



**Written by**

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## Champagne and sparkling wine - a compilation

•Alexandre Penet, Extra Brut 2006 Champagne *The small print seems to suggest this was made at a co-op in Reims. 50% Chardonnay, 30% Pinot Meunier, 20% Pinot Noir. Dosage 6 g/l. Heady nose with a hint of elderflower; richer than most of the wines I have tasted from this producer. Intense and persistent.* 12% Drink 2013-2018  
17.5

•Penet-Chardonnet, Les Epinettes Extra Brut Grand Cru 2009 Champagne *Disgorged February 2014. Verzy single-vineyard Pinot Noir from 40-year-old vines. No malolactic.* Mid gold with a very fine bead. Rich nose with a flattering floral perfume and a combination of depth of flavour and delicacy of texture on the palate. Hint of green apples too. Very lively and vivacious. Drink 2015-2015  
17

•Penet-Chardonnet, Les Blanches Voies Extra Brut Grand Cru 2010 Champagne *All Chardonnay from one vineyard in Verzy. No malolactic conversion. Dosage 5 g/l. Fewer than 1,000 bottles filled. To be launched late 2015.* Playful, very ripe fruit that can easily handle this low dosage. Chalky perfume with notes of putty. Nice balance and a particularly neat finish. Long. Vivacious and persistent. Not too demanding. Drink 2015-2019  
17

•Alexandre Penet, Blanc de Blancs Extra Brut Grand Cru NV Champagne *100% Chardonnay part fermented in oak casks. Dosage less than 5 g/l.* Pale straw. Very savoury and serious - almost white burgundy-like - on the nose with the subtlest of hints of oak. Clean and bracing. Not a trace of sweetness but not as uncompromisingly austere as some bottlings from this producer. Complete on the palate with a persistent and hugely satisfying aftertaste. Great balance. 12.2% Drink 2014-2018  
17

•Penet-Chardonnet, Les Fervins Extra Brut Grand Cru 2009 Champagne *Disgorged 2014. From a single 20-year-old vineyard planted with 70% Pinot Noir and 30% Chardonnay.*

Tight, dense, tiny bead. Bone dry. Still youthful with less of the opulence of 2009 in evidence than in Les Epinettes but with very convincing persistence and width on the finish. Promising for the future. 12% Drink 2016-2020

17

•Alexandre Penet, Extra Brut NV Champagne *Excellent background given on the back label of all this producer's wines. 40% Chardonnay, 30% Pinot Noir, 30% Pinot Meunier. Dosage 6 g/l.*

Very brisk mousse. Flirtatious, floral nose. Real lift and zest. Rather transparent - nothing like the density of the Brut Nature Grand Cru from the same producer. Featherlight, in fact. Very pretty and winning. Racy. Drink 2014-2017

16.5

•Alexandre Penet, Brut Nature Grand Cru NV Champagne *70% Pinot Noir, 30% Chardonnay and five years on the lees.*

Lively mousse. Impressive development on the nose - a really substantial wine, to judge from the nose. Savoury and super serious. Not for the faint-hearted. Absolutely bone dry and the opposite of juicy. But very interesting ... in a pretty demanding idiom. Drink 2014-2018

16

•Penet-Chardonnet, Cuvée Diane Claire Brut Nature Grand Cru NV Champagne *Disgorged Feb 2014. A blend of two-thirds Pinot Noir and one-third Chardonnay based on the 2002 vintage.*

Very deep gold. Steady mousse. Toasty nose with considerable autolysis in evidence and real lift. Quite transparent and bone dry on the end. Fairly uncompromising but there is some delicacy here. I wonder whether the wine wouldn't be improved by a little dosage to carry the autolysis effects? A good wine for lovers of the style but slightly too much like hard work given what I'm sure were stunning raw ingredients back in 2002. Drink 2014-2017

16

•Penet-Chardonnet, TerroirEscence Extra Brut Grand Cru NV Champagne *70% Pinot Noir, 30% Chardonnay from Verzy and Verzenay. Based on 2010 and disgorged 28 July 2014.*

Light nose and very marked acidity. Pretty delicate and many palates will find this just a bit too tart at present. Demanding. Lots of good intentions but perhaps a bit too particular for some. 12% Drink 2016-2019

16

•Penet-Chardonnet, Grande Réserve Grand Cru NV Champagne *Disgorged Jan 2013. Grand Cru Verzy. A blend of two-thirds Pinot Noir and one-third Chardonnay based on the notorious 2001 vintage and aged for eight years.*

Quite a deep gold. Quite an open nose reminiscent of a mature Meursault! Relatively loose in texture with marked acidity. Brave and obviously conscientiously made. But I suspect the acidity will always be the hallmark of this wine. Pretty dry finish. Well-intentioned but not, in the end, the deliverer of that much pleasure. Drink 2014-2016

16

•Penet-Chardonnet, TerroirEscence Rosé Brut Nature Grand Cru NV Champagne *Disgorged July 2014. Blend of grand cru plots in Verzy and Verzenay. 70% Pinot Noir, 30% Chardonnay based on the 2009 vintage.*

Deep rose pink. Steady mousse. Flirtatious lift on the nose with much more character than most pink champagnes - even a suggestion of rose petals scents - but then a bone-dry finish. The juice is virtually sucked out of the palate! This is a rosé to drink with food, I think. Very austere finish indeed. Drink 2015-2016

16

