

THE SOURCE

Champagne Ponson & Paul Gadiot La Petite Montagne

Varietal(s)	35% Chardonnay, 25% Pinot Noir, 40% Pinot Meunier
Region	Champagne, France
Short Summary	Maxime and Camille Ponson are sixth-generation winemakers in Champagne's La Petite Montagne. Organic and biodynamic farming are now largely practiced in their premier cru vineyards from seven communes. Led by a predominance of Pinot Meunier, they also grow Pinot Noir and Chardonnay on their vineyards with a variety of expositions and slopes, from high up on the plateau on heavier topsoils and medium-hard chalk bedrock, down to the mid-slope with tuffeau/chalk bedrock with sandy topsoil derived from the bedrock, and the lower slope on deep sand topsoil on chalk bedrock. The grapes are whole-cluster pressed, undergo 10-day to two-month-fermentations, are temperature controlled, aged in stainless steel and concrete on their lees before bottled, aged four to five years, disgorged, dosed and aged a little longer in bottle before sale. The style here is one of pleasure and fuller body, though minerally and fine.
Terroir	La Petite Montagne, a sub-section of Champagne's Montagne de Reims, located east and southeast of Reims, the region's capital. The Ponson vineyards are scattered between seven different communes and only on Premier Cru (1er Cru) sites. From north to south, we begin with Vrigny, Coulumes-la-Montagne (their home town), Pargny-lès-Reims, Jouy-lès-Reims, Ville-Dommange, Sacy and Ecueil. Between the first and last parcels to be picked there is often a difference of ten days of separation. All maintain an east, southeast or south exposition and the climate is continental: freezing winters, dry and warm summer days and cool summer nights. This a blend of parcels from on top of the plateau, mid-slope and lower slope.
Cellar Notes	The grapes are whole cluster pressed in a traditional Coquard basket press. Some years the cuvée (the first press juice that comes after the discarded initial one hundred liters of free run juice) may go straight to tank for fermentation without any overnight settling. This depends on the quality of the fruit. Alcoholic fermentation lasts between ten days and two months and Maxime limits the maximum temperatures to around 16°-18°C. Aside from temperature control, he believes that systematic enology will more or less make the wines the same from year to year and likely kill the personality of the wine. Malolactic fermentation happens sometimes but is not encouraged.
Farming	Sustainable—Organic Certified—Biodynamic Certified—Uncertified Naturalist Biodynamic treatments and principals are also incorporated but without certification.
Total SO2	None Added—Very Low—Low—Medium—High