

Amy Reiley's

# Eat Something Sexy

WINE OF THE WEEK

## DOMAINE CARNEROS LE RÊVE- THIS SPARKLING WINE RIVALS CHAMPAGNE

October 19, 2018 / by Amy Reiley

Fortunately last night I had the opportunity to dine with esteemed winemaker Eileen Crane of Domaine Carneros. After a dining with a legend and tasting through wines like the ones she creates, I had my inspiration. I scrapped everything I was working on yesterday to talk with you about Domaine Carneros Le Rêve.



DOMAINE CARNEROS.

### 2011 DOMAINE CARNEROS LE RÊVE

Le Rêve is Domaine Carneros tête de cuvée. It is the sparkling wine producer's finest Blanc de Blancs. It is the flagship wine of this sparkling wine producer which makes distinctly American wines. Yet it is one with a culture steeped in French tradition. You see Domaine Carneros was founded by Champagne's Taittinger family.

### AMERICAN WINERY, FRENCH LEGACY

The Taittinger family created their American winery in California's Carneros region 1987, appointing a young, American winemaker named Eileen Crane as the head of the operation. Although Crane was young, female and American, she possessed something the Taittingers did not, experience with Carneros fruit. (In case you aren't familiar with the dynamics of the wine industry, it is very much a male-dominated business today. And back in 1987? Well, female winemakers were about as mythical as elves and fairies.) But the Taittingers obviously made an astute decision, hiring Crane, because that young, female winemaker took Domaine Carneros from unknown to one of the most respected wineries in America.



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More than 30 years later, Crane is still at the helm, producing vintage after vintage of outstanding sparkling, as well as still wines. And last night, she shared a tasting of six vintages of her tête de cuvée, Le Rêve with an intimate group of wine writers and influencers. And somehow, I was lucky enough to get named to the guest list to sit down and taste this magical wine with its creator.

### ABOUT THIS WINE

The 2011 is the current release of Le Rêve. Although it is seven years old, this is a wine still in its infancy. Its youthful character is the result of 2011's cool summer, according to Crane. A Blanc de Blancs, the wine was made from 100% estate Chardonnay. (Some previous vintages of Le Rêve were blended with a modest amount of Pinot Blanc.)

### THE VERDICT

The 2011 Domaine Carneros Le Rêve might be one of my favorite vintages of this prestigious California sparkling wine. At \$115 per bottle, it is obviously a special occasion wine but one that is, without question, worth the price if you can afford it. It offers bright lemon zest acidity with pear, pineapple, a hint of crème fraîche and faint toast on the palate. It finishes long, exceptionally long, with budding notes of vanilla flan. With a bit of age, the toasty notes as well as the caramel on the finish should blossom and shine. But if you can't help yourself and have to drink it now, you are bound to enjoy the youthful side of this delicious Blanc de Blancs.

