Jewels in the crown
The many facets of red princess Wan Baobao
When it comes to choosing champagne, it's easy to pick one of the mass-manufactured grands marques. However, it might pay to seek out a house that is quietly creating a great reputation. Jacquesson is often voted by wine experts as a must-buy champagne.

The House of Jacquesson was founded in 1798. Today, brothers Jean-Hervé and Laurent Chiquet are at the helm. With other brands, a non-vintage champagne usually showcases the "house style," producing a wine that is consistent in taste regardless of vintage variation. This is achieved through blending and the use of reserve wines from back vintages. Jacquesson, however, is different. In 2000, the house started the Cuvee 700 series, which is described as the "opposite of a non-vintage wine." The goal is to "seek excellence rather than homogeneity, respect for the character of the vintage rather than its derision, and the preference to strive to produce a great wine rather than maintain a house style".

The "700" denotes the production number of the cuvee's record in the cellar book, with cuvee No 1 having been made in 1898. Cuvee 728 is that which is based on grapes from the 2000 vintage. Jacquesson may change depending on vintage but it is always elegant and pure, with mineral notes and low dosage levels. Its low sugar levels make it a good food wine to be enjoyed throughout the meal.

Here are three standouts:

Jacquesson Cuvee 733 NV
A blend of 61 per cent chardonnay, 18 per cent pinot noir and 21 per cent pinot meunier. Sixty seven per cent of the wine is made from grapes from the 2010 vintage, while reserve wines from back vintages make up the rest of the blend. Aged for three to four years. Citrus, apple, mineral, fresh and fruity notes. Well balanced with good fruit intensity.

Jacquesson Brut AOC Grand Cru Champagnes 2004
Champagne has a Sided character, sometimes too complex to appreciate in a specific grape, and the chardonnay grapes planted in 1962. The year 2004 was a classic year, with mild and rainy weather during the summer months followed by hot and sunny weather in September. The wine has spent eight years on lees before disgorgement in 2013. Made entirely from chardonnay.


Jacquesson Cuvee 733
The disgorgement technique (late disgorged) is made with the same method as wines from the 700 series. The champagne is aged for nine years before release. Jacquesson believes that the wine has matured a lot but evolved very little. It has gained complexity without ageing in any other way. Think of this wine as a mature person who is still youthful on the outside and inside.

The wine is a blend mainly from 2005, with reserve wines from 2004 and 2001. A blend of 52 per cent chardonnay, 24 per cent pinot noir and 24 per cent pinot meunier. The wine was disgorged (removal of sediment) in September 2012. Honeyed, toasted and yeasty nose. Quite tight on palate. Mellow, with rounded fruit.

Jacquesson Brut AOC Grand Cru Champagnes 2004
Champagne is a fin-de-siecle ("said location"), referring to a specific vineyard) with chardonnay vines planted in 1962. The year 2004 was a classic year, with mild and rainy weather during the summer months followed by hot and sunny weather in September. The wine has spent eight years on lees before disgorgement in 2013. Made entirely from chardonnay.


Rise and shine
Champagne maker Jacquesson has managed to stand out from the crowd by embracing change and innovation.