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Carneros: Chardonnay, Pinot Noir And More From Napa And Sonoma

Given the success of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir in Carneros, it's only natural that high quality méthode champenoise sparkling wines are produced here as well. Arguably the most famous is **Domaine Carneros**, founded in 1987 by the celebrated Champagne house of Taittinger. Winemaker Eileen Crane, who has served in this capacity since day one, notes that at that time the Taittinger firm was seriously looking for a location for a home for sparkling wine production in California and while they considered the Russian River Valley as a site, "the location in Carneros was compelling." Carneros was also the home of sparkling wine firms from Champagne houses such as Chandon and Mumm, and the fine Spanish sparkling wine producer, Gloria Ferrer.



Domaine Carneros, one of California's most celebrated sparkling wine houses

The top cuvée here is "Le Reve," French for "the dream." This is a Blanc de Blancs, 100% Chardonnay, with the wine modeled after Taittinger's prestige cuvée, Comtes de Champagne Blanc de Blancs. Why did the company opt for this decision? Crane explains; "When I was hired in 1987 to build Domaine Carneros, Claude Taittinger (then president of Champagne Taittinger) said to me, "we have France's best Blanc de Blancs and I would like to have someday America's greatest Blanc de Blancs." In late 1998 we released the first Le Rêve 1992."