



Domaine Les Crayères, Reims

When ephemeral becomes memorable



This splendid historic property, member of Relais & Châteaux, embodies French *Art de Vivre* with rare finesse. Ever since the Gardinier Family took over in the early 1980's, it has aged to perfection with a radiant new vision reaching far beyond the terroir of the estate.

It invites guests to view the Champagne region through a kaleidoscope of unique features: its land, its vineyards... and so much more.



PHILIPPE MILLE, FORWARD-THINKING CUISINE

“Bringing out the soul of Champagne in my cuisine takes much more than crafting the terroir... it means uncovering its secrets!”

After two years spent mastering the myriad of subtleties of this diverse and complex terroir of wine-makers, our Chef, awarded the coveted title of *Meilleur Ouvrier de France* in 2011 and a second Michelin star in 2012, considers that finally, today, he is ready and able to offer much more than just locavore, sustainable cuisine.

As soon as he arrived, he reconciled the prestige of the venue with the country life he loves, built a capital of trust and created a virtuous circle encompassing each of the 64 producers, farmers, fish farmers and gatherers who supply him today with the best of everything within 70 kilometres of the estate. Philippe Mille was also determined to share Champagne’s regional identity by featuring its finest historic and creative achievements through original cooking and carving techniques as well as the best local savoir-faire and craftsmanship.



By surprising his guests too! Take this monochromatic, immaculate razor clam recipe, reminding them that shellfish are no strangers to the crayeux terroir: thousands of shells carpeted the ground some 45 million years ago and left a natural iodine legacy we can still taste in a glass of champagne. Served in a wide-rimmed, matte white soup bowl, the colour of limestone, this razor clam dish reflects his complex culinary thought process.



While Philippe Mille admits that his menu - which, unlike stuffy fine dining menus, changes 20 to 30 times a year - is sometimes built around a single vineyard or a favourite wine, every recipe he creates is now there to tell the story of his encounter with a wine-grower, a farmer and a craftsman. Take the straw marquetry artist in Nanteuil, Grégory Pierson, who inspired the Chef to prepare a poultry raised by Monsieur Cogniard in a recipe featuring rye from which the straw is derived.

Another example: Vitraux Simon-Marq, the stained glass manufacturer who designed tableware to set off his langoustine marinated in Arbane grape verjuice, a spectacular tribute to the Reims Cathedral.



His turbot is not only grilled over vine shoots and served on a champagne barrel stave, it is served with potatoes cooked on embers, in this forge built by a local metalworker, a cooking method that echoes with his childhood when he would watch his father work as a blacksmith.

By expressing his love for the art and architecture in a culinary language infused with the dialect of local craftspeople and farmers, Philippe Mille carves out a permanent place for the Domaine Les Crayères in the multifaceted region it calls home.

Far from being overwhelmed by this geography of fine connoisseurs, our Chef has forged himself a singular personality, proclaiming his love for a cuisine enshrined in time-honoured French traditions, featuring powerful flavours which draw their identity, and their savour, from bones and carcasses, slow-cooking techniques, and are enhanced by tableside service.

“Why bother inventing stories in the kitchen or with producers if there is no one to tell them to our clients?”



Michel Gebel, a man of tact and discretion, has for mission to bring the emotion of Philippe Mille to the table, intact.

This transmission is at the heart of everything Philippe Mille does, drawing on skills forged in some of the world's greatest kitchens - at Drouant, at the Pré Catelan with Frédéric Anton, at Lasserre, at the Ritz with Michel Roth, then at the Meurice working with Yannick Alléno – today he is at the head of his own kitchen brigade, sharing his culinary know-how and vision with the next generation.

“Building product knowledge within the brigade involves cultivating close ties with producers, to understand them and highlight their value.”



This Chef runs his brigade on common sense, lively exchange and mutual respect, creating a calm and supportive atmosphere for every service.

“In a kitchen, know-how and knowing how to work are two parts of a whole. Working as one is the only way to guarantee the highest level of precision,” explains the man who created in 2010 a competition to motivate young talents. Today, the Trophée Mille has become an international event attracting participants from fourteen countries and a number of starred Chefs who share their passion and provide support for future greats.



AN EXCEPTIONAL WINE CELLAR

With three cellars and 63,000 bottles, more than 3,000 references of which 1,000 of champagne, the Domaine Les Crayères' wine cellar is one of the most impressive in France. And not your run-of-the-mill variety either: its precious stock is kept at ideal temperature in an authentic bunker at the far end of the grounds.

While Head Sommelier Martin Jean has set up a superior ageing cellar to tend to prestigious vertical collections with nearly impossible to find Côte Rôtie of the Domaine Jamet and Meursault Coche-Dury, this young Champagne born-and-bred enthusiast also thrives on cultivating another treasure: 9,000 bottles of champagne from no fewer than 530 Houses.

In his thirties, Martin is determined to step up and embrace the new energy that is shaking up the region, and has selected 250 independent wine-growers to join the ranks of his cellar.



These wine-growers are known for their insatiable thirst for knowledge, crafting a personal vision and working with the singularity of their own vineyard soil. The result is a plethora of bespoke wines to choose from. “Young wine-growers have a totally different approach and their journeys into other wine-growing regions, or further afield, have a definite impact,” explains the Head Sommelier. Venerable estate or young independent vineyard, it’s all a question of balance. “In each wine, we look for purity, and for a distinctive signature,” continues this demanding connoisseur who adds only a dozen of new wines to his list out of some hundred new ones introduced each year, and can remove a few ones as well.

He doesn’t believe in the perfect pairing – “Every person has a different perception, coloured by their background, the context, etc.” - but aims only to enhance the meal experience, providing guideposts along the way.

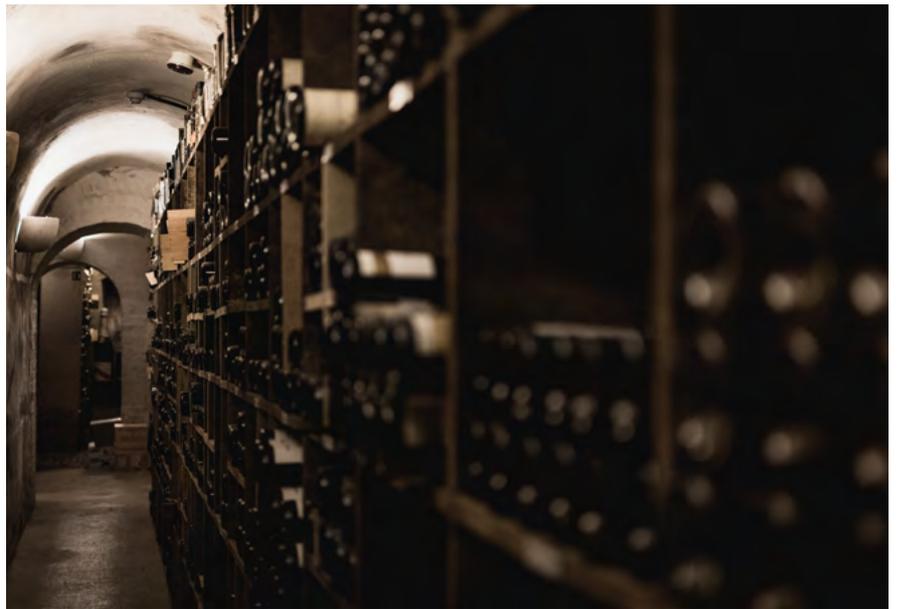


«Despite what many people think, champagne improves with age.

Over time, it develops other aromas, pairs with other dishes...

We can sometimes miss out on things if we drink a champagne when it's too young. »

That is why some of his champagnes are also found in the ageing cellar to improve balance in certain vintages, mellow the dosage or enhance complexity... Martin Jean works closely with the Chef, the wine-grower and clients to propose carefully thought-out champagne pairings from a by-the-glass menu of a half-a-dozen champagnes, covering a wide range of different characters, or from the thousands of bottles on what was voted the world's best wine list in 2022 by The World of Fine Wine.



CASTLE LIFE

Voted most beautiful hotel in the world several years running by Condé Nast Traveler, jewel of Relais & Châteaux establishments, the Domaine Les Crayères is a destination in itself at the beating heart of Reims.

From the top of the Butte Saint-Nicaise, a listed UNESCO World Heritage Site, the hotel overlooks the Saint-Remi Basilica dome on one side and the Reims Cathedral on the other.

A dream, on a human scale but majestic, surrounded by seven hectares of landscaped nature designed by Jules-Édouard Redont, dotted with Lebanese cedars and century-old boxwoods, garden beds with over 3,000 bulbs and flowers replanted each season.



The construction was launched by the Marquise de Polignac, an architectural enthusiast, in the purest Mansart style. Completed in 1904, the Château has the most stunning views over the city and the *Montagne de Reims*.

Twenty rooms named after European empresses, queens and princesses are perched above the peristyle or in the Cottage, a more intimate and bucolic lodging in the shade of the park.

Twenty rooms, some with a majestic view, make clients feel like guests in a sophisticated, aristocratic family home. They all feature French *Art de Vivre* with a warm, down-to-earth welcome, which our Director of Hospitality, Marie-Liesse Mantsch has been perfecting for more than 35 years!



A PROUD HERITAGE

The decoration is the work of one of the greatest names in classical style, Pierre-Yves Rochon, featuring beautiful fabrics, antique furnishings and the famous French *je-ne-sais-quoi*.



Every year, two rooms are renovated, true to Louis XIV style with help from the finest contemporary craftsmanship. Wallpapers and fabrics are chosen using patterns from historical archives of the Pierre Frey House, Dedar velvet and embroidered pieces by Lelièvre.

In recent years, the Domaine Les Crayères has met the challenge of asserting a subtle balance between the unique charms of a historic estate and 21st century amenities.

Throughout the Château, we can admire the elegance of a venue that has stood the test of time, a refinement highlighted by decorating choices such as the array of tartans in the Bar La Rotonde creating the feel of a British gentlemen's club, the winter garden's artfully draped roof reminiscent of the roaring 20's, the original oak furnishings in the Salon Melchior, Le Parc** restaurant's dining room with its superb chandelier and family portraits in XXL medallions, the Aubusson tapestry in the Salle Boisée and the views of the terrace beyond its rounded windows...



Today, the Domaine Les Crayères offers a journey through time and especially “in Champagne”, with all the contemporary hospitality codes, both chic and warm-hearted.



A BRASSERIE IN THE MIDST OF NATURE

Tucked away on one side of the park, the Brasserie Le Jardin offers a casual atmosphere between its bucolic terrace unlike any other in Reims, and an immense loft-like building, designed in a resolutely contemporary style around an open kitchen.



In this venue, Chef Philippe Mille leaves protocol at the door, creating a free-wheeling menu based, as always, on generosity, headline products and the same demanding sourcing as for Le Parc** restaurant.

Precision cooking, delicate reductions and gourmet desserts make this a top-tier bistro destination offering a three-course menu for 39 euros at both lunch and dinner!



The selection of wines and champagnes meets the venue's high standards: Head Sommelier Martin Jean grabs here the opportunity to innovate as part of this high-value menu: pouring out pleasure one glass at a time from magnum bottles.



A PRIVATE BAR WITH CULT STATUS

Seating forty, by reservation only, in an iconic mahogany and tartan decor, La Rotonde has become a legendary venue. As a meeting place for the happy few, one of the select addresses that dot the globe, it is famous for its unique atmosphere, part gentlemen's club, part winter garden *à la française*...



As of the first autumn days, guests can warm themselves in the Bar, comfortably ensconced in Ralph Lauren virgin wool and soft velvet; while in spring, guests can enjoy the exceptional terrace of the Château, overlooking the gardens ablaze with flamboyant sunsets.

The top-shelf selection of spirits is all that can be expected, and then some. The most demanding aficionados can treat themselves to rarer-than-rare brandies, like those from the Tyrolean Rochelt distillery, as well as brown spirits and signature cocktails.



THE PRODUCERS' MARKET

To integrate the Domaine Les Crayères into local life, and give artisan producers the public visibility they deserve, Chef Philippe Mille launched this annual event in 2010, two steps ahead of the locavore movement. It has become hugely popular, attracting 6,000 visitors who meet over a September weekend to enjoy the picturesque setting of the Domaine Les Crayères' park while (re)discovering the local producers' secrets.



Among those present are Julien and Patrick Cogniard who raise the milk-fed lambs served in the restaurant Le Parc**, Sophie Laluc and her goat cheeses, the Spinelli family's delightfully fragrant pink-hued button mushrooms...

The goal of this event? To remind people that the Champagne-Ardennes region is much more than just wine, they are home to a large and thriving community of farmers, growers and food producers.



A WHITE PARTY

A summer highlight, this event celebrated its 11th edition in 2023



Another initiative that snowballed over the years, and today 3,000 guests sport an all-white look and gather on the lawn with a picnic basket developed by the Chef and a bottle of champagne for two.

Starting at 7 pm, guests enjoy a series of four concerts featuring a mix of local performers and international names, while the champagne bar helps keep everyone cool throughout the evening...



KEY FEATURES

Domaine Les Crayères: at a glance

French Art de Vivre

- **Domaine Les Crayères:**



- 5-star hotel Relais & Châteaux: 20 rooms and suites, from 490 to 1,500 euros



- Restaurant Le Parc** : Open for lunch and dinner from Wednesday to Sunday, seats 50, menu from 120 to 390 euros



- Brasserie Le Jardin: Bib Gourmand Michelin, open 7 days a week, menus 39 & 60 euros, seats 130 people indoors or on the terrace

- **Iconic French and Champagne region establishment:**

- Travellers' Choice Tripadvisor 2023, triple reward for the restaurant Le Parc**, the Brasserie Le Jardin and the 5-star hotel

- “Living Heritage Company” label

- Condé Nast Traveller Choice 2021

- Louis Vuitton Travel Guide

- Named the world's most beautiful hotel in 2007 by The New York Times

- First hotel restored and decorated by Pierre-Yves Rochon in 1981

- **Find us :**

- Located on the Butte Saint-Nicaise, listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site

- A 3-minute walk from the cellars and vineyards of the Pommery and Veuve Clicquot champagne Houses

- An 8-minute walk from the Taittinger and Ruinart cellars

- By train: 45 minutes from Paris and 30 minutes from Charles de Gaulle airport, then 10 minutes from the train station

- By car: 90 minutes from Paris



Chef Philippe Mille

- 2022: Restaurant Le Parc** ranked in the top 150 best restaurants in the world and awarded a score of 17.5/20 by the Gault & Millau guide
- 2021 - 2022: A banner year for Philippe Mille
 - 2021: Top 100 French restaurants according to OAD
 - 2021: 50 Best Discovery
 - 2021: Gault & Millau d'Or Grand Est Région 2021
 - 2021: Restaurant Le Parc** named the 200th best restaurant in the world by La Liste 1000
- 2021 - 2021: New Opus: a product, a craftsperson, an art creator
- 2021: Release of his second book "*L'Âme de la Champagne*", which received the "Livres et Savoir" prize from the National Academy of Cuisine in 2022
- 2016: Release of his first book "*Le goût à l'état brut*"
- 2012: The Producers' Market was created, 6,000 visitors each year
- 2012: Domaine Les Crayères' Restaurant Le Parc** earned its second Michelin star
- 2011: Domaine Les Crayères' Restaurant Le Parc* earned its first Michelin star
- 2011: Meilleur Ouvrier de France and Grand Chef Relais & Châteaux titles
- 2010: Creation of the Trophée Mille
- 2009: Bocuse d'Europe and Bocuse de Bronze trophies

Wine Cellar

- 63,000 bottles on the Domaine
- More than 3,000 references of which 1,000 references of champagne
- Voted the world's best wine list by The World of Fine Wine in 2022
- Voted the best champagne & sparkling wine list in the world by The World of Fine Wine in 2021 & 2022
- Wine Traveler 2019 - 2020
- 22,000 bottles in the ageing cellar located in the authentic estate's bunker





PRACTICAL INFORMATION

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