

CHAMPAGNE

MONTAGNE DE REIMS

MARIE-NOËLLE LEDRU

AMBONNAY



OVERVIEW | Marie-Noëlle Ledru's tiny, perfectionist grower-estate is known only to a handful of champagne connoisseurs, yet today she is making some of the best wines in Ambonnay. The estate has existed since 1946, and Ledru has been making the wines here since 1984. The winery is now in an old stone house that belonged to her mother's family, tucked discreetly away behind the place de la Croix; her father came from Bouzy, and tended vines there as well.

VINEYARD AREA: 6 hectares

ANNUAL PRODUCTION: 2500 cases

SOIL TYPES: siliceous-clay soil and chalk

VARIETALS: chardonnay, pinot noir

With vineyards in Ambonnay and Bouzy in the south of the Montagne de Reims, Marie-Noelle Ledru is a rare breed of female vigneron (she refers to herself as a 'viticultrice'). As a civil servant, she inherited the property from her parents who retired in 1984. The philosophy is to use no insecticide, and if treatments are necessary, only environment friendly options are considered.

Ledru owns 6 hectares of Chardonnay and Pinot noir spanning 30 different parces in Ambonnay and Bouzy. The Chardonnay has an average age of around 40 years. All of the vineyards are planted with cover crops and tilled, and she uses no herbicides or insecticides, seeking to work her vines as naturally as possible. The same sensibility extends to the cellar, where she makes the wines without filtration, without cold-stabilization and without any sulfur at disgorgement. Fermentation is all in stainless steel and enameled steel tanks, for their neutrality, and the malolactic is allowed for all wines.

The wines are aged for a respectably long time on their lees, averaging about three years for the brut sans année and five years for the vintage wines, and all disgorgement is done by hand, in a fashion not dissimilar to how it might have been done two or three generations ago. Ledru only bottles about half of her production, meaning that there's very little wine to go around, and the other half is sold to the négoce, most notably to the houses of Pol Roger and Deutz.

The style is vinous with Pinot Noir at least 85% dominating. The wines have body and structure to support cellar ageing. Any passionate champagne supporter who likes great vinous Ambonnay can only fall in love with the wines from Marie-Noelle. She makes no concessions to the modern style of today, allowing the rich terroir to speak for itself.



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