



PETER LIEM

# CHAMPAGNE

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO THE WINES, PRODUCERS,  
AND TERROIR OF THE ICONIC REGION

## VILMART ET CIE. MONTAGNE DE REIMS

Vilmart et Cie. traces its history back to 1890, when it was founded by Désiré Vilmart. Since 1989, his great-great-grandson, Laurent Champs, has been in charge of the estate, turning it into one of the finest grower-producers in the

Montagne de Reims. The majority of Vilmart's 27 acres (11 hectares) of vines lie in Rilly-la-Montagne. Vilmart is a member of Ampelos, an organization that promotes organic and sustainable viticulture, and Champs hasn't used herbicides or chemical fertilizers since taking over the estate. All the wines are fermented and aged in oak of various sizes, and the wines never undergo malolactic fermentation. The **Grand Cellier** (££), vinified in large oak *foudres*, is a premium nonvintage blend based largely on chardonnay, and it shows both the voluptuous texture and the silky finesse that are the hallmarks of Vilmart champagne. The vintage-dated **Grand Cellier d'Or** (££) comes from the *lieu-dit* of Blanches Voies, a particularly chalky site, and it's made in a mixture of barriques and 600-liter *demi-muids*, larger wooden barrels used for their greater ratio of wine to wood. Vilmart's top wine, the **Coeur de Cuvée** (£££), comes exclusively from vines that are more than fifty years old in Blanches Voies. It's a champagne that rewards long aging, needing up to a decade after release to fully emerge. Vilmart also makes an excellent rosé called **Cuvée Rubis** (£££), which is supple in texture and elegantly fruity, while a vintage-dated rosé, **Grand Cellier Rubis** (£££) is made only in the best years.



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Laurent Champs of Vilmart