

SPARKLING FORM

FOR MORE THAN TWO CENTURIES, BACCARAT CRYSTAL HAS LIT UP SOME OF THE FINEST DINING TABLES IN THE WORLD

Admired as much for its creative, innovative spirit as for its craftsmanship, Baccarat's collections combine cutting-edge design with an artisan expertise that goes right back to the company's foundation. The glassworks was established in 1764 in France's Lorraine region. Its crystal soon caught the eye of the aristocracy and, after Louis XVIII gave the royal seal of approval by ordering a set of stemware, prestigious commissions began to flood in – from Rajastani maharajas, Arabian kings and leaders of the Ottoman Empire. One furnace at the glassworks was reserved exclusively for producing pieces for the Russian court.



As the centuries have passed technologies have moved on, but Baccarat crystal ware is still produced on the same site – and with the same reverence for the art of glassmaking – as when it was first founded.

THE HARCOURT COLLECTION

The essence of Baccarat is perhaps most clearly distilled in the Harcourt collection, which celebrated its 170th anniversary in 2011 and is the oldest stemware model still featured in Baccarat's catalogue. With its hexagonal foot, triple knot stem and wide, flat-cut sides, the Harcourt remains a bestseller. The heavy funnel-shaped bowl of the glass with its six large, flat cuts, triple-knopped stem and hexagonal foot have been particularly appreciated by Pope Benedict XV, the king of Cambodia, as well as the presidents of Brazil, Lebanon and Ivory Coast, who ordered the service engraved and gilded with their arms and monograms. The Shah of Iran used it for the banquet tables during the festival to mark the 2,500th anniversary of the Persian Empire in 1971. The presidents of France also use this pattern for large dinners held away from the Elysée Palace, for instance at the Galerie des Glaces at the Château de Versailles. In addition, the service is used in France's largest embassies like the United States and England.

For the company's anniversary, Philippe Starck and his daughter, Ara, took on the challenge of reinterpreting the glasses' distinctive shape. Taking inspiration from a chess set, they produced a set of light and dark-coloured Harcourt champagne flutes. Meanwhile students at ECAL, the Lausanne Cantonal School of Art, were invited to offer their own versions of the Harcourt glass. The often playful designs perfectly capture the concept of *art de vivre*, which lies at the heart of the Baccarat philosophy.

CHÂTEAU BACCARAT

Amid all the celebrations, Baccarat also launched a new collection – Château Baccarat – which was created with wine lovers in mind. The company believes the slender trapeze lines of these glasses 'reveal the complexity, richness and subtlety of wine better than any other glass yet created'.

'Together, Harcourt and Château Baccarat represent the ethos of timeless quality'

To produce a design that would provide the ultimate drinking experience, Baccarat enlisted wine expert Bruno Quenioux as technical adviser. And the Château Baccarat has had a rapturous reception from connoisseurs. Noted French chef Pierre Gagnaire said: 'Drinking from such a unique glass gives rise to extraordinary adventures. It is as if you were listening to a piece of music, in the acoustic perfection of a symphony hall.'

Pierre likens a Château Baccarat glass to a work of art – something Baccarat strives to create in every piece of crystal it produces. Together, Harcourt and Château Baccarat represent the ethos of timeless quality and design, which is at the heart of everything Baccarat does.

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