



KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

## LAMBERT DE SEYSSSEL

Country: France

Region: Savoie

Appellation(s): Seyssel

Producer: Gérard Lambert, Olivier Varichon

Founded: 2008

Annual Production: 16,600 cases

Farming: Lutte Raisonnée

Website: [www.lambert-de-seyssel.com](http://www.lambert-de-seyssel.com)



Seyssel may be unknown to many oenophiles today, but the vineyards of this small appellation are regularly mentioned in documents dating back to at least the 11<sup>th</sup> century, and with the development of sparkling wine production methods in the 19<sup>th</sup> century a new Seyssel *mousseux* was created that quickly gained great popularity. Even Queen Victoria is said to have enjoyed the region's sparkling wines during spa stays in neighboring towns. The "Royal Seyssel" label (originally called "Royal Carte Bleue"), launched in 1901 by the Varichon and Clerc families, was considered for many years to be the best sparkling Seyssel on the market. But when the operation was purchased in the 1990s by a large Burgundian *négociant*, quality suffered badly, and in 2007 the owners finally closed the local winery, keeping only the rights to the name 'Varichon et Clerc' in order to shift the name recognition in the market to their other sparkling wines. Dismayed to see what their great local wine had come to, Seysselans Gérard and Catherine Lambert teamed up with Olivier Varichon, great-grandson of the founder, to buy back the Royal Seyssel label and recreate the light, floral wine that was once so renowned.

The sparkling wines of Seyssel indulge in the same *méthode traditionnelle* production techniques used for Champagne, and Lambert de Seyssel takes it one step further by aging the Royal Seyssel for at least three years before disgorging it, giving the wine more complex, distinguished aromas and a fine *perlage* than the competition, which ages only the legal minimum of nine months. The house style is also quite dry (low dosage) in order to preserve the character of the grape varieties.



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## LAMBERT DE SEYSSEL (continued)

| <u>Wine</u>  | <u>Blend</u>               | <u>Vine Age</u> | <u>Soil Type</u> | <u>Vineyard Area</u> |
|--|----------------------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Méthode Traditionnelle “Petit Royal”                                   | 70% Molette<br>30% Altesse | 10-25 years     | Clay, Limestone  | 100 ha total         |
| Seysssel Méthode Traditionnelle<br>“Royal Seysssel” Grand Cru Régional | 70% Molette<br>30% Altesse | 20-50 years     | Clay, Limestone  | 100 ha total         |

“ha”= hectares; one hectare equals roughly two and a half acres

### VITICULTURE / VINIFICATION

- Sorting is done in the vineyards
- The must undergoes a cold settling (*débourbage*) and then is racked into temperature-controlled stainless steel tanks for alcoholic fermentation
- Most years the wines do not undergo malolactic fermentation; in particularly acidic vintages 10% of the wine will undergo malolactic fermentation
- An *élevage* on the fine lees lasts until the spring after the harvest
- Grape varieties are vinified separately, then blended just before the second (sparkling) fermentation

#### Méthode Traditionnelle “Petit Royal”:

- A *liqueur de tirage* is added to launch the second (sparkling) fermentation and the bottles are stocked *sur latte* for two years
- 12 g/L dosage
- Wine comes from a single vintage but it not labeled with a vintage

#### Seysssel Méthode Traditionnelle “Royal Seysssel” Grand Cru Régional:

- A *liqueur de tirage* is added to launch the second (sparkling) fermentation and the bottles are stocked *sur latte* for three to four years
- 10.7 g/L dosage
- A vintage wine

### MISCELLANEA

*“L’Altesse is the historic grape of the area for sparkling wines, and it has existed here since 1393. Its name translates to ‘Highness,’ which I guess makes sense in a place like Savoie. Wines from Altesse are remarkable for their aromatic finesse, elegance, and great aging potential. A second grape called Molette is what they consider the key to Royal Seysssel’s success. It is a native Savoie variety, descended from Gonais, with small compact clusters and tiny berries of golden yellow and remarkable acidity. They are a perfect combo for a vin Clair.”*

– Lyle Railsback