



- **Country:** France
- **Region:** Champagne
- **Vintage:** 2012
- **Colour:** White
- **Grape Variety:** Pinot Noir, Chardonnay
- **ABV:** 12.5%
- **Bottle Size:** 75cl
- **Closure:** Natural cork
- **Style:** One of the finest Champagnes produced for many years
- **Drink With:** 18 month old Parmigiano Reggiano

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CHAMPAGNE POL ROGER CUVÉE SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL 2012

<https://gerrardseel.co.uk/products/champagne-pol-roger-cuvee-sir-winston-churchill-2012>

Broad and impressive nose, with a distinctive Pinot Noir character that is so familiar of the Cuvée. Notes of Pink Lady apples, Manuka honey and lightly toasted hazelnuts. The texture is broad, as is so often found with Churchill due to the extended time on the lees, but paired back with taut, mineral and precise acidity. The contrast between richness and acidity helps round the wine and gives immediate pleasure, but will grow in complexity over the years for those who can resist

The relationship between Champagne Pol Roger and Sir Winston Churchill dates back to a fortunate meeting at a luncheon given by the British Ambassador to France some months after the liberation of Paris, at which was served the sumptuous 1928 vintage of Pol Roger. Attending the lunch was the beautiful Odette Pol-Roger as well as the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, with whom she struck up an instant rapport. A friendship was born which continued until Churchill's death, creating links between the Pol-Roger and Churchill families which are still as strong to this day.

The pressures of his post sadly prevented Winston Churchill from ever paying a visit to 44 Avenue De Champagne, the home of Champagne Pol Roger, but he nonetheless proclaimed it "the most drinkable address in the world". As recompense for breaking his promise to visit, he sent Odette a copy of his memoirs inscribed "Cuvée de Réserve, mise en bouteille au Château de Chartwell". He even named one of his racehorses "Pol Roger", and the filly strode to victory at Kempton Park in 1953, the coronation year.

Champagne Pol Roger created their prestige *cuvée* in homage to Sir Winston Churchill mindful of the qualities that he sought in his Champagne: robustness, a full-bodied character and relative maturity. The exact blend is a closely guarded family secret, but it is undeniable that the composition would meet with the approval of the man to whom it is dedicated: "My tastes are simple, I am easily satisfied with the best". Pinot Noir predominates, providing structure, breadth and robustness, whilst Chardonnay contributes elegance, finesse and subtlety. Composed exclusively of grapes sourced from *grand cru* Pinot Noir and Chardonnay vineyards which were already under vine during Churchill's lifetime, Cuvée Sir Winston Churchill is only made in the very best vintages and is always released later than the other vintage Champagnes from Pol Roger, marking the great man's appreciation for older wines.

On the whole winter was mild and dry, however there was a cold snap at the beginning of February. Following cool and rainy weather in early spring, unseasonal warm weather prevailed in late March, favouring an advanced budbreak. This was followed in turn by rain, mild weather and five spells of frost in April and May, of

which two gave cause for concern. Furthermore, some vineyards were hit by hail on a number of occasions. These climatic challenges made for great variation in the development of the grapes. Hot, sunny weather from late July through to the first days of September, ensured that the grapes reached an ideal maturity. The yields were low, but the grapes were in excellent health. Harvesting lasted from 10th to 26th September. The 2012 crop showed a potential average alcohol content of 10.6° and a total acidity of 7.8 g/l .

ABOUT THE GROWER

Pol Roger made his first sale of wine in January 1849. Family circumstances forced him to set up a business after his father, a notary, contracted an incurable disease and could no longer carry on his practice. The customer was a merchant in Aÿ, the birthplace of Pol Roger. The firm developed rapidly and from Aÿ it moved to Épernay in 1851. As early as 1855, Pol Roger began to favour the production of brut Champagne. He knew that this was the type of Champagne that the English preferred.

When Pol died of pneumonia in 1899, his two sons were ready to take over from him. Maurice and Georges Roger inherited the business from their father, having worked alongside him since the age of 18. The two brothers' determination enabled the firm to overcome a catastrophe, when in February, 1900, the cellars and buildings collapsed. Five hundred casks and one and a half million bottles were lost.

In that same year, they obtained the right to change their family name to "Pol-Roger", as a tribute to their father. Maurice and Georges proved to be very successful. Maurice was the voice of the firm, taking care of its public relations, sales and marketing. Georges was the nose, sometimes described as the taster-in-chief, looking after the making of the Champagne. Georges was also in charge of the financial management. Exports progressed; many crowned heads became customers of the brand and top restaurants on the Champs-Élysées were serving Pol Roger, but the First World War was to bring this expansion to a halt.

Jacques, Maurice's son, came on board in 1927, heralding the arrival of a third generation in the firm. The roller coaster of Pol Roger's fortunes continued with the financial crash of 1929, which rendered the economic situation especially difficult for the Champenoise. If that wasn't bad enough, the Germans occupied France during the Second World War and the Wehrmacht took control of the production and purchasing of Champagne.

In the '40s, Odette Pol-Roger became close friends with Winston Churchill. The British statesman was an unwavering client of Maison Pol Roger, declaring it to be "The most delightful address in the world". It wasn't until 1955 that a general improvement in sales could be felt. The range of wines was enlarged and this gave an additional impetus to the development of Pol Roger's fame. In 1961, a vintage rosé was launched. A few years later, a special wine was launched in honour of the house's best-known customer. Cuvée Winston Churchill was born in 1975. Over the last forty years, the company has continued to develop and prosper, and by 1999 its vineyard holdings had reached 201 acres.