

Roger Coulon



Eric and Isabelle Coulon are the representatives of the eighth generation of the Coulon family to be engaged as *récoltant-manipulants*, producing Champagne from Vriigny and the surrounding villages in the northwest corner of the Montagne de Reims. Since 1806, this family has gradually increased its holdings so that there are now 10 hectares under vines, almost all located within the 1er Cru rated villages of Vriigny, Coulommès and Pargny, about 10 kilometers distance from Reims. In terms of their rigorous vineyard management and cellar practices, eighth-generation Eric and, as of late, his bright son Edgar occupy a tiny fringe within a region still largely mired in chemical farming and dominated by the ultra-powerful *Grandes Marques*: organic viticulture, spontaneous fermentations, low sulfur, and no fining or filtration all allow this estate's terroirs to speak clearly of the magic that one can encounter on the slopes surrounding Reims.

Coulon is one of only 6 growers in the *élite Trait d'Union*, an association committed to expressing terroir and working as naturally as possible. The other members, Egly-Ouriet, Larmandier-Bernier, Sélosse, Prévost, and Jacquesson, are lofty company indeed, with prices far higher than Coulon's. Eric and Edgar's wines strike an uncanny balance between precision and richness, combining penetrating minerality with the boldness and power these red-grape-dominated terroirs deliver at their best.

Viticulture:

- **Farming:** Certified Organic since 2019
- **Treatments:** Copper sulfate only
- **Ploughing:** Annual ploughing to maintain vineyard health
- **Soils:** Soft limestone, Sparnacian clay and Thanetian sand
- **Vines:** Vines are from Selection Massale and are planted on east-facing slopes. Vines are trained in Guyot and planted at 8,500 vines/ha, and average vine age is 40 years old. "Les Linguets" was planted 60 years ago as *franc de pied*. "Les Limons" and "le Village" are 65 and 82 years old.
- **Yields:** Controlled with severe winter pruning, debudding, and an occasional green harvest
- **Harvest:** Exclusively manual, usually mid-September
- **Purchasing:** Entirely estate fruit



Vinification:

- **Fermentation:** Chardonnay ferments spontaneously in barrels of various shapes and sizes; Pinot Meunier and Pinot Noir ferment spontaneously in stainless-steel tanks and barrels of various shapes and sizes. Half of Meunier destined for rosé production is left in whole clusters.
- **Extraction:** *Bâtonnage* only to counter reduction
- **Chaptalization and Acidification:** None
- **Pressing:** 4000-kg pneumatic bladder press
- **Malolactic Fermentation:** Blocked via temperature

Aging:

- **Élevage:** Wines age 10-24 months in stainless-steel tanks or oak barrels of various shapes and sizes, including *foudres*, 600-l *demi muids*, and 205-l barrels traditional to Champagne. Perpetual reserve solera of Pinot Meunier dates back to 1995.
- **Lees:** Wines rest *sur lie* during *élevage* and rest *sur lattes* for at least 3 years and up to 15 years.
- **Dosage:** Maximum dosage is 3 g/l. *Héritage* sees 1 g/l. *Esprit de Vriigny* sees no dosage.
- **Fining and Filtration:** All wines are unfinned and unfiltered
- **Sulfur:** Restricted to its absolute minimum, and applied only when necessary during *élevage* and at bottling