



**VALKYRIE**  
SELECTIONS

REVIEWS  
WINE ADVOCATE  
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## CHAMPAGNE LARMANDIER-BERNIER

*"In the 1990s, Pierre Larmandier and his wife Sophie began to work the soils of their vineyards and abandoned the use of herbicides, moving toward organic and then biodynamic farming. They have had few imitators: "I thought I could be five years ahead of the others in giving up on chemical farming," Pierre observed to me, "but I never imagined that I might be fifty years ahead!" Pierre's father had always advocated picking mature fruit, and with the new farming methods, the wines became almost too concentrated and tightly wound, he relates. So, changes in the winery followed suit: fermentation in wood—foudres, demi-muids and barrels (today, mainly from Stockinger)—instead of stainless steel, and the use of ambient instead of selected yeasts. Today, Larmandier-Bernier numbers among the Côte de Blanc's—and Champagne's—finest estates, and with some 19 hectares of vines, their wines are happily not as hard to find as those released by the region's smallest micro-producers. All these recent and forthcoming releases are warmly recommended, and I'll be writing more about the estate in a future issue."*



LARMANDIER-BERNIER      Extra Brut Blanc de Blancs || 91 points  
Latitude

"The latest rendition of NV Extra Brut Blanc de Blancs Latitude is excellent, offering up aromas of lemon oil, wet stones and white flowers. On the palate, it's medium to full-bodied, bright and precise, with good concentration, racy acids, an ultra-fine mousse and a long, chalky finish. As usual, this is a classy introduction to the Larmandier-Bernier range."



LARMANDIER-BERNIER      Extra Brut Blanc de Blancs || 93 points  
Longitude

"The latest rendition of the Larmandiers' NV Longitude Blanc de Blancs Premier Cru Extra Brut is predictably superb, offering up scents of waxy lemon rind, crisp yellow apple, dried white flowers and fresh hazelnut, followed by a medium to full-bodied, vinous but precise palate that's pure, delicately textural and captivatingly weightless despite its undeniable intensity and concentration, concluding with a complex, mouthwateringly saline finish. It's hard to think of a better value in Champagne."



LARMANDIER-BERNIER Brut Nature Blanc de Blancs || 94 points  
Premier Cru Terre de Vertus 2013

“Disgorged in 2018 with minimal dosage, the 2013 Brut Nature Blanc de Blancs Premier Cru Terre de Vertus unfurls with notes of lemon oil, oyster shell, pastry cream and crisp green apple that gains in definition and purity with time in the glass. On the palate, the wine is medium to full-bodied, with a pinpoint mousse, lovely venosity, fine depth at the core and a mouthwateringly saline, chalky and decidedly dry finish. As usual, this is a classy and distinctive bottling from Larmandier-Bernier.”



LARMANDIER-BERNIER Extra Brut Blanc de Blancs || 95 points  
Grand Cru Vieille Vigne du Levant 2009

“The 2009 Extra Brut Blanc de Blancs Grand Cru Vieille Vigne du Levant is showing very well, wafting from the glass with aromas of lemon oil, orange, English walnuts, drawn butter and dried white flowers. On the palate, the wine is medium to full-bodied, vinous and sapid, with a pinpoint mousse, excellent concentration and broad shoulders, underpinned by incisive but ripe acids and concluding with a long, saline finish. As Larmandier-Bernier followers will know, this bottling hails from a parcel of old vines—between 50 and 70 years old—in the lieu-dit Bourron du Levant in Cramant and matures for a year in barrels, large and small, before spending another seven or eight years sur lattes. It’s typically the richest, most powerful wine in the cellar.”



LARMANDIER-BERNIER Extra Brut Blanc de Blancs || 96 points  
Grand Cru Vieille Vigne du Levant 2010

“Disgorged in June 2018, the 2010 Extra Brut Blanc de Blancs Grand Cru Vieille Vigne du Levant offers up a bright and detailed bouquet of citrus oil, flowers, white peach, warm bread and a delicate top note of walnut oil that’s less pronounced than its delicately oxidative 2009 counterpart. On the palate, the wine is full-bodied, broad and satiny, with considerable concentration and old-vine extract, concluding with a long and saline finish.”



LARMANDIER-BERNIER Extra Brut Rosé de Saignée || 96 points

“The latest edition of Larmandier-Bernier’s NV Extra Brut Rosé de Saignée is simply stunning, wafting from the glass with scents of minty red apples, rose petals and blood orange. On the palate, it’s medium to full-bodied, pure and elegant, with a concentrated core of vibrant fruit, a pinpoint mousse and a long, beautifully fragrant finish. This wine’s alliance of delicacy and intensity makes it one of the most exciting rosé bottlings being produced in all of Champagne. This cuvée derives from the domaine’s oldest vines in Vertus and is disgorged with three grams per liter dosage.”



LARMANDIER-BERNIER      Extra Brut Blanc de Blancs || 97 points  
Grand Cru Les Chemins d'Avize 2011

“The 2011 Extra Brut Blanc de Blancs Grand Cru Les Chemins d'Avize is superb, unfurling in the glass with a classy bouquet of warm biscuits, waxy citrus rind, buttered yellow apples and hints of gingerbread. On the palate, the wine is broad, full-bodied and powerful, with an ample core of fruit, ripe acids, superb concentration and a delicate mousse, concluding with a long finish. From the southeast-facing Chemin de Plivot and Chemin de Flavigny lieux-dits, this is the most generous, sun-kissed wine in the range. It's fermented in old barrels and sees four years sur lattes, followed by disgorgement with two grams per liter dosage. This Champagne displays some of the textural qualities of an excellent white Burgundy, and its glorious bouquet shows that ripe grapes and minimal dosage can deliver all the aromatic plenitude that some commentators contend only derives from added sugar and bottle age.”



LARMANDIER-BERNIER      Extra Brut Blanc de Blancs || 96+ points  
Grand Cru Les Chemins d'Avize 2012

“Disgorged in March 2018 to be released later this year is the 2012 Extra Brut Blanc de Blancs Grand Cru Les Chemins d'Avize, an impressive wine that wafts from the glass with scents of almond paste, pear, lemon and crushed chalk that are gently wood-inflected at this early stage, though I expect that will be hard to discern with a few more months on cork. On the palate, the wine is medium to full-bodied, rich and textural, with a deep and multidimensional core and a precise, lively finish. I'm looking forward to revisiting it.”

Reviews by William Kelley  
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