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## 'Champagne isn't always razzle and dazzle'

A quick tour around a handful of the region's vineyards reveals a less showy, more circumspect side to Champagne



Fill your boots: visit Champagne to pick up first-class fizz at keen prices



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How I wished I had a truck with me. Or a white van, maybe. At very least, a spacious hatchback. I was at the René Geoffroy winery in Aÿ, near Epernay, with a glass of their Cuvée Expression NV in my hand – and the wine was so precise a fulfillment of what I'd hoped to find when I set out on this trip that I could hardly believe my luck.

### René Geoffroy

(4 Rue Jeanson, 51160 Aÿ. Open by appointment Mon-Sat: [Champagne Geoffroy](#))

The winery, once an old cooperative bought seven years ago, is near Bollinger's in Aÿ. It's a lovely place to be, like a big, old rambling house with capacious cellars, on several floors, and with some surprisingly Elle Decor-style touches in the choice of paint colours and tiles ("My wife," says Jean-Baptiste Geoffroy). The family used to sell all their grapes on to other producers but Jean-Baptiste's grandfather began to vinify after the Second World War and now, says JB, "I don't sell any grapes any more – not to Moët, not to Veuve Clicquot. I haven't got enough champagne even when I use them all myself."