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HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN  
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HIS MAJESTY THE PRINCE OF WALES  
WINE MERCHANTS  
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INDEPENDENT WINE MERCHANTS-1780



CHAMPAGNE SALON

EXCLUSIVE TO CORNEY & BARROW IN THE UK

*“A single terroir: the Côte des  
Blancs; a single cru: the grand cru  
Le Mesnil-sur-Oger; a single grape:  
Chardonnay; a single vintage and  
time – Salon is the legacy of a very  
singular man indeed.”*

REBECCA PALMER



# THE STORY OF SALON

The story of Salon's creator, Eugène-Aimé Salon, reads like a picaresque novel, a tale of rags-to-riches – or in this case: furs.



Maxim's restaurant menu, c.1920s



Eugène-Aimé Salon, c.1930s

The child of a cart-maker from Le Mesnil-sur-Oger, the young Aimé Salon left for Paris, finding work for a fur merchant, where he rose from messenger boy to managing director, making the company and himself a sizeable fortune in the process. Work hard, play hard? Aimé Salon mixed the two assiduously. Very much the *bon vivant* as well as shrewd businessman, enthralled by Paris and its glittering social circuit, he even had his own table at Maxim's, the hottest address of the time, where he would meet clients and lovers alike. He was also passionate about champagne and apparently consumed a great deal of it in the company of his glamorous friends. And this is where the improbable story of Cuvée 'S' began.

Some say that Aimé Salon decided to create this champagne for his own amusement, or for a bet, or to impress his contemporaries - who could possibly have the cash, the connections or the insider's skill to produce a champagne with their name on it? Others believe the story of the eccentric and aesthete, determined to create the perfect champagne; either way, it is clear that this became something of an obsessive project. Aimé Salon returned home to

Le Mesnil-sur-Oger to consult with his brother-in-law Marcel Guillaume, a cellar master. It was he who explained to Aimé Salon the special nature of Le Mesnil's soils, the exceptional acid profile of its grapes, and their potential to yield wines of great power, purity, and longevity. At this point perhaps, had anyone other than Aimé been driving the project, Cuvée 'S' might never have happened. For this was the land of the chardonnay grape, very much second fiddle to pinot noir back then; nobody had ever made a champagne exclusively from chardonnay, any more than they would consider making a wine from a single vintage or vineyard! Fortunately, for us, Aimé Salon lived by his own rules.

And so the quest began, with chardonnay the new muse. Marcel's little black book of vineyards and vigneron was plundered and Aimé Salon set to work on an exacting plan. Just imagine the incongruity of it: the Parisian entrepreneur down from town, gliding past horse and cart in his gleaming Hispano Suiza J12, treading the vineyards in his shiny city shoes, in pursuit of the finest plots, the most favourable gradient, the purest chalk. He developed an exacting



Maxim's Restaurant

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Style and elegance of the 1920s Paris

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# TO ORDER

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# CHAMPAGNE SALON 2006

As rare as it is refined, Salon defined the *blanc de blancs* style and today remains its icon, original and supreme.

The achievement and legacy of one man, the idiosyncratic Eugène-Aimé Salon, this is a wine forged in singularity. The fruit of one grape: chardonnay; one *terroir*: the Côte des Blancs; a single '*cru*' village: Le Mesnil-sur-Oger; and a single vintage, declared only when exacting conditions are met. Self-possessed, uncompromising in style and standard, Salon has become the ultimate insider's champagne, one with a certain glamour but without pretension; a wine that stands alone.

The 40<sup>th</sup> vintage to be released from this tiny champagne house, 2006 bears the signature Salon traits: the haunting perfume and purity, the filigree precision and latent power. It is also rare: please note that due to vintage conditions, volumes are limited.

## VINTAGE NOTES

While the Union des Maisons de Champagne – the association of *grandes marques* houses – summarised 2006 as '*une année plutôt chaude et sèche*' (a relatively warm, dry year), the reality was more complex, and as always the vagaries of weather conditions are fundamental. Winter was cold with a number of frosts but no ongoing damage. April and May were dull and unusually rainy, useful for water reserves at least! At last, June brought much-needed sunshine, giving fine conditions for flowering mid-month. The mercury continued to rise as July progressed, leading to accelerated growth in the vines and increasing consternation among growers, fearful of a reprise of 2003's heatwave challenges. Indeed, the heat triggered a series of hailstorms, though fortunately Salon was spared. As so often happens, Nature swings the pendulum of extremes, as if in pursuit of balance. August arrived to plummeting temperatures, plunging growers into a whole new set of worries as conditions remained unrelentingly cool and rainy through the month. Would the grapes ripen now? Fortunately, September pulled out all the stops, with cool mornings and glorious sunshine bringing the grapes to perfect maturity for harvest, before the Autumn rains.

## TASTING NOTES

While 2006 champagnes show considerable stylistic heterogeneity across the board, the vintage has been acknowledged for its richness, with acidities in balance but typically less pronounced than cooler years. Chardonnay will tend to shine in vintages like this, as will producers blocking malolactic fermentation in pursuit of firm acids. Salon is the champion of both.

We first tasted Salon 2006 in April 2017, when it was surprisingly expressive and supple for a Salon in its first flush. Since then, it has seemed reticent, more tightly wound. This is an enigmatic Salon, one that Didier Depond, Président of Champagne Salon, likens to a great Romantic in its contrasts of light and dark, innocence flirting with exoticism. The classic Salon hallmarks are all here: the never-ending, tiny bubbles, impossibly fine; the signature scent of white flower purity dissolving into decadence. The palate is an exercise in structural refinement, where depth and lightness are inextricable, indeed inexplicable, the languid curve belying latent power. Intense and tensile, this is a beguiling Salon with the dimension and fine linear acidity to permit cellaring for 30 years.

Corney & Barrow score 18.5 to 19

£1690/case of 6 bottles, in bond UK  
£845/case of 3 bottles, in bond UK

NB: A very limited number of magnums are available – please speak to your sales representative for more details.

Stock will be available for delivery from October 2017.

## DRINKING DATES

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

Vintage	Drink date
1982	Drinking now to 2030
1983	Drinking now to 2020 At absolute peak now (Magnums will drink to 2030+)
1985	Drinking now to 2030 (magnum to 2040)
1988	Drinking now to 2030 (magnum to 2040)
1990	Drinking now to 2040 (magnum to 2040)
1995	Drinking now to 2050 (magnum to 2060)
1996	Drinking now to 2050+ (magnum to 2060+)
1997	Drinking now to 2040 (magnum to 2050)
1999	Drinking now to 2050+ (magnum to 2060+)
2002	Drinking now to 2060+ (magnum to 2070+)
2004	Drinking now to 2050+ (magnum to 2060+)
2006	Drinking now to 2050+ (magnum to 2060+)

