

Diebolt-Vallois Champagne

Making Champagne 'the way my grandfather did,' Jacques Diebolt creates delicate wines of great finesse and elegance under his family's label, Diebolt-Vallois.

A Small Estate Grows

When he was just 17, Jacques took over his father's two hectare vineyard in the Côtes-de-Blanc area of Champagne. Under the tutelage of his grandfather, he tended the chardonnay vines and began experimenting with winemaking. With painstaking care, he bottled his first Champagne in 1959.

The following year he married Nadia Vallois who was also from a farming family in Côtes-de-Blanc. She brought with her into the marriage a small plot of chardonnay vines in the area. The newlyweds further expanded their land holdings with a hectare in Ardre Valley that was planted to pinot noir and pinot meunier. Together they continued making wine, changing the label to Diebolt-Vallois to reflect their partnership.

An American Introduction

Throughout France the brand's wines gained recognition. Responding to the growing demand, a winery and caves were built in 1978 across the street from their family home in Cramant. Although the delightful bubbly found its way onto the tables of France's best restaurants, it did not begin to be exported into the

United States until 1980. In fact the line of Champagnes from Diebolt-Vallois remained virtually unknown in America until 1992, when Jacques was named 'Champagne Producer of the Year' by the international magazine Gault Millau. Today Nadia and Jacques' children, Isabelle and Arnaud also work at the winery. The family continues the

tradition of careful farming and meticulous winemaking started by Jacques' grandfather years ago.

A 'Lovely' Line-Up

The estate currently makes four different Champagnes. 'Cuvée Prestige' is 100%

Grand Cru chardonnay from their Côtes-de-Blanc vineyards, half of which is raised in oak and half in stainless steel. 'Cuvée Tradition' is a blend of 30% pinot noir, 30% pinot Meunier, and 40% chardonnay from the Ardre Valley vineyards. A delicate non-vintage 'Blanc-de-Blancs' is also produced. The Underground Wine Journal notes it is 'stony-edged with perfume and notes of spice and vanilla—lovely Champagne.' In celebration of the new millennium, Diebolt-Vallois released a 1995 Blanc-de-Blancs. It too was received with praise. The Wine Spectator called it 'focused and vibrant, revolving around citrus, bread dough and apple flavors, allied to a firm, ripe framework.' All of the wines represent the careful, delicious efforts of a small, family owned estate.

