

Champagne R.H. Coutier, Ambonnay



The Coutiers have been in Ambonnay since 1619. René's father was the first to plant Chardonnay in the village; his nine-hectare vineyard is made up of one-third Chardonnay and two-thirds Pinot Noir. The domaine produces 50,000 bottles each year. Ambonnay's *terroir*, with a fair amount of siliceous-clay soil, is famous for making wine of great finesse, fruit and suppleness. Coutier's champagnes are very characteristic: long, pure, rich but beautifully well-balanced, with no rough edges. They are given extremely low dosages. René does not use wood to age his wines except for the Cuvée Henri III because, with the rich Ambonnay soil, he doesn't need to.

The Wines

- *Blanc de Blancs*: is testimony to the *terroir* here. Lovely "signature" aroma of just barely cooked apple alongside what appears to be almost a "Pinot" character. The Coutier's old vines chardonnay, planted in 1946, are the oldest chardonnay in Ambonnay. This is a single-vineyard Blanc de Blancs which combines the elegance of its grape with the substance of its soil.
- *Brut Tradition*: Thirty percent of the grapes are Chardonnay and the rest are Pinot Noir. This wine is lively and delicate, with mineral and citrus flavors married to a vivid structure, frothy texture and powerful finish.
- *Rosé*: is made with Chardonnay (55%) and Pinot Noir (45%), with an exceptionally low dosage.
- *Cuvée Henri III*: is 100% Pinot Noir and is aged in the cave for more than 4 years just as the Coutier's grandparents aged the wine. Why Henri III? It was King Henri III who gave the right to the community of Ambonnay to hold an annual wine fair in 1578.
- *Millésime 2002*: is made of 75% Pinot Noir and 25% Chardonnay and was aged only in stainless steel vats. The nose is typical Pinot-- fruity and complex; in the mouth it is fresh and opulent.