



- **Country:** France
- **Region:** Champagne
- **Vintage:** 2013
- **Colour:** White
- **Grape Variety:** Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier
- **ABV:** 12.5%
- **Bottle Size:** 75cl
- **Closure:** Natural cork
- **Style:** Elegance personified
- **Vegetarian:** Yes (not certified)
- **Vegan:** Yes (not certified)
- **Drink With:** It pairs wonderfully with the salty freshness of seafood, the subtle flavour of tender poultry, or the pure sweetness of lightly sugared fruit desserts

GERRARD SEEL: WINE MERCHANTS TO THE TRADE SINCE 1984

01925 819695

wine@gerrardseel.co.uk

gerrardseel.co.uk

Gerrard Seel Limited
31 Melford Court
Hardwick Grange, Woolston
Warrington
WA1 4RZ

CHAMPAGNE PERRIER-JOUËT BELLE EPOQUE 2013

<https://gerrardseel.co.uk/products/champagne-perrier-jouet-belle-epoque-2013>

Champagne Perrier-Jouët Belle Epoque is a subtle wine, the fruit of an astonishing year marked by a very mild winter and an exceptional spring. Light gold with an almost radiant clarity and fine, vibrant bubbles. The nose offers magnolia, honeysuckle and citrus aromas (bergamot, orange, lemon peel) clothed in just-ripe pear and peach notes with a hint of minerality. Bold initial flavours are followed by a wonderfully persistent crystalline freshness, revealing white fruit flavours complemented by notes of almond milk on the finish.

Carefully crafted, the *cuvée* Belle Epoque 2013 is the fruit of an astonishing year, marked by a very mild winter and an exceptional spring. The temperatures in April, worthy of a summer month, caused the vines to flower early. Although the summer got off to a rainy start with low temperatures for the time of year, the sun's return in August allowed the grapes to ripen fully, leading to an early harvest and an especially generous vintage.

This unique blend brings out the freshness and elegance of the Chardonnays (50%) from the *grands crus* of Cramant and Avize. From the Montagne de Reims, the Pinots Noirs (45%) display a generosity and delicate complexity that prolong the Chardonnays' finesse. Finally, the rounded charm of the Pinots Meuniers (5%) from Dizy provides the finishing touch to this beautifully balanced *cuvée*. Over six years of ageing in Perrier-Jouët's cellars and a low dosage (9g/l) further refine the indulgence and sophistication of this great vintage. While preserving the Perrier-Jouët house style, Hervé Deschamps blended this *cuvée* to emphasise the unique character of the 2013 vintage.

ABOUT THE GROWER

The story begins in 1811, one year after the marriage of Pierre-Nicolas Perrier and Rose-Adélaïde Jouët. He was twenty-five and she eighteen, and their qualities neatly complemented one another: she was a cultured, spirited young woman from a family of merchants, who had been given an education inspired by the Enlightenment; he was both passionate about botany and a seasoned vintner, well versed in the production of Champagne.

The Perrier family, like many other Champagne producers at the time, owned barely ten hectares of vineyards spread out over Epernay, Aÿ, Avenay, Dizy, Pierry and Chouilly. Pierre-Nicolas set about enhancing his inheritance by acquiring plots in Aÿ, Maily and in what were to become the Grands Crus of the Côte des Blancs, Avize and Cramant. A quest for perfection motivated his every step. This started with the harvest, which was not used if he considered its quality to be poor. This same mindset meant that Pierre-Nicolas was the first to guarantee the origin of his wines by printing the cru and vintage on his corks to protect against imitations.

Rose-Adélaïde invested her passion for excellence into the entertaining of clients and guests in Épernay. Inspired by her taste for the beautiful, she loved to share her attachment to the culture of the Champagne region with her visitors, thus creating a genuine art of hospitality.

Their son Charles - who married Octavie Gallice - was also a perfectionist, keen on science and technological progress, and he took up his parents' reins. Nature was his passion, and he set about acquiring the knowledge and experience required to coax the best from it. He cultivated an extraordinary number of plants and conducted research into vines, fully aware that the vineyards were the jewel in his house's crown. Thanks to the addition of rare plots, such as those in the Grands Crus of Mailly and Verzenay, he increased the size of the property he had inherited from his father sixfold.

The reputation of his house's wines had now become established throughout Europe: Perrier- Jouët was served at the tables of Napoléon III, Leopold 1st of Belgium, Charles 15th the King of Sweden, and of Queen Victoria. In 1861, she awarded Perrier-Jouët her Royal Warrant, thus making the house one of her court's official suppliers.

Since Charles and his brother Edouard remained childless, it was Octavie's nephew, Henri Gallice, who took over control of the house from his uncle in 1872. Having been trained by Charles, Henri upheld the traditions of the estate's founders. He was careful to "maintain a high quality", by not bottling vintages which he considered not to be good enough, and, as a true oenologist, by blending vintages which have since become legendary. His demanding approach bore fruit: in 1880, a million bottles were exported, in particular to the USA - one of the house's new markets.

At the same time, Henri Gallice cultivated his taste for contemporary art. This was in 1902, during the period that became known as the "Belle Epoque". Scientific and technological innovations were pushing back the world's frontiers, women were claiming their rights and the cinema was launching a new era. A faith in progress and a quest for modernity spawned a wide-ranging stylistic movement: Art Nouveau. Henri Gallice asked one of its instigators, Emile Gallé, to decorate his bottles. This master glassmaker produced a whirl of white Japanese anemones, although another half a century was to go by before this bouquet re-surfaced...

After weathering the disaster of phylloxera and the ravages of the First World War, a fresh chapter of Perrier-Jouët's history began with Louis Budin. As Henri Gallice had lost his son René, it was Louis Budin, René's brother-in-law, who took charge of the House. This agricultural engineer and lover of the Champagne region reinvigorated the vineyards, above all by the acquisition of plots in Dizy and the legendary property of Bouron Leroi. Meanwhile, he reorganised his sales network both in France and abroad, before handing over the keys of the house to his son, Michel, who in turn continued to shape the vineyard by adding new plots to it, including parts of another fabulous property: Bouron du Midi.

It was Michel Budin who, in 1964, quite by chance rediscovered the charm of those magnums decorated by Emile Gallé. Bucking contemporary trends he, along with his sales director Pierre Ernst, decided to use them to house his new cuvée, whose racy style was expressed by its unique elegance. As an allusion to Art Nouveau, he called it "La Belle Epoque", and its first vintage was launched in 1969. Michel Budin then took things further by starting a collection of Art Nouveau furniture and

artefacts. In 1990, These works by Majorelle, Guimard and Lalique among others, resulted in the remarkable décor of the Maison Belle Epoque, where Perrier-Jouët's private guests are now entertained.

Since 2005, Perrier-Jouët has belonged to the Pernod Ricard Group. Over two centuries after its foundation, the spirit of Pierre-Nicolas Perrier and Rose-Adélaïde Jouët still persists. Perrier-Jouët is cultivating its passion for nature in order to express its Champagne philosophy, based on a constantly renewed artistic craftsmanship. It continues on its path alongside artists and designers, nourishing a dialogue inspired by Art Nouveau in which one and all can put their own spin on the movement's motto: the addition of beauty to utility and poetry to the objects of everyday life.

Made up of the five main Champagne crus, Perrier-Jouët's vineyards currently extend over 65 hectares. Ideally placed, the best plots are part of the Côte des Blancs; situated mid-slope with a south-by-south-east exposure, they provide the ideal soil for Chardonnay - the house's emblematic grape variety. Its finesse, its lightness, its floral, occasionally mineral notes and its great length on the palate mean that this white grape variety has become the standard-bearer of the Perrier-Jouët style.

The plots in Montagne de Reims are, for the most part, planted with Pinot Noir. This ancient grape variety has a black skin but white juice and it is less sensitive to spring frosts than Chardonnay. Its fresh fruit notes give body, freshness, generosity and, above all, a long cellar-life to Champagne. In the Marne Valley, the Perrier-Jouët vineyards boast both Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier. The latter – which owes its name to the white down found beneath its leaves – is another black grape with white juice. Particularly fine, it provides structure while still allowing the character of Chardonnay to dominate the blends. To provide the balance of its grape requirements, Perrier-Jouët has been working in partnership with other growers for many generations, selecting their grapes according to its own strict criteria.

Just as a jeweller cuts and polishes a gemstone, Perrier-Jouët highlights the exceptional nature of its soil in the production of its Champagne, and in particular during the blending of the base wines which is the decisive step in a process handed down over the centuries by only seven cellar masters. One of the characteristics of the Perrier-Jouët house style is the art of blending without any initial pre-mixing. "I throw myself fully into any blending project all at once, as in a first draft made by an artist, in which intuition, sensitivity and know-how come together, without anyone being able to say exactly how," explains Hervé Deschamps, cellar master since 1993. Like his predecessors, he conceives each cuvée as a unique work of art. Then, in the silence of the cellars, time allows the Perrier-Jouët style to emerge.

As the heir to an exceptional legacy, the cellar master works like a craftsman. With a precise plot-by-plot approach, the wine from each plot is made separately so that each can be tasted and experienced individually before choosing which ones will be used in each cuvée. It is also his responsibility to judge when an exceptional year should be used to create a vintage wine. Hervé Deschamps excels in this art and Perrier-Jouët regularly submits its vintage releases to the judgement of the world's greatest wine experts. T