

Antonio Galloni
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Brut Cuvée No. 736

The NV Brut Cuvée 736 is outrageously beautiful. Wonderfully alive and vibrant in the glass, the 736 exudes energy, tension and class, all hallmarks of 2008, the base vintage for this release. Dried pears, crushed flowers, anise and mint develop in the glass, but ultimately, the 736 is really a wine of textural elegance and class. With each passing vintage the 700-series wines seem to keep getting better. Simply put, the 736 is one of the top wines in Champagne. And its price? Very reasonable for the quality of what is in the glass. If I were going to buy only one mid-tier Champagne by the case, this would be it. The 736 is 53% Chardonnay, 19% Pinot Noir and 18% Pinot Meunier based on 2008, with the addition of 34% reserve wines. In this release dosage is just 1.5 grams per liter, which is low by house's historical standards. Tasted again after the 2004 lieu-dits, the 736 more than holds its own. A rose version is slated for release towards the end of the year. It should be a stunner. Disgorged October 2012.

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Brut Ay Vauzelle Terme

The house's 2004 Brut Ay Vauzelle Terme (100% Pinot Noir) is gracious on the palate. Rich and creamy at first, then turning more delicate with time in the glass, the 2004 stands out for its impeccable balance. Small red berries, kirsch, rose petals and mint are all alive in the glass. The finish turns a bit fleeting, but not enough to detract from the wine's considerable appeal. My impression is that the Vauzelle Terme will be the first of these wines to mature, but that may just be splitting hairs, as the quality of all these wines is superb. Dosage was 1.5 grams per liter. 96

Brut Avize Champ Cain

The broad shoulders of Avize come through loud and clear in Jacquesson's 2004 Brut Avize Champ Cain. A rich, creamy wine, the 2004 fills out its frame beautifully. Layers of vanilla, pencil shavings, peach, apricot and white flowers all flesh out in the glass. Rich and powerful the Avize impresses for its intensity and pure pedigree. This is a drop-dead gorgeous wine from Jacquesson. Dosage was 1.5 grams per liter. 96

Brut Dizy Corne Bautray

The 2004 Brut Dizy Corne Bautray is remarkable for many reasons. One of those is just how vivid the flavors are. An utterly seamless wine, the 2004 Corne Bautray impresses for its exceptional overall balance. Almonds, lemon oil, chalk, sage and light pastry notes develop as this utterly beguiling Champagne shows off its superb pedigree. The 2004 was bottled with no dosage, but that isn't even evident in the least. A wine of notable vibrancy and energy, the 2004 is a wine built on focus and persistence. 95