

2005 PRESS FILE

*136 years of history
and a new era starts for the Ludes House...*

Since the takeover in October 2003 by Alain Thiénot, the independent Champagne group, and the arrival Jean-Louis Malard, as Managing Director, the House is reborn!!

136 years after its creation, Canard-Duchêne remains faithful to Ludes, a small village located 10 miles from Reims. We are the only great Champagne House located in the middle of the vineyards of the Montagne de Reims.

A little history...

Canard-Duchêne House was founded in 1868 in Ludes.

It all started with a love story between Victor Canard, cooper, and Léonie Duchêne, daughter of a family of winemakers in Ludes, who put their names together to found this Champagne House.

In 1890, their son Edmond brought international fame to the House and even penetrated the very closed circle of the suppliers to the Court of Tsar Nicolas II. Hence the two-headed eagle, emblem of the Russian Imperial family, which has been present on the labels since the

The third generation picked up the challenge. From 1930 onwards, Victor Canard gave a new dynamism to the House by introducing the brand to multiple retail channels and by launching the Special Cuvée Charles VII in 1968 to celebrate the centenary of the House.

In 1978, Canard-Duchêne joined Veuve Clicquot / LVMH and learned about modern communication techniques, strengthened its presence in large distribution networks, without forgetting its traditional clientele of "brasseries", quality restaurants and off-licences. By joining the family champagne group "Alain Thiénot" in 2003, Canard-Duchêne strengthens once again its bonds with the Champagne region.

2004, the year of the rebirth

The takeover of Canard-Duchêne by the Alain Thiénot group has boosted the brand. In the first year, sales jumped from 2.5 to 2.9 million bottles, i.e. a 16% growth compared to 2003. Canard-Duchêne will keep going in this direction and intends to reach 3.3 million bottles in 2005.

The House has also secured its grape supplies, the main worry of all champagne producers, thanks to the good relations which Alain Thiénot (a former courtier) maintains with the vine-growers, and thanks to the charisma of its General Director, Jean-Louis Malard, born and bred in the region.

In 2004, the brand has also recovered the management of its own distribution, in France as well as abroad. In France, Canard-Duchêne has recruited two sales forces, one dedicated to large distributors and the other one specialised in the independent sector. Indeed, although it is not very present in wine merchants, the brand wants further to penetrate this market which will serve as a showcase for the entire range of Champagne (vintages, Blanc de Noirs or Brut Rosé).

2004 was also a good year for exports, which represent now nearly 40% of the overall activity. The British market has passed the symbolic target of 500.000 bottles, with a strengthened national distribution and advances in all other sectors. On the second export market, the West Indies, the brand has continued to defend its positions with renewed marketing initiatives and a poster campaign at the end of the year. The brand also continues its development on several great international markets with the arrival of some very active distributors. This is the case in Germany, in Switzerland and in the Benelux. This new year has also enabled the brand to strengthen its links with its partners for the Great Export (French Polynesia, Reunion, Cyprus) and to recruit new agents on the Finnish and Swedish markets. Lastly, Canard-Duchêne has been distributed since 2004 in new sales areas, Russia, South Africa and Dubai. The goal is to continue the recruitment of new markets for 2005.

The Head Office of the House has also been renovated: larger offices, a new department for visits to the public. The second phase of the project includes in the near future the opening of the new production site (disgorging and labelling units) which will provide a large production capacity thanks to its two separate labelling lines (one for large volumes and the second for small series and special sizes).

The Canard-Duchêne House therefore enters the year 2005 with enthusiasm and confidence.

A GREAT HOUSE

The Managing Director, Jean-Louis Malard, born and bred in the region, has a passion for champagne. He has created his own House, before joining Canard-Duchêne, where he brings his knowledge of the region, of the trade as well as his dynamic entrepreneurial spirit.

For its grape supplies, the House relies on vineyards in the Alain Thiénot group as well as long term partnerships developed with vine-growers, representing 400 hectares spread over sixty villages in the Champagne region. The Alain Thiénot group has also invested in a brand new winery, enabling it to double its storage capacity for still wines.

The House style is guaranteed by blends of Pinots Noirs from the "Montagne de Reims" and Aube region, bringing structure and ageing potential, Pinots Meuniers from the "Montagne de Reims", renowned for their suppleness and fruitiness, and Chardonnays which give finesse and elegance to the blends.

More than ten million bottles are ageing in the chalk cellars of Canard-Duchêne, which were dug by hand in the 19th century. They extend over 6 kilometres and 4 levels, between 12 and 38 metres deep. A part of these galleries was decorated, to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the House, by artist Michel Le Brun, who gave his vision of Canard-Duchêne through allegorical works of art on the history of Champagne and of the House.

WINES FOR PLEASURE

First of all, Canard-Duchêne Champagnes wants to remain accessible in order to give a touch of informal elegance to simple moments of warmth and authenticity. The House has created a range of Champagnes which can match various occasions and meet all expectations.

All the House wines are fruity, balanced and round. Seductive, they offer an immediate pleasure.

The Canard-Duchêne House produces two separate ranges of Champagnes:

- The classic range
- "Grandes Cuvées"

THE CANARD-DUCHÊNE RANGE



a. Canard-Duchêne Brut

A balanced and well-structured Champagne, composed of 40% Pinot Noir, 40% Pinot Meunier and 20% Chardonnay. This pleasurable wine, fresh on the nose and round on the palate, gives gorgeous flavours of white fruits. A Champagne for pleasure, ideal as an aperitif.



b. Canard-Duchêne Rosé

As is traditional for the Champagne region, our Rosé is a blend of Brut and of Pinots Noirs fermented as red wine. Clear and pale salmon in colour, it is a true rosé, dominated by ripe red fruit, reminding Laurent Fédou of "strawberry jam slowly bubbling in the jam pan". This cuvée can be drunk as an aperitif, or with white meats and light meals.



c. Canard-Duchêne Vintage 1999

For an exceptional harvest, an exceptional wine. This vintage champagne, aged five years in our cellars, expresses the personality of Canard-Duchêne. It is made from wines from a single year: 1999. The nose is complex and attractive, revealing aromas of cooked fruits, cinnamon and butter. It is elegant and refined on the palate, showing a good balance of power and freshness. Vintage 1999 is a marvellous aperitif, but can also accompany food.



d. Le Demi-Sec Canard-Duchêne

Made from the same blend as the Brut, it is more sweetened (42 grams of sugar per litre). This fruity and mellow wine is a perfect match for desserts but can also be enjoyed on its own at any time of the day, while nibbling some pastry, purely for pleasure. A noticeable straw-yellow colour, intense fragrances of fresh fruit, and sweet on the palate.

2) THE GRANDES CUVÉES

Canard-Duchêne Grande Cuvée was first created in 1968 to celebrate the centenary of the House. In 1998, the House launched its Grande Cuvée Rosé and in 1999, the Blanc de Noirs. These wines are made from the best "crus" in the region and are blended from the best years. With great finesse and subtle elegance, they are the quintessence of the Canard-Duchêne style.



a. La Grande Cuvée Brut

Canard-Duchêne Grande Cuvée Brut, with its pale golden colour and green hues, expresses a great balance between maturity and freshness with a surprising contrast: a lovely fine nose, fruity and flowery, brings the Chardonnay element to the fore. It is long on the palate, with complex flavours. This well-structured wine is a harmonious match with fish and seafood dishes.



b. La Grande Cuvée Rosé

Grande Cuvée Canard-Duchêne Rosé is noticeable by its rich coppery tints. This wine, both floral and fruity, combines vinosity and finesse through red fruit and morello cherry aromas. It is a perfect rosé for parties, celebrations or intimate moments.



c. La Grande Cuvée Blanc de Noirs

Grande Cuvée Canard-Duchêne Blanc de Noirs, composed exclusively of black grapes (70% Pinot Noir and 30% Pinot Meunier), is a wine for connoisseurs, which can be enjoyed throughout a meal. Its secondary aromas, suggesting mushrooms and forest undergrowth, together with stewed fruit, are typical of pinots: Pinot Noir finds its best expression with time.

AWARDS FOR CANARD-DUCHENE

The Hachette Wine Guide

- 2002 "Coup de Cœur" for the Grande Cuvée Brut
- 2004 One star in the 2005 Guide for the Vintage 1993 and the Grande Cuvée Blanc de Noirs.
-

The Vinalies

- 2004 - Excellence prize in the 22nd Vinalies Internationales for the Grande Cuvée Brut.
Official selection by the French œnologists
- Prix des Vinalies, for the 1993 Vintage
- Prix des Vinalies, for the Canard-Duchêne Brut Rosé
-

International Wine Challenge

- 2001 Bronze Medal for the Grande Cuvée Brut
- 2001 Bronze Medal for the Grande Cuvée Blanc de Noirs
- 2001 Bronze Medal for the NV Brut
- 2003 Silver Medal for the NV Brut
- 2003 Silver Medal for the 1993 Vintage
- 2004 Silver Medal for the NV Brut
-

THEY TRUST CANARD-DUCHENE

For over fifteen years, Canard-Duchêne has been associated with numerous prestige events in the French "Grandes Ecoles" and Universities.

Canard-Duchêne Champagne is a regular guest for special events in student life: galas, diploma ceremonies, end-of-year cocktails in the most prestigious Schools and Universities in France (about 80 galas throughout the year).

Saint-Cyr and Polytechnique, where "Canard-Duchêne sabring" is both a symbol and a tradition, remain the most faithful Schools, without forgetting: ESSEC, Ecole des Mines, Ecole de la Marine Marchande, EDHEC, numerous universities such as Pharma Lyon, Kiné Lyon, Paris-Dauphine, medical universities and the famous ENA.

It is also the perfect champagne for elegance and friendship. In a partnership with about fifty "Belles Brasseries", Canard-Duchêne makes itself visible throughout the year, with a customised serving and decoration kit. We select outlets with a similar atmosphere.

French "brasseries", warm and friendly, providing good value for money; where people feel comfortable drinking Canard-Duchêne by the glass.

In 2005, Canard-Duchêne will continue and intensify its partnerships with "brasseries" all over France.

In 2004, Canard-Duchêne has extended and intensified its partnerships with the Brasseries throughout France.

CONTACTS

Contacts Canard-Duchêne

- Alain Thiénot: Chief Executive Officer
- Jean-Louis Malard: Managing Director
- Laurent Fédou: Œnologist and wine maker
- Aude Ceccarelli: Marketing Product Manager, France and International
- Alexis Petit-Gats: Export Area Manager
- Stéphanie Federhpil: Export Area Manager
- Karine Belotti: Visits and cellars

For your orders

Sales Administration: Christine Bantignies

Tel: +33 (0)3.26.61.10.96 - Fax: +33 (0)3.26.61.13.90

Shop

Open all year round, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Sales and tastings.

Cellar visits

From 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., in French, English and German.

Paying visits (including a tasting). Booking is advised.

Book with Karine Belotti by mail (kbelotti@canard-duchene.fr),

Fax (+33 (0)3.26.61.13.90) or phone (+33 (0)3.26.61.11.60).

Head Office

Canard-Duchêne, 1 rue Edmond Canard, 51500 Ludes

Tel: +33 (0)3.26.61.10.96 - Fax: +33 (0)3.26.61.13.90

Internet : www.canard-duchene.fr - info@canard-duchene.fr

Press contacts:

Pain Vin & Company • Contact: Christelle Alamichel
8, rue Royale, 75008 Paris, France

Tel: 01.55.35.08.16 • Fax: 01.55.35.08.09 • calamichel@capetcime.fr