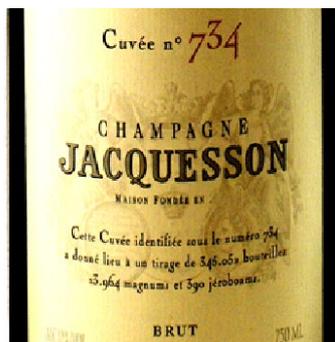


Jacquesson jettisons vintage for 7-series

Jacquesson Champagne is ceasing the production of its blended vintage wines with the highly-regarded 2002 harvest to focus on its core product, the 7-series cuvées.



Speaking to *the drinks business* at the FMV tasting in London on Tuesday this week, Jean-Hervé Chiquet, owner and manager of the grower and bottler, said: “We have stopped producing vintage blends because if I tell you we make the best blend possible that means we cannot make two.”

For the future, Jacquesson’s only vintage Champagnes will come from its four single-vineyards (Avize, Dizy Corne Bautry, Dizy Terres Rouge, and Aÿ Vauzelle Terme) and will be made only in high quality years.

Together these four cuvées account for just 10% of production and Chiquet stressed that these single-site Champagnes were made from wines not needed its its 7-series blends.

Jacquesson released its first numbered Champagne in 2003, the Cuvée 728, to replace its Brut Perfection NV, because Chiquet was “frustrated with the non-vintage concept”.

The 7-series blends are designed to reflect the character of whatever harvest was used as the primary base of the multi-vintage blend.

Explaining this decision, Chiquet said, “In the spring of 1998, me and my brother were working on the blend for the non-vintage Brut Perfection and we made a first blend which we liked, but realised that it contained too much Chardonnay, and was not consistent with the house style, so we made a second blend, which was not as good.

“This made us think, why make something that is not as good just to be consistent? Why bother with all the effort in viticulture and winemaking? So we decided to make the best blend every year.”

Jacquesson’s current release is the Cuvée 734, which is based (with 73% of the blend) on the 2006 vintage and, as shown clearly on the back label, was released in March 2010 with three years ageing in bottle, including four months after disgorgement.

“The back label of Jacquesson tells you the best kept secret in Champagne, which is the real age of the wine,” said Chiquet.

He also said from 2013 the 7-series will switch to a late-disgorged version of the current cuvée, which will be called 733.

“The problem is that what we sell is not what we produce,” he concluded, alluding to the long maturation times in Champagne and hence delay between the creation of a new product and its release onto the market.

Patrick Schmitt, 16.06.2011

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