

Understanding champagne labels

10 Sep 2008 by Jancis Robinson

1 Look for vintage year. If there is none, the champagne is a non- vintage blend.

2 Blanc de Blancs or Chardonnay on the label indicates that only Chardonnay and no black grapes have been used and the wine may be slightly austere. (Blanc de Noirs means that only black grapes have been used and the wine may be quite full- bodied.)

3 Look at the two- letter code which accompanies the code number of the producer.

NM *négociant- manipulant*, one of the big houses/ maisons/ négociants

RM *récoltant- manipulant*, a grower who makes his or her own wine

CM *coopérative de manipulation*, one of the co- operatives

RC *récoltant- coopérateur*, grower selling wine made by a co- op

MA *marque d'acheteur*, buyer's own brand, usually a made- up label

4 Sweetness levels:

extra brut, bone dry

brut, dry

sec, dryish

demi- sec, medium sweet

doux, relatively sweet