



N.P.U. – Nec Plus Ultra 2003

Audacity!

The Cuvée N.P.U. "Nec Plus Ultra" was born from the desire to produce - without constraints of cost – the greatest possible Champagne. For this, the most demanding choices are made at all stages of production. From this crazy dream was born a Champagne at the pinnacle of winemaking... N.P.U. "Nec Plus Ultra".

Only in truly great vintages...

First, an exceptional vintage is needed: after improving our "savoir faire" during the 80's, the first ever N.P.U – Nec Plus Ultra, a 1990 vintage, was released in 2002. Four follow, each of different temperaments: the generous 1995; the eccentric 1996; and the 1999, maybe the most classic, and now...2003! The 2003 harvest: A very Good Year, indeed! Were the effects of nature really so harsh that the grapes released themselves from their suffering, better to die than be free and alive, yet elusive? Because this wine is a survivor; of the unusually late frosts at the beginning of April, to the eight hailstorms, and the long heatwave that we all remember well. Also to survive – the ultimate obstacle - "the general idea": willing the harvest to come soon, in order to celebrate or bury a vintage. What madness... at Bruno Paillard we knew that "time does not respect what we do without it".

Exclusively "Grands Crus" grapes...

Of the 320 villages in Champagne, only 17 are entitled to the appellation "Grand Cru"; grapes selected to create N.P.U. "Nec Plus Ultra" 2003 are sourced from only four of them: Oger, Chouilly, Verzenay and Mailly. These are the noblest amongst the Grands Crus of the north of Champagne, better suited for the year's heatwave.

In small wooden barrels...

As always at Maison BRUNO PAILLARD, only the first pressing – the purest – was retained. But an essential characteristic of the N.P.U – Nec Plus Ultra is that the first fermentation was conducted in small wooden barriques where the wines spent their first 10 months. During this period each "Cru" developed its own personality while acquiring these slightly woody aromas which used to be found in yesterday's wines. Apparently a challenge, as this year was particularly sensitive to oxidation. Yet, despite this, the wine harmonised. The summer following the harvest, in July 2004, after 10 months of aging in barrels, the assemblage began, from only 14 selected barrels, half Chardonnay, half Pinot Noir, which gave 4,200 bottles, all individually numbered.





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More than twelve years in the Cellar...

The second fermentation took place almost immediately after bottling and a long maturation followed in the darkness of our cool cellars. These bottles remained in the cellar 10 years on lees, before “disgorgement” (which date is on the back label). As always at Bruno Paillard, the “dosage” is very small. In the case of the N.P.U. “Nec Plus Ultra” it is 3gl, reduced to a minimum, virtually imperceptible, “Extra Brut”. After this “operation”, each bottle is then returned to the cellar for a necessary convalescence of at least a year before release onto the market.

A discovery...

Tasting this wine is in itself a great moment. It should be served at cellar temperature (10°C) possibly refreshed in an ice bucket half-filled with water and a little ice. It should not be left too long in the refrigerator or on the ice. It can be enjoyed alone as an aperitif where its complexity can be fully expressive or accompany any meal, with the exception of sweet dishes. The 2003 vintage N.P.U. - “Nec Plus Ultra” took a 12-year journey to reach its full expression. Let it open in the glass before tasting. Admire its deep golden colour. Listen to it! Discover its many and complex layers of aromas that gently unfold. Finally, taste it, and grasp all its richness, each and every nuance...

“What audacity indeed make an extra-brut in this vintage controversial because of the extreme climate. The result is brilliant!”

Guide Gault & Millau – 2017