

Champagne

Veuve Blanche Estelle

Brut

100% single vineyard

Mesnil-sur-Oger

Blanc de Blanc – Grand Cru

Rather than the smoothly consistent blends that dominate the production of the biggest Champagne houses like Moët & Chandon and Veuve Clicquot, *grower - producers* make champagnes with clear, pronounced personalities, expressing the nuances particular to a specific vineyard. The unique influence of the soil and climate produce flavor characteristics in the grapes that are preserved and enhanced by production methods lavished with the individual attention of a true artist. Veuve Blanche Estelle is 100% Chardonnay from le Mesnil-sur-Oger, a Grand Cru commune and the most esteemed terroir in the Côte des Blancs. The precise location of the vineyard can be seen in the attached photograph. This is a hand-crafted *grower champagne* and a perfect example with which to refute the prevailing blending philosophy that claims that a combination from various sub-regions in Champagne is greater than the sum of its individual components. *Grower champagnes*, on the other hand, capture the terroir (the unique flavors derived from specific parcels of land) which is often blended away by the big brands in their striving to maintain a consistent house style. Artisanal, grower champagnes from choice, small vineyards, made in limited quantities like Veuve Blanche Estelle certainly deviate from the “house styles” of more well-known brands. That being said, this small grower prefers to keep his multi-vintage blend a true expression of its illustrious pedigree.



Vineyard: The vineyard is located just upslope from Salon’s “Mesnil” and kitty-corner to Krug’s “Mesnil.” The soil composition is predominately white chalk.

Tasting notes: Toasty fresh-baked brioche aromas dominate the first nose which quickly leads into subtle overtones of white flowers and spicy apple. The backbone of perfectly integrated citrus notes pulls through the immensely complex flavor array and finishes long with a zesty lemon blossom theme.

Veuve Blanche Estelle Vineyard in Mesnil-sur-Oger

This photo was taken looking down at the village while standing in the vineyard. The Salon “Le Mesnil” vineyard is located just in front of the steeple and the Krug “Mesnil” vineyard is adjacent to it on the right (in front of the trees).



Echelle des Crus

The wine-growing communes in Champagne are classified according to a scale known as the *échelle des crus*: each commune receives a percentage rating on a sliding scale. The scale was established in 1911. Only the communes (villages) with the maximum 100% rating are considered to be Grand Cru and only the 80-99% communes are considered to be Premier Cru.

Le Mesnil-sur-Oger is certainly one of the most esteemed Grand Cru communes. It is located in the *Côte des Blancs*. The production is restricted to 100% Chardonnay.