



## Skinner Blanc de Blancs

- 60% Marsanne, 40% Roussanne
- Methode Champenoise, Extra Brut Style
- Elevage Regimen: 8 months on the lees, 100% neutral French oak, 14 months tirage

From Adam Smith, winemaker: “The moment of inspiration for making a methode champenois Blanc de Blancs came when we agreed that we all love bubbles. That was basically all that mattered. The old world reference point was an elusive one. At Skinner, with our Rhone-dominant focus, it didn’t make sense to do the traditional thing with our sparkling project (Chardonnay). No, we’re rule breakers! Around that time I had a delicious wine from the famed Domaine Auguste Clape in the Northern Rhone (happens to be one of my favorite producers of Cornas, by the way). It was a Marsanne-Roussanne blend from the Saint-Pèray region—a tiny region that only allows those two varietals to be grown and produced. The wine was glorious, and I *thought this could make such delicious sparkling wine*. Most production from Saint-Pèray is, in fact, sparkling wine. I asked the sommelier if she happened to have any stashed away, to which she replied, “yeah, in your dreams”. See, the thing is, Saint-Pèray sparklers are very hard to come by. They produce very little wine and most of it is consumed locally. Is it as wildly famous and coveted as the great domaines of the Champagne regions? Not even remotely. But the wines of Saint-Pèray are rare gems, and it seemed to make the most sense to just make one of our own. And now, we want to share it with you.”

### WINEMAKER NOTES

Sparkling wines are meant to be bright, vibrant, textural delights. That said, they need to retain a certain amount of acidity and freshness to play well on the palate. The Marsanne and Roussanne were sourced from our local stable of vineyards, picked early to maintain natural acidity and low alcohol (higher alcohol levels can inhibit secondary bottle-fermentation... that’s where the bubbles come from). The grapes were hand-sorted, and cold-pressed, whole cluster. After a period of juice oxidation (“browning out” as we call it in the biz, and my tried and true method of making stylish, perky white wines) we send to neutral oak barrels for sur lees ageing, stirring the lees (for texture) every month. Once I was satisfied with the developing character of the wines they were racked and blended, then bottled under crown-caps for riddling and tirage, where bottle fermentation takes place. 18 months later, the bottles were disgorged with a minimal dosage (addition of wine and sugar to balance acidity), making this Extra Brut style of Blanc de Blancs age-worthy, and downright seductive.

### TASTING NOTES

This Marsanne-Roussanne blend is full of surprises. For starters, it’s tiny bubbles, buoyant acidity and silky texture create a playful but complex wine. Electric notes of pear, apple blossom and wet slate dominate on the nose. Candied citrus, eau de vie, melon and sweet earth sail along the palate, finishing cleanly with a peppery lift that is thoroughly satisfying.