

Champagne Diebolt-Vallois Cramant



2004 Brut Blanc de Blancs

"Diebolt's 2004 vintage blanc de blancs contains chardonnay from three different villages: 60 percent of it comes from Cuis, 35 percent from Epernay and five percent from Chouilly. "Cuis is quite firm," says Diebolt, "but Epernay and Chouilly are rounder and much more supple, so they balance well." This is flowery and summery in tone, noticeably lighter in body than Diebolt's outstanding 2002 yet possessing the same sense of elegance and poise. Its aromas of green citrus and green apple are silky and refined, finishing with long, delicate length and a subtle infusion of chalky minerality. It's still obviously youthful, making you feel somewhat guilty drinking it, but the fact is that it simply tastes really, really good."

Peter Liem, ChampagneGuide.net (rated two of three stars; last tasted 6/09)

2002 Brut Blanc de Blancs

"An elegant and relatively high-toned nose that offers a moderate level of yeastiness with a distinct citrus component to the dried floral notes preceding crisp, intense and mouth coating middle weight flavors of fine depth and complexity, all wrapped in a beautifully persistent finish. I quite like this as it's stylish and understated with a subtle sophistication. Stated differently, this is a 'quiet' effort as it has plenty to say but you have to listen as it doesn't shout. This will be capable of aging up to a decade and I wouldn't start drinking it in earnest for another few years."

93 points-Burghound.com (October 2007, Issue 28)

"This is pure Côte des Blancs Champagne, beautifully clean and fresh. The fruit is compact in its youthful vigor, a slip of a wine that commands attention with tremendously concentrated lemon and bright apple fruit. It offers plenty of charm if you drink it now, and exceptional balance for aging."

94 points– Peter Liem, Wine & Spirits (December 2007)

Fleur de Passion 2002

"Hints of herbs in the aroma quickly give way to toast, coffee and candied citrus, followed by a mint accent. Smooth in texture, with good cut and a lingering aftertaste of pastry. Drink now through 2022. 750 cases made."

92 points- The Wine Spectator (December 31, 2008)

"The 2002 Brut Blanc de Blancs Fleur de Passion is initially a rather tightly-wound, angular wine. With some time in the glass, this Champagne becomes a little more generous, yet it remains focused in its expression of white peaches, flowers and minerals. The finish is long, sweet and ultimately quite seductive, even if this isn't an especially accessible wine at this stage. The Fleur de Passion is made from the estate's oldest vines in Cramant and aged in barrel. Anticipated maturity: 2011-2019."

92 points-Antonio Galloni, The Wine Advocate (#180)

"This marvelous Champagne isn't as dramatic as most Cuvée de Prestige wines, but it is a real Connoisseur's choice. Very dry, and almost austere at the first sniff and sip, it unfolds a host of subtle nuances as it warms and opens in the glass. You won't find a big overlay of oxidation or yeastiness, but rather a steely core of very pure fruit that is interlaced with energetic acidity that drives the wine to a very long finish that shows lovely nutty and mineral nuances. I'd bet that this will develop positive characteristics for a decade if you've got good cellaring capability and plenty of patience. Terrific stuff."

95 points– Michael Franz, winereviewonline.com (November 25, 2008)

"At the top of Diebolt's range is the Fleur de Passion, sourced from 50-year old vines in Cramant and made entirely in old barriques, without malolactic, fining, filtration or cold-stabilization. The 2002 is potentially the greatest Fleur de Passion yet, and in time it may even surpass the unbelievable 1996. The only problem with it at the moment is that while it's a wine of obvious class, it's begun to close down very severely, even more than is generally typical for this cuvée. When I first tasted the 2002 at the beginning of 2007, it showed a delicately expansive aroma, already subtly complex and precise, with energetic tension and extremely long, graceful length. It continued to develop more depth and character, but by the beginning of 2008 (ironically, just before it was to be released), it was showing signs of closing down, with its fruit appearing more and more reticent and introverted. On my most recent tastings, between August and December of 2008, it had firmly retreated into its shell, showing great length and refinement, along with a sophisticated minerality and silky, subtle texture, but the core of fruit was extremely stubborn and unyielding. You will not want to miss out on this wine, but it is definitely one to put in the cellar, and to leave there for as long as you have the patience. It's possible that it may re-emerge in the short-term—other vintages that have shut down in similar fashion, such as 2000 and 1998, have begun to slowly reveal a little more of themselves now, if given plenty of air—but I really don't see the point of opening this again before at least 2012."

Peter Liem, ChampagneGuide.net (rated three of three stars; last tasted 12/08)

NV Blanc de Blancs Brut

"Pale yellow, with tiny bubbles. Fresh, incisive scents of lemongrass, lime and pear, with a floral undertone. Shows tight citrus flavors on entry, then gains weight in the middle palate and offers notes of pear skin and dusty minerals. I like this wine's stony, restrained personality. The finish is dry, focused and persistent; this would work well with raw oysters or fresh crab."

90 points-Josh Reynolds, Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar (December, 2009)

"Based on Cuis, which often accounts for up to two-thirds of the blend, this also includes chardonnay from Chouilly, Cramant and Epernay. The current release is 70 percent 2006 and 30 percent 2005, showing a round, rich presence typical of these two warm years. Underneath the ripeness, however, it's classic Côte des Blancs chardonnay, with a flowery finesse and subtle, energetic persistence. It's already showing well as a young wine thanks to its fruitiness, but should undoubtedly improve with further bottle-age as the components harmonize and become more complex."

Peter Liem, ChampagneGuide.net (rated one of three stars; last tasted 1/09)

"This is arguably the most elegant wine in the range with a wonderfully high-toned nose of rose petal, brioche and freshly peeled lemon rind that is in keeping with the foamy but fine flavors that offer even more complexity before culminating in a gorgeously balanced and harmonious finish. This is a really pretty blanc de blancs and given that this genre often develops its complexity only with extended bottle age, this is one to buy in quantity so that it can be drunk over the next 5 years, or longer if desired."

91 points-Allen Meadows, Burghound.com, Issue 36 (4th quarter, 2009)

NV Cuvée Prestige

"Light fold. An expressive, floral bouquet displays tangerine, apple, smoky lees, honeysuckle and a touch of saffron. Minerally and precise, offering lively citrus and orchard fruit flavors and an undercurrent of sweet butter. The mineral note picks up steam with air and carries through the very long, spice, precise finish. I'd let this age for a few more years but there's no harm in drinking it now for its energy."

92 points-Josh Reynolds, Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar (December, 2009)

"Diebolt's Cuvée Prestige is made largely from old vines in Cramant, and is typically a blend of three different vintages. The current release, L.06, is made of 50 percent 2005, 30 percent 2004 and 20 percent 2002: it feels harmonious and refined, already showing a nuanced complexity and dimension. It's persistently fragrant, with a quiet intensity and marvelous length, and shows all of the class and breeding typical of this cuvée. As with all releases of Diebolt's Prestige, this should only become more complex and detailed with additional time in the cellar."

Peter Liem, ChampagneGuide.net (rated two of three stars; last tasted 1/09)