



BY APPOINTMENT TO
HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN
WINE MERCHANTS
CORNEY & BARROW LIMITED
LONDON



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HRH THE PRINCE OF WALES
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INDEPENDENT WINE MERCHANTS

Established 1780



SALON 1999

EXCLUSIVE TO CORNEY & BARROW IN THE UK

SALON 1999

We seem to have waited such a long time to launch Salon 1999, a vintage of monumental stature in the history of the champagne region. As such, it seems fitting that this – only the 37th vintage made of this extraordinary champagne and likely to be one of its finest exponents – should mark the end of the 20th century; itself a monumental event.

Salon is a story that began in the early 1900s. Eugène-Aimé Salon started making champagne largely as a hobby, one that became an obsession in pursuit of a dream: to make the world's most exceptional champagne. This approach ran contrary to prevailing practice and baffled his contemporaries, for Salon was founded on the premise of singularity: a single grape (Chardonnay) sourced from a single *cru* (Le Mesnil-sur-Oger), a single vineyard and a single vintage.

It's no surprise that Salon was considered an eccentric – there are innumerable risks and challenges inherent in producing a champagne Salon's way, particularly when subject to a climate as capricious and marginal as that of the champagne region. Furthermore, producing such a champagne requires the commitment of time: Chardonnay, particularly from chalk-rich sites such as Salon's in Le Mesnil, requires lengthy lees ageing before it will start to emerge even tentatively from its chrysalis. But for Eugène-Aimé Salon, it seems all this was merely part of the greater process.

His genius, and the key to his champagne's complexity, lies in its simplicity – itself the ultimate sophistication, as Leonardo da Vinci is recorded to have said – a message that would chime no doubt with Eugène-Aimé himself as with all great creative talents.

Salon understood intuitively the potential of Chardonnay grown in the *terroir* of Le Mesnil and allowed the space and time to age. He took this perfectionist premise to its very extreme, creating Salon in only exceptional vintages: those that provided the conditions necessary to achieve the emblematic style he defined.

While the Salon style has inspired many imitators, it remains unique to this day: crystalline, complex, pure, Salon brings power and restraint into equal focus. Its register and precise expression alter subtly from vintage to vintage and with bottle age, however like all great wines, its fundamental character emerges true.

VINTAGE NOTES

1999 was an exceptional vintage, somehow befitting its historic status at the turn of the millennium. The champagne region's most abundant harvest, smashing all records, 1999 was also one of the vintages to disprove the widely-held notion that quality and quantity must be mutually exclusive. Indeed, for many *champenois*, 1999 remains among the finest of vintages in living memory, legendary for its quality.

Sunlight and warmth were key to 1999 – average temperatures were significantly higher (1.4°C) than any vintage in the preceding 60 years. Spring arrived early, bringing summertime heat in early March. Despite the usual issues of spring frosts and hailstorms, flowering at Salon took place on 11th June in wonderful, sunny conditions leading to an even fruit-set and the potential for an abundant vintage. Despite patches of rain in July and unexpectedly cool weather in early August, prospects for harvest remained undaunted, promising a pristine crop from vines in magnificent health. However, the path to greatness does not always run smooth – harvest began in perfect conditions but then the heavens opened. Fortunately, the Salon team began picking early and as a result, avoided most of the rain, retaining vital concentration of flavours and acidities.

TASTING NOTES

Salon 1999 will take its rightful place among the most legendary Salon vintages. During the latest tasting in February 2011, the wine was restrained and vinous on the nose, however a little time in the glass gives a glimpse of the wine's potential depth and complexity. Mouth-filling, with a creamy, featherlight mousse and the vivacious chalky minerality of the Mesnil *terroir*, there is tremendous tension and self-assurance to this champagne, which remains nevertheless delicate and enigmatic. Notes of brioche, May blossom, white peach and almond are in the wings, poised and tantalisingly discernible, yet still under veil. Time will bring its reward to those steel-willed enough to defer gratification (a note: 1997 is both accessible and graceful in the meantime). As ever finely wrought, Salon 1999 rides the knife-edge of finesse and power with characteristic panache.



Rebecca Palmer
Associate Director & Buyer
March 2011

DRINKING DATES

We are often asked our opinion on specific drinking dates for Salon and are pleased to provide recommendations as follows:

1982	From now to 2030
1983	Drink now at absolute peak – sublime. <i>Magnums will drink to 2020+</i>
1985	From now to 2030 (<i>magnum to 2040</i>)
1988	From now to 2030 (<i>magnum to 2040</i>)
1990	From now to 2050 (<i>magnum to 2060</i>)
1995	From now to 2050 (<i>magnum to 2060</i>)
1996	From now to 2050+ (<i>magnum to 2060+</i>)
1997	From now to 2040 (<i>magnum to 2050</i>)
1999	From now to 2050+ (<i>magnum to 2060+</i>)

A very small quantity of Salon 1999 has been bottled in magnums. Please contact your sales representative for more details.

CASE PRICE

£950/case of 6, in bond UK

Stock will be available for delivery from mid-May 2011



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