

DOMAINE JEAN VULLIEN

CREMANT DE SAVOIE NV

Cremant de Savoie

WINERY OVERVIEW: While this alpine area of eastern France may be better known for skiing than viticulture, a cadre of Savoyard vignerons are producing excellent wines. The region's best come from a boomerang-shaped string of hillside villages between Grenoble and Albertville (site of the 1992 Winter Olympics) called the Combe de Savoie (Combe is a word of Celtic origin meaning a sharp, deep valley). Jean Vullien and his two sons, David and Olivier, tend 69 acres on the Combe in the villages of Chignin, Montmélian, Arbin, St-Jean de la Porte, and their hometown of Fréterive.

The domaine's holdings include all of the region's indigenous grape varieties, as well as strategically-placed parcels of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir (the boys both graduated from La Lycée Viticole in Beaune). The wines range from a crisp, lemon and mineral Jacquère-based white that British wine author Andrew Jefford would categorize as "Muscadet of the Alps" to complex floral and spiced reds made from Mondeuse. In recent years, David and Olivier have also earned a reputation for their excellent Méthode Traditionelle sparkling wines.

Though the Vulliens have been making wine for 40 years, the family is perhaps best known as a leader in another segment of the wine industry. Since 1890, Vullien Pépinière Viticole (vine nursery) has been supplying young vines to growers throughout France. In fact, they were the source for about 25% of the Chardonnay planted in Chablis after the ravages of phylloxera.

REGION: Savoie, France

APPELLATION: Cremant de Savoie

STYLE: White

TYPE: Sparkling

WINEMAKER: Jean Vullien and his two sons, David and Olivier

SOIL: Dark Jurassic limestone and black marl base with pebbly topsoil layer of scree (degraded limestone fragments that have accumulated over time from Massif des Bauges slopes above).

VITICULTURE: Sheltered from the winds of the North on the slopes of Fréterive and St Jean de la Porte, in the heart of the Combe de Savoie. The vineyard is composed of young and old vines. Sloping slopes, full sun south. Manual harvest.

FARMING: Sustainable

AGING: Minimum aging of 12 months set by AOC laws.

VINIFICATION: 30% Chardonnay, 50% Jacquere, 20% Altesse. Strict selection in both vineyard and on sorting table before crush. Direct pressing. Alcoholic fermentation at 16C in thermoregulated stainless steel vats. Aged on the lees in their cellar.

ALCOHOL: 12.5%

VARIETIES: Chardonnay, Jacquere, Altesse

SIZES: 750ml

