

CHAMPAGNE JACQUESSON

DIZY, VALLE DE LA MARNE

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JACQUESSON
MAISON FONDÉE EN 1789



Memmie Jacquesson founded Jacquesson in 1789 and did so well that Napoleon gave him a medal. In 1835, his son Adolphe instituted the radical notion of training vines in rows with the collaboration of Dr. Guyot. He established a base level of sugar in bottles with the aid of a chemist, substantially reducing the problem of bottle explosion. Lastly, he patented the wire basket known as the muselet, still used today to hold sparkling wine corks in place.

The house left family hands toward the end of the 1800s, and was bought by the Chiquet family in 1974. **Today Jacquesson is jointly managed by Jean-Hervé and Laurent Chiquet.** Jean-Hervé, once the cellar master, now primarily runs the commercial aspects of the business, while his younger brother Laurent primarily runs the production side and has taken the role of chef de cave. The two work closely with their vineyard manager, Sylvain Leblanc. **The house farms 31 hectares in the grand cru villages of Aÿ, Avize, and Oiry, and in the premier cru villages of Hautvillers, Dizy, and Mareuil-sur-Aÿ.** In addition, from these same villages, the Chiquets buy grapes off of 11 hectares from growers with whom they work closely.

Sustainable farming practices are the norm here. No herbicides are used and rows are tilled in the spring and fall, with grass sowed in summer. When fertilizers are used, they are entirely organic. Pruning is severe for low yields, and canopy management is stressed to ensure minimal mildew and odium pressure, thus holding fungicide sprays to a minimum.

Jacquesson has a small production facility in Dizy, across the river from Epernay. Here, the brothers use vertical presses rather than more abusive horizontal presses. Only juice from the first pressing is used—the press wine itself is sold to négociants—and of course all the juice is either from grand cru or premier cru vineyards. The juice flows by gravity into steel tanks for 24 hours of settling, after which it is transferred to large neutral wood casks (foudres) for several months to undergo alcoholic and malolactic fermentations. The lees are stirred to enrich the wine, a practice that has the additional benefit of providing a naturally reductive environment, keeping the need for SO₂ additions to a minimum. The first racking normally occurs in April or May. Malolactic fermentation is never blocked because 1) this would require a lot of SO₂; and 2) low acidity in Champagne grapes is not a concern. Since the fruit that makes the wine always attains an enviable level of ripeness, the dosage is typically in the extra-brut range of one to six grams of sugar per liter. Bottling is done without any filtration. Care is taken with the labels to transparently detail all relevant information about the wine without marketing flourishes.

Jacquesson's transformation into a small, grower estate over the last handful of years is nothing short of remarkable. Readers who haven't tasted these Champagnes in some time owe it to themselves to do so. Today, Jacquesson is among Champagne's elite producers, that much is certain.

—Antonio Galloni, vinousmedia.com, July 2015

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