

CHAMPAGNE
**LECLERC
BRIANT**

Épernay, France

NATURE AT WORK

PRESS KIT

A PIONEER OF ORGANIC CHAMPAGNE

The identity of Leclerc Briant has been shaped by individuals who were far from ordinary: successive generations of the Leclerc family who were inventive, open-minded and who were the true trailblazers of organic and bio-dynamic agriculture in Champagne.

It was Lucien Leclerc, scion of a family of vignerons in the town of Aÿ, who in 1872 founded the family estate in the village of Cumières. Much later, in 1955, the head office was transferred to Epernay and Bertrand Leclerc and his wife Jacqueline Briant decided to change the status of the company into that of a fully-fledged Champagne House.

Bertrand was the fourth generation of the family and, as the 1950s drew to a close, he adopted a way of life that was increasingly linked to the cycles of Nature: a philosophy that he introduced to his vineyards and instilled in his family. Although he was a simple farmer, he was ahead of his time and he first started experimenting with organic viticulture as long ago as the 1960s.

In 1990, his son Pascal, took an even bolder step when he introduced bio-dynamic methods to 50 ares of his vineyards, an initiative with which he persevered

for more than ten years with the help of a handful of like-minded colleagues who carried forward the bio-dynamic movement in Champagne.

In 2012, the House was saved from oblivion when it was acquired by Mark Nunnelly and Denise Dupré, an American couple who are devotees of the French 'Art de Vivre' and who fell in love with the House and its heritage. They were joined in the acquisition by Frédéric Zeimett who was born and bred in the Champagne region, has a wealth of knowledge of wine and who is now the General Manager.

From the outset, their firm intention has been to revive the spirit of the House and to restore it to its rightful place as a leader in bio-dynamics in Champagne, not as an end in itself, but rather from a desire to create wines of the highest quality.

NATURE AT WORK

It's a self-evident truth that Nature is all around us; it nourishes and sustains us; it's the very source of our existence and it's here, in Nature, that **Leclerc Briant has found its own definition of luxury.**

As if imbued with a sacred dimension, it is Nature, through the richness of the soil, the blazing heat of the sun, the abundance of water, and the persistence of the wind, that produces such remarkable grapes.

Then it's the turn of human beings - to tend to the grapes and extract their pure essence: "**Living energy transmuted through bio-dynamics**".

This is Leclerc Briant's constant objective: to fuse Nature in its purest form, with the emotion of pure luxury: hand-made and exquisitely crafted in every detail, from the vineyard to the glass.



A SINGULAR APPROACH TO GROWING GRAPES

Profound respect for Nature and for the multiplicity of terroirs has always been of overarching importance at Leclerc Briant. The entire estate is tended using organic and bio-dynamic practices.

Today, the vineyard estate comprises 14 hectares, the majority of which are located in Grand Cru villages (Mailly-Champagne and Le-Mesnil-sur-Oger) and Premier Cru villages (Hautvillers, Cumières, Mareuil-sur-Aÿ, Bisseuil, Rilly-la-Montagne, Villers-Allerand and Trépail).

From these villages in La Montagne de Reims and La Vallée de la Marne, Leclerc Briant is supplied with all three of the iconic grape varieties in Champagne: pinot noir, pinot meunier and chardonnay.

The House is also able to complete and diversify its supplies by purchases, representing an additional 15 hectares of vineyards, from a small number of trusted partners. All the partners' vineyards are certified as organic or bio-dynamic and this is the first step in Leclerc Briant's demanding quality standards.

HUMILITY IS THE WATCHWORD IN THE WINERY

To have a chance of making great champagne, you have to start by making great wine.

Hervé Jestin

Wine making at Leclerc Briant is as soft and natural as possible, following the natural rhythms of life so that the wines are not subjected to any interventions whatsoever.

To a great extent, the work of vinification is orchestrated by **Hervé Jestin**. Hervé is a long-time friend of Leclerc Briant; he is regarded as the authority on bio-dynamics in Champagne. And in his specialised field of oenology has developed the concept of geo-energy.

His work has been to identify the guiding principles of bio-dynamic resonance and to apply them not only to work in the vineyards, but also to the art of wine making in Champagne.

Acting merely as a humble servant whose role is to assist the grapes, he likes to emphasise that

“we are dealing with organisms that are endowed with reason”.

It is this hyper-sensitive approach that he practices at Leclerc Briant with the full cooperation and engagement of the estate team.

The wines are partially aged in barrels, that are a few years old already. The shape of these barrels and their slightly oxidative effect, together with the stability lent by the wood itself and the tartaric acid, act as a sort of matrix.

The wines are only disgorged after a long period of ageing deep underground in the cellars. They then receive a small amount of liquor containing very little sugar, so that they can express their character without any artificial embellishment.



TRAILBLAZERS THEN AND NOW

Although the first objective is to faithfully preserve the singular character of the House, that does not mean merely keeping what already exists. Rather, it involves a constant self-examination which almost always results in shaking up the traditional ways of doing things.

As long ago as 1960, Bertrand Leclerc was making wines from single vineyards, or *lieux-dits*. In 1970 he made his first Brut Zero champagne and today this bold pioneering spirit has not wavered or diminished.

It is manifest in the pursuit of the purest possible champagne and the rejection of all gimmicks,

as well as in the testing of innovative containers and materials (such as terracotta, glass, gold and titanium), in the creation of cuvees that are as original as they are unexpected (such as *Abyss* which was aged under the sea) and generally in pushing the boundaries.

The only limits that the House recognises are those surrounding a *clos*, or walled vineyard, and in particular, the walls enclosing Leclerc Briant's own *clos*: Le Clos des Trois Clochers in Villers-Allerand, so called because of the three bell towers one can see from the vineyard.

THE PERFECT SETTING

In everything that Leclerc Briant undertakes, the elegance of the presentation must do justice to the quality of the wines.

Look underneath the *muselet*, the retaining wire holding each cork, to find the signature in red which symbolises the veins of clay running through the soil in certain plots of vines: the constraints of the packaging should never stand in the way of a flight of fancy.

The same is true of the reception and production facilities, from the winery to the barrel room, where elegance and refinement are paramount to better serve the wines and the guests alike. Visits are by

prior appointment only and include a tasting, from novice to connoisseur level according to your preference.

To prolong the pleasure Leclerc Briant also welcomes visitors to another of its properties on the mythical Avenue de Champagne, Epernay's most prestigious thoroughfare. Le 25 bis by Leclerc Briant offers not only a boutique dedicated to the entire range of champagnes, but also five guest rooms restored by the finest craftspeople, with care and with an eye to every detail.



CHAMPAGNES WITH REAL CHARACTER

From pressing the grapes to disgorging the bottles, from the Classic range to the Speciality range, the wines are listened to and respected so that they can express their full and perfect personality in keeping with the individual energy of each vintage.

THE CLASSICS

Réserve Brut, 1er Cru Extra Brut, Rosé Extra Brut, Vintage Extra Brut and Rosé de Saignée Extra Brut: a palette of wines enhanced by blending. The wines selected for this range blend together naturally without the least manipulation and with the use of little, or no, reserve wines.

SINGLE VINEYARD SELECTIONS

Les Basses Prières, La Croisette and Le Clos des Trois Clochers represent the quintessential nature of their respective terroirs, each taken to new heights by bio-dynamics.

SPECIALITY RANGE

Grand Blanc sans soufre, Blanc de Meuniers, Abyss and Divine embody the rarity of the very best cuvées each with its own inimitable expression.

AGNE

**LECLERC
BRIANT**

France

rs 1^{er} Cru

LES PRIÈRES

ne 2014

ZÉRO

CHAMPAGNE

**LECLERC
BRIANT**

Épernay, France

Hautvillers 1^{er} Cru

LES BASSES PRIÈRES

Millésime 2014

BRUT ZÉRO

LECLERC BRIANT

AGNE

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CHAMPAGNE

**LECLERC
BRIANT**

Épernay, France

Parcelle à Épernay

LA CROISSETTE

Millésime 2015

BRUT ZÉRO

CHAMPAGNE

**LECLERC
BRIANT**

Épernay, France

Parcelle à Épernay

LA CROISSETTE

Millésime 2015

BRUT ZÉRO

CHAMPAGNE

**LECLERC
BRIANT**

France

er Cru

CLOCHERS

15

CHAMPAGNE

**LECLERC
BRIANT**

Épernay, France

Villers-Allerand 1^{er} Cru

LE CLOS DES TROIS CLOCHERS

Millésime 2015

BRUT ZÉRO

CHAMPAGNE

**LECLERC
BRIANT**

Épernay, France

Villers-Allerand

Le Clos des Trois Clochers

Millésime 2015

BRUT ZÉRO

CHAMPAGNE
**LECLERC
BRIANT**
Épernay, France

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