



J. LASSALLE

(J. Lah-sahl)

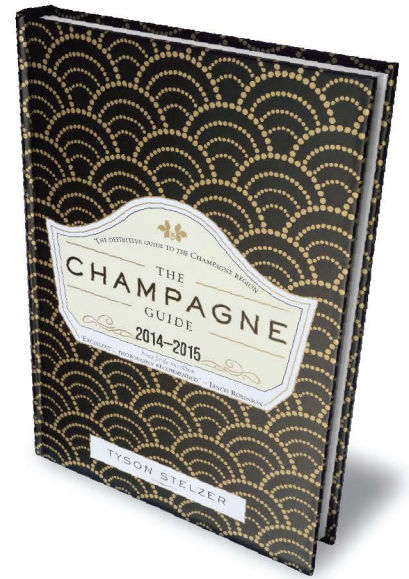


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CHAMPAGNE
J. LASSALLE
PROPRIÉTAIRE DE VIGNOBLE



It takes great sensitivity to create wines that communicate the subtleties not only of the place that has given them birth, but the very personalities of those who have brought them to life. When I first tasted the enchanting champagnes of J. Lassalle, I knew nothing of the estate or the family behind them and was immediately captivated by their dainty restraint and feminine beauty, arousing my curiosity to discover how such delicate sophistication could be achieved. It all made sense when I met the three generations of delightful women who, for more than 30 years, have nurtured this immaculate estate in the charming village of Chigny-les-Roses.

EVER SINCE JULES LASSALLE PASSED AWAY IN 1982, HIS wife, Olga, daughter Chantal and grand-daughter Angéline Templier have worked closely together to double the size of their family estate to 11.2 hectares and an annual production of 100,000 bottles. Templier oversees winemaking, ably assisted by her mother. Olga, now 92, still helps with management and administration. ‘We don’t need any men to help!’ Templier grins.

The meticulous attention to detail of these women shines in every stage of production. The winery at their home in the village is pristine, bathed in white light, one of the cleanest little facilities I’ve visited anywhere. ‘We do everything as my grandfather did, but because we are girls we have a feminine touch, and you can feel it in the wines,’ says Templier.

These are not wines to be taken lightly. The Lassalles have been making champagnes exclusively

from their premier cru vineyards since 1942. Their aspiration is to express the terroir of the northern slopes of the Montagne de Reims, so all vineyards are tightly located within 10 kilometres of the house. Pinot noir is king here, and comprises 60% of plantings. Chardonnay (25%) takes a confident, if surprising, lead in Lassalle’s most sublime cuvée, and pinot meunier makes up the remaining 15% of the estate. The family is privileged to own a significant proportion of old parcels, with some vines up to 50 years of age. ‘They make great wines, so we don’t replant them!’ Templier exclaims. Any fruit of insufficient quality is sold to large houses.

Blends comprise all three champagne varieties in proportions varied according to the season, bolstered by a generous stock of five years of reserve wines. Preserving freshness at every stage is a high priority. Grapes are pressed on the first floor and the juice