nuits-Saint-Georges, a little village nestled in the heart of the Côte d'Or. As one of the first to specialize in sparkling wine production in Bourgogne, Louis Bouillot has gained international recognition as a quality producer of Crémant de Bourgogne.

Light lemon yellow with lively bubbles and a full-bodied palate of ripe citrus and apple blossom. Round and restrained on the palate, with a delicate and mineral finish.



Crémant de Bourgogne, Rosé, Brut, NV, by Bailly Lapierre

Bailly Lapierre has been producing nuanced and sprightly sparkling wines since 1972. Its caves are built into an underground quarry, providing unique and natural conditions for vinification and aging.

Aromas of ripe cherries and red currants dominate the nose of this wine, with just the slightest hint of crushed strawberry blossom. Zesty and frothy on the palate and finishes crisply, thanks to a refreshing acidity.