PURE CHABLIS

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Press Release - Chablis, July 2018

The Volume Complémentaire Individuel (VCI) explained

What is the VCI?

The VCI is a scheme by which producers are permitted to set aside a stock of wine which they can use at a later date when yields are low. It is a tool for regulating volumes released onto the market to smooth out any irregularities in the availability of Chablis wines, to keep prices under control and help secure the viability of winegrowing businesses.

How does it work?

Prior to the harvest, every summer, the Organisme de Gestion (ODG) management body can, if it wishes, request a VCI of a certain level. This request is then considered by the Institut National de l'Origine et de la Qualité (INAO), and either approved or rejected. It should be noted that in recent years, winegrowers have not requested a VCI for the Chablis Grand Cru appellation.

Then each individual producer whose yields are greater than the base yield for the appellations and lower than the maximum permitted yield (70hl/ha for Chablis), are able to set aside a VCI reserve.
The base yields for Chablis wines are as follows: 60hl/ha for Petit Chablis and Chablis, 58hl/ha for Chablis Premier Cru, and 54hl/ha for Chablis Grand Cru. The reserve must be used by the estate if the following year's yields are below this base yield. Everything is closely monitored and followed up in detail in order to ensure winegrowers respect the quantities allowed.
For example, if a producer obtained 63hl/ha of Chablis in 2015, he or she was authorized to set aside 3hl/ha. In 2016, if he or she only obtained 58hl/ha, they could use 2hl/ha of this stock to make the year's production up to the 60hl/ha base yield for the appellation.

However, the volumes of wine set aside as a security measure must be sold under its true vintage. For example, if low yields in 2015 were compensated for by 2014 VCI wines, the additional volumes had to be sold as 2014 vintage.

For producers who had no yield shortfall in 2015, 2014 VCI wines were subsequently sold under their own vintage and the equivalent volume produced in 2015 was set aside instead. These sliding stocks ensure that winegrowers always have a recent vintage as VCI.

No more than 50% of the base yield volume may be set aside over any three-year period, and the volume sold in any year must never be greater than the annual yield.

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How is the VCI scheme managed on an individual level?

The VCI is nominative and allocated to an individual winemaker and is not transferable. It is managed on an individual basis, as its name suggests.
For example, in 2016, a few rare sectors that were unaffected by frost or hail were able to set aside some VCI wines, but despite yields being low for most other producers across the region, they were not able to transfer their VCI to other winegrowers. It should be noted that not all producers set aside VCI wines.

When was the VCI introduced?

Chablis was the first winemaking region to test the VCI system in 2005. It has proved to be so efficient that in 2013, its use was extended to all French white wines in appellations that requested to be included.
In terms of red wines, tests carried out in the Bordeaux region since 2010 have been conclusive and the VCI scheme was opened to all red AOCs in 2015.
Experiments in terms of rosé AOCs began in 2014, but sparkling wines are not yet included in the scheme.

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