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A Closer Look at the *Volume Complémentaire Individuel* (VCI)

What Is the VCI? A Regulatory Tool for Building a Reserve

The *Volume Complémentaire Individuel* (VCI) is a **regulatory mechanism** that authorizes producers—under strict conditions—to **build a reserve** using a portion of the current year's harvest.

The reserve established through the VCI allows producers to offset future shortfalls caused by climate-related challenges and contributes to market stability.

By smoothing fluctuations in annual yields, the VCI helps regulate volumes released to market, avoid price volatility, and support the long-term viability of winegrowing operations.

How does the VCI work?

Each year before harvest, if conditions warrant, the relevant winegrowers' union may request authorization from the INAO's national committee to apply a VCI. If approved, producers are allowed to set aside the authorized volume. This volume varies depending on conditions but may not exceed **20% of the base yield** for the appellation.

The VCI reserve is created or augmented using grapes harvested **above** the base yield and only when a VCI has been authorized for that specific year.

- For *Petit Chablis* and *Chablis*, the base yield is **60 hL/ha**.
- For *Chablis Premier Cru*, it is **58 hL/ha**.
- The AOC *Chablis Grand Cru* currently does **not** use the VCI, by producers' choice.

The VCI system is strictly regulated and fully aligned with appellation specifications.

How is the VCI reserve used and replenished?

The VCI reserve must be declared the following year by the producer and marketed under its original vintage.
Regardless of the following harvest's size, the VCI reserve **must be released** the next year.

- If the new harvest is **below** the base yield, the VCI reserve helps offset the shortfall—up to the base yield limit.
- If the harvest **matches** the base yield, the producer must replenish the VCI reserve with an equivalent volume from that year's harvest—maintaining the reserve at its previous level, but with the most recent vintage.
- If a new VCI is authorized and the harvest allows, the producer may also **augment** the VCI reserve—by releasing the prior reserve and then replenishing it **beyond** its previous level, up to the newly authorized limit.

This rolling stock system ensures that the VCI reserve always contains wine from a recent vintage and offers producers a practical tool for managing supply while safeguarding long-term sustainability.

A producer may build a VCI reserve for each appellation they produce; however, the total VCI reserve for any given appellation **cannot exceed 50%** of the base yield—the equivalent of half a harvest.

Regardless of reserves, the **total volume marketed in any given year may not exceed the base yield**.

Who manages the VCI?

The VCI is individually managed and **non-transferable**. It is tied to the producer—not the land or business entity. Each estate is responsible for tracking and managing its own reserve in accordance with AOC regulations.

When was the VCI first implemented?

Chablis was the first appellation to pilot the VCI in **2005**.

Proven effective, the system has since been adopted by other French wine regions facing similar challenges.