

NATURALLY  
NON CONFORMIST



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CHAMPAGNE  
**LECLERC  
BRIANT**

*Depuis 1872 à Epernay*

## A PIONEER OF ORGANIC CHAMPAGNE

The Champagne House of Leclerc Briant has a rich history that dates back over one hundred and forty years. The unique identity of the house was built through generation after generation of the Leclerc family who, thanks to their inquisitive and inventive nature and their openness to change, paved the way for organic and biodynamic agriculture in Champagne today.

The company was founded in 1872 in Cumières by Lucien Leclerc, the son of a family of vine growers from Ay. In 1955 the business moved to Epernay and not long after, Bertrand Leclerc, the 4<sup>th</sup> generation of the family, and his wife Jacqueline Briant established the company as a champagne trading house, or *Négociant*.

In the 1950's, Bertrand and Jacqueline first introduced organic production into the vineyards. They were very attuned to nature in all aspects of life and this focus on the earth heavily influenced the family and would continue to be a part of the house for decades to come. Although only modest farmers, they were far ahead of their time, and by the 1960s were undertaking their first experiments with biodynamics.

Bertrand's son Pascal inherited the house in 1990 and continued his father's legacy, boldly adopting biodynamic production on a full half hectare of vines. He persevered for more than 10 years and, with a handful of like-minded vigneron, paved the way for what was to become the biodynamic movement in Champagne.

Following Pascal's sudden death, an American couple Mark Nunnely and Denise Dupré acquired Leclerc Briant in 2012. Lovers of the French *art de vivre*, Mark and Denise fell in love with Leclerc Briant, its history and its philosophy. They took ownership of the house in partnership with Frédéric Zeimett, a native of Champagne with vast experience in the world of fine wine, who is now the Managing Director.

Together, this team crafted a vision to breathe new life into Leclerc Briant – to restore its soul and to reclaim its place as a leader in Champagne. The bold and inventive spirit of the Leclerc family lives on today, continuing the tradition of producing Biodynamic wines, not so much as an aim in and of itself, but rather, as a means of creating the highest possible quality Champagnes.



## A UNIQUE APPROACH TO GRAPES: SIMPLY A MATTER OF RESPECT

A profound respect for nature and for the land has always prevailed at Leclerc Briant. The entire estate is certified as either organic or biodynamic.

Today, that estate covers 10 hectares of primarily 'Premier Cru' classified vineyards, in the towns of Hautvillers, Cumières, Mareuil-sur-Aÿ, Bisseuil, Rilly la Montagne and Villers-Allerand. Here, on sloped vineyards over La Montagne de Reims and La Vallée de la Marne, Leclerc Briant cultivates the three classic grapes of Champagne: pinot noir, pinot meunier and chardonnay.

In addition to grapes from its own estate, Leclerc Briant also purchases grapes from a dozen or so vigneron who supply an additional 10 hectares of grapes including some from the prestigious Côte des Blancs. In keeping with Leclerc Briant's demand for the highest quality, all these suppliers are certified as organic or biodynamic.

## HUMILITY IS THE BUZZWORD IN THE WINERY

At Leclerc Briant, making Champagne is a gentle, natural process carried out with respect for the wine itself, without trying to alter nature in any way.

The house's winemaking is led by Hervé Jestin, an acclaimed winemaker and Champagne expert who has worked with Leclerc Briant for many years.

As an oenologist, a proponent of geogravity, and the authority on biodynamics in Champagne, Hervé's work has set the standard both for growing biodynamic grapes and for biodynamic winemaking in the region.

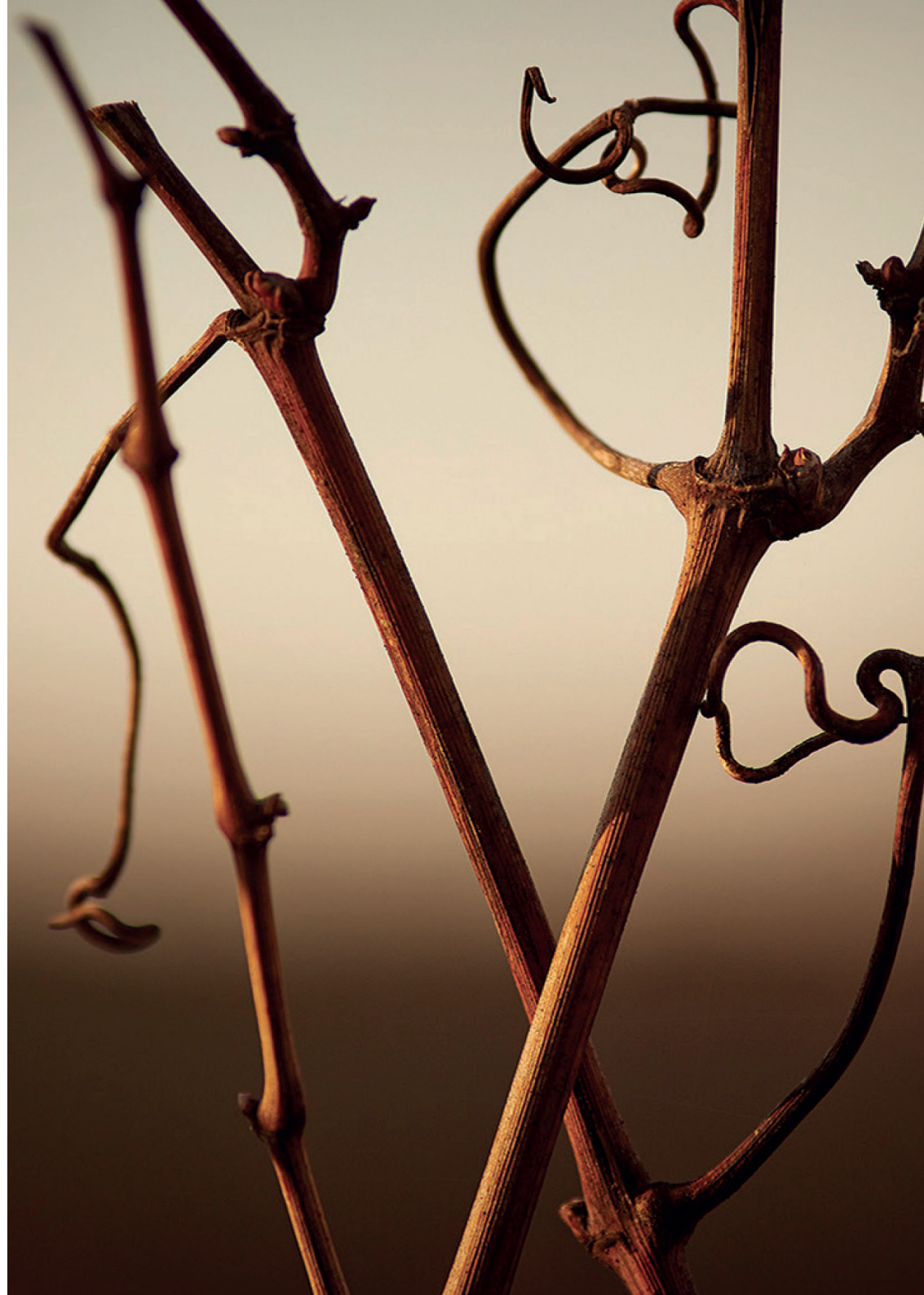
Hervé insists that his role is simply to facilitate what the grapes do naturally and he often reminds everyone that the grapes have an intelligence all of their own.

Leclerc Briant is the only négociant in Champagne whose entire grape supply is organic and sourced from all three iconic regions of Champagne: La Côte des Blancs, La Montagne de Reims and La Côte des Bar.

It's an approach that requires expertise and humility, both of which Hervé brings to his work, ably supported by the team at Leclerc Briant.

The wines are partially fermented in aged barrels, adding sophistication to the taste. The stability that the wood and the tartaric acid lend to the Champagne results in a well balanced wine that brings out the natural flavors of the grapes.

The champagne then undergoes an extended period of aging in underground chalk cellars with optimal temperature and humidity before finally being disgorged. Added sugar, called dosage, is always very low in the Cuvées so that the wines can express themselves without artifice.



## TRAILBLAZERS FROM THE BEGINNING

Producing high quality wines while remaining faithful to the unique character of Leclerc Briant remains the primary objective of the House. In practice, this means preserving the best parts of the house's history, while constantly questioning how the wines can be improved even further. Often this results in turning traditional processes and ways of thinking on their head.

As far back as 1960, Bertrand Leclerc was already creating wines from individual plots of vines, contrasting the common practice of blending wines from multiple vineyards.

In 1970, he made his first Brut Zéro champagne, without any added sugar whatsoever. Today that bold readiness to push boundaries lives on. This is seen particularly in the way that anything remotely artificial is laid aside in the quest for champagne that is as pure as possible.

In fact, the only walls that Leclerc Briant recognizes are those surrounding a prestigious walled vineyard or Clos. Leclerc Briant has even developed a Clos of its own: le Clos des Trois Clochers in Villers-Allerand, named after the three belltowers that can be seen from the vineyard.

## A BRIGHT AND 'BIO-CHIC' FUTURE AHEAD

A 'Bio-Chic' character is the hallmark of Leclerc Briant; the paradoxical cornerstone on which all else rests.

Being organic (Bio) has always been a guiding principle of the house, while Chic is no less than what would be expected from a house committed to making champagnes fashioned by hand, to excellence at every step of the way, and to viticulture worthy of master craftsmen.

Wines of such high caliber demand to be presented in a setting worthy of their quality. This is evidenced in exquisite details like the stylish red seal hidden beneath the capsule, evoking the veins of clay that run through the plots of vines, the austere elegance of the labels suggesting the minimalist approach to winemaking, and the sleek foil cover that highlights the lunar cycles that guide biodynamic winemaking. This same inimitable style can be found around the world in the restaurants, boutiques, and tasting rooms where Champagne Leclerc Briant can be enjoyed.

Whether it be in the new hospitality center, in the reimaged winery, or in the state of the art barrel room, the spirit of renovation is everywhere at Leclerc Briant.

At the center of the global bio-chic presence of Leclerc Briant, you will find that the heart of the brand lies in Epernay. Leclerc Briant now has a home for that heart on the most prestigious thoroughfare in Champagne, the famous Avenue de Champagne. At No. 25b, a new tasting room, boutique, and luxurious hospitality suites are ready to welcome VIP visitors.

There is a bright and bio-chic future ahead for Leclerc Briant.



## CHAMPAGNES WITH REAL CHARACTER

From the moment the grapes are pressed to the second the bottles of champagne are disgorged, from the Classics range to the Specialties range, to the Single Vineyards range, every wine is respected and listened to and thus is able to express its own particular personality of each vintage.

### THE “CLASSICS”

Brut, Brut Réserve, Brut Rosé, Vintage Brut and Vintage Demi-sec blend together so naturally that very little reserve wine need be included.

### “SINGLE VINEYARD” SELECTIONS

Les Chèvres Pierreuses, Les Crayères, La Croisette and Le Clos des Trois Clochers represent the quintessence of terroir enhanced by biodynamics.

### “SPECIALTY RANGE”

Rubis de Noirs, Cramant without sulfites, Blanc de Meuniers, Vintage Collection 1985 and Vintage Collection Rosé de Saignée 1990, are all exceptional champagnes, each with its own unique character.

