

PATRICK ALLEN SELECTIONS

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Champagne Joël Falmet

The Domaine at-a-glance

Owner/Winemaker: Joël Falmet
Soil: Kimmeridgian Soil **Year Est:** 1990s
Size: 6.5 H **Location:** Rouvre-les-Vignes
Appellations Produced: Champagne (Aube)



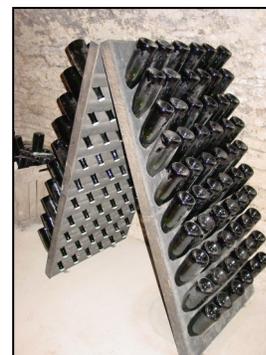
Joël Falmet



Joël Falmet's vineyards are located in the Aube (Bar-Sur-Aube) within the Côtes des Bar region of Champagne. The domaine consists of a small family vineyard of only 6.5 hectares (approx. 15.5 acres) with a total annual production of around 2000 cases. The domaine has been passed down through the family for several generations. Joël took over the family domaine in the early 1990s. Joël, along with the help of his brother Yves (now a producer in Saint-Chinian), was the first in the family to produce an estate bottled wine.

Joël is exceptionally conscientious when it comes to his vineyards. Planted exclusively on hillsides around the village of Rouvre-les-Vignes, the vines are all sustainably farmed. Falmet uses no herbicides or pesticides in his vineyards. In addition, Joël plants oats between the rows of vines. This helps to prevent erosion, introduces nitrogen back into the soil, creates competition for water in wet years, and helps prevent evaporation in dry years.

About the Côtes des Bar The Côtes des Bar has always been one of the more controversial regions of Champagne. The Côtes des Bar is more than 70 miles southeast from the center of Champagne, the Marne, which surrounds the towns of Reims and Epernay. The sub-region of Bar-Sur-Aube gets its name from the Aube river that runs through the region. The Aube river is responsible for creating the hillsides where Champagne vineyards now grow. Over the millennia the river cut its way through a thick layer of limestone exposing large channels of Kimmeridgian soil which now forms the hillsides of the Côtes des Bar. Originally considered part of Champagne, the vineyards were removed from the commercial classification of Champagne in 1911. After riots broke out, a concession was made in mid 1911 to classify the vineyards of the Côtes des Bar as a "Champagne 2ème Zone". Essentially, this reclassification called the wines a second class Champagne. In addition to battling the reclassification, the winemakers of the Côtes des Bar had just suffered their way through phylloxera, and would soon have their vineyards ravaged by World War I. It wouldn't be until 1927 that the Côtes des Bar was reclassified as A.O.C. Champagne. The arguments made by the winemakers of the Marne, to exclude the Côtes des Bar from the official Champagne district were, in some ways, justified. The soil in the Côtes des Bar is very different from that of the Marne. In the Côtes des Bar the soil is primarily Upper Kimmeridgian, the same soil that is found in Chablis, while the soil in the Marne is light "Champanian" chalk. In fact, the Côtes des Bar is geographically and geologically much closer to Chablis than it is to the Marne. The Côtes des Bar generally produces richer, fuller-bodied wines than the Marne, partially because it is further south and therefore slightly warmer. In addition, the Kimmeridgian soil of the Côtes des Bar tends to produce richer wines than the light, fine chalk soil, found around Epernay. Though many of the "Grand Marque" Champagne houses still look down upon the vineyards of the Côtes des Bar, they also generally use grapes from this region to add body and richness to their own wines. To this day, there are very few estate bottled Champagnes in the Côtes des Bar. Most of the wine is sold to cooperatives or the large Champagne houses for blending.



70% Pinot Noir,
20% Pinot Meunier
10% Chardonnay

Technical Notes: The grapes for this wine are all sustainably farmed. Joël is one of only a few producers to use a soléra system for his vin de reserve each vintage. As he pulls out wine from his vin de reserve, he adds a little wine back to his soléra. Currently it is a 12 year old soléra, which significantly adds to the depth and complexity of his Champagnes. Each vintage he blends 30% wine from the solera, with the current vintage. The "Parcelles" cuvée spends 42 months on the lees before disgorgement. Joël bottles his wine with a low, 9 grams per liter, dosage. **Annual production only 1660 cases**

Tasting Notes: "Les Parcelles"- Brut NV Joël's wine is an exciting example of Champagne from the Aube. The nose is perfumed with fresh apple aromas, rich yeasty notes, and hints of citrus. In the mouth the wine is rich and full-bodied, with a suggestion of red fruit. Thanks to the Chardonnay in the blend, the finish is bright and crisp with citrus notes. The combination of rich fruit with a lively finish, make this a very versatile Champagne, perfect for meals or simply on its own.