Press release – July 2022

Le Volume Complémentaire Individuel
What it is and how it works

What is the Volume Complémentaire Individuel (VCI)?

The Volume Complémentaire Individuel (The Individual Extra Volume scheme) is a scheme by which producers are permitted to set aside a stock of wine which they can use later 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 to help assure 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. Then if approved, 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), can set aside a VCI reserve. This is closely monitored to stay within the limits defined by the rules.
It should be noted that no VCI has been requested by winegrowers for the Chablis Grand Cru appellation.
The base yields for Chablis wines are as follows: 60hl/ha for Petit Chablis and Chablis, 58hl/ha for Chablis Premier Cru.

The reserve must be used by the estate the following year. If the following year's yields are below the base yield, the VCI can then make up for the loss of harvest within the limit of the appellation's base yield. Otherwise, this wine will be marketed under its vintage, and replaced by an equivalent volume from the most recent harvest. These sliding stocks ensure that winegrowers always have a recent vintage as VCI.

First example: if a producer obtained 63hl/ha of Chablis in 2022, he or she sets aside 3hl/ha. In 2023, if he or she only obtains 58hl/ha, they can use 2hl/ha of this stock to bring the year's production up to the 60hl/ha base yield for the appellation.

Second example: for producers with no yield shortfall in 2023, VCI wines will subsequently be sold under their own vintage and the equivalent volume produced in 2023 will be set aside instead.

On June 20, 2018, the national AOC wine committee of the INAO voted in favor of increasing the VCI. The maximum volume that can be set aside was increased from 30 to 50% of the base yield of an appellation, a ceiling that can only be reached in three years, at best. However, under no circumstances should the volume sold in any year be greater than the annual yield.

How is the VCI scheme managed on an individual level?

The VCI is allocated to an individual winemaker and is not transferable. It is managed on an individual basis, as its name suggests. In 2016, for example, 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 its use was extended to other appellations.

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