

# All That Sparkles

French Bloom and its premium, alcohol-free cuvées have woven themselves into the very fabric of wine country.

**French Bloom co-founders**  
Maggie Frerejean-Taittinger  
(left) and Constance Jablonski.



**Maggie Frerejean-Taittinger and Constance Jablonski, co-founders of the zero-alcohol, sparkling wine maison French Bloom, instantly light up when talking about one another.**

New York, where the duo met some 15 years ago, “is full of temporary friends,” says Frerejean-Taittinger. “But Constance was the total opposite. She was committed. She always showed up.” Jablonski can hardly wait to volley back: “Really, Maggie is such an inspiration. I’m always learning so much from her.” The depth of their bond is palpable — in their words, yes, but also in the calm, earnest place from which they speak. The entrepreneurial pair is a breath of fresh air.

I have to imagine this groundedness came in handy as the two set out to achieve a herculean task, especially in France: completely eschewing alcohol to produce a collection of sparkling wines so complex and captivating you hardly miss that ethanol-induced kick. As Frerejean-Taittinger puts it, jokingly, “If you tell a wine grower in Burgundy that you’re going to dealcoholize their wines, they’re going to follow you out with a shotgun.” But the longtime friends, with all due respect, remained determined. They knew they were onto something.

Jablonski, a vibrant, high-fashion model born in Lille, and Maggie, an influential gastronome originally from Chicago, crossed paths again in Paris, at a time when neither felt they could keep up with the social demands of their respective (and often overlapping) worlds. The American was pregnant with twins, while simultaneously heading up international development for the Michelin Guide, and the Frenchwoman’s presence was endlessly requested on global runways, magazine covers, and invite lists.

Both kept a close watch over what they put into their bodies,

*“Our very first goal was to create something delicious. The fact that there is no alcohol is almost secondary.”*

yet nearly everywhere they went, they felt pressured to have a glass in hand. And the water and juices offered as substitutes never stood up to the occasion, no matter how hallowed the aquifer or artisanal the orchard. Sitting down to a meticulously orchestrated meal at a Michelin-starred restaurant in the sixth arrondissement of Paris, for example, Frerejean-Taittinger recalls being the lone person left out of the toasts and pairings, thinking to herself, “We have a long way to go.”

The road leading up to French Bloom’s 2021 launch was long indeed. “Surrendering ourselves to experts,” notes Jablonski — as well as enlisting the savvy of Frerejean-Taittinger’s husband, industry veteran Rodolphe Frerejean-Taittinger — the budding vintners embarked on years of in-the-weeds research. Deep in experimentation, development, Covid-era capitulations, and flirtations with grapes everywhere from Bordeaux to Champagne to the Pays de la Loire, the team emerged from Limoux, at long last, with their lodestar: the glinting, pear-tinged, dry-yet-juicy, mineral intricacy of the chardonnay grape. And, importantly, with their master stroke of technique, too: the gentle, manual process of cold-vacuum distillation, which removes the alcohol while deftly preserving original aromas.

This careful interweaving of modern advancements and traditional methods, Jablonski tells me, laddered up to one clear pursuit: pleasure. “Our very first goal was to create something *delicious*. The fact that there is no alcohol is almost secondary.” Frerejean-Taittinger adds, “We wanted to [retain] everything we love about

traditional French sparkling wine — that attack, that high acidity, the minerality, that crisp finish.” The pair became rigorously fixated on building an architecture of flavor so layered and mesmeric its sheer lusciousness would be poised to transport just about anyone who imbibed.

I can personally attest: The result is something pretty spellbinding — with an added tip of the hat to my favorite bottle, the enigmatic Extra Brut. A new addition to the French Bloom lineup (joining Le Blanc, Le Rosé, and La Cuvée Vintage 2022) this deep, dreamy blanc de blancs seduces from the moment it hits the glass, looking like gleaming citrine. Each tipple reveals an entrancing, ever-unfolding character — here oak, there fruit, now ocean — finishing, always, with an addictive bit of tension.

So it’s no surprise to me that French Bloom counts the likes of Béatrice Cointreau, Jean Moueix of Petrus, Moët Hennessy, Dominique Crenn, La Grande Épicerie, and Ducasse Baccarat among their early backers and biggest fans. Which is not to say, however, there weren’t a number of tough customers along the way: For many sommeliers they spoke to, “It was a *hard* no,” remembers Frerejean-Taittinger. “It was like, ‘Why don’t you just drink water?’” Without naming names, let’s just say there were a good deal of belated converts in the end.

Late, early, near future, right now — whenever the idea (and joy) of drinking more mindfully does spring up, as it did for Frerejean-Taittinger and Jablonski, it’s a real boon to have something so passionately, ancestrally, and imaginatively crafted to, yes, indulge in. //

