



Champagne Salon 1996

Champagne Salon 1996 : A pinnacle

PRESENTATION

One grape variety, one cru, one year – Salon Le Mesnil (first vintage 1905) was created by Aimé Salon, a passionate gentleman obsessed with perfection. His idea of Champagne was to fashion a masterpiece of balance and elegance, an explosive Champagne full of seductive aromas, full of character, yet subtle: Thus was born Salon Le Mesnil. Only a few thousand bottles are made in carefully selected vintages and offered for sale some ten years later. The 1996 vintage – at the top of this rare, elite collection – is being compared to the legendary 1928.

THE VINTAGE

Rare are the vintages of Salon Le Mesnil, only 37 have been produced in the past century. Each new vintage has been a peak in the landscape of Champagne. Now Salon Le Mesnil is reaching the summit of the Himalayas with its 1996 vintage. Exploding with aromas and freshness, this new vintage offers breathtaking heights and extraordinary character.

IN THE VINEYARD

1996: Auspicious flowering on the summer solstice

Thanks to a warm spring, the vines flowered on June 21 in Le Mesnil-sur-Oger. Flowering on the summer solstice, the longest day of the year, is regarded as especially auspicious by the growers of Champagne. From this moment on, the intensity of the Côte des Blancs Grand Cru Chardonnay began to develop its unique characteristics, richness in sugar and high level of acidity. The Chardonnay grapes reached their maturity on September 23 in our vineyards of Le Mesnil-sur-Oger at which time hand-picking took place under the best conditions.

VARIETALS

Chardonnay 100%

SERVING

It is a virile, strongly built wine with restrained power, “feline like a snow tiger”, adds Depond. Taste it lightly chilled (between 13° and 15° – 55-60 F), so it reveals all its power, richness and penetrating aromas.

TASTING

Salon Le Mesnil 1996 is a pale yellow wine with hints of green, “as bright as the morning sun light on the highest snow caps” says Didier Depond, chairman of Champagne Salon Le Mesnil. With fine, active bubbles, it has both the electricity and impertinence of youth, yet shows complexity and layers of aromas.

On the palate, Salon Le Mesnil displays a remarkable subtlety of flavors with touches of green apples, fresh citrus – lemon and grapefruit – building into mellow hints of ripe pear and kiwi.

FOOD PAIRINGS

Pick rare, but very simple dishes to accompany Salon Le Mesnil 1996

Salon Le Mesnil's restrained power, dazzling aromas and mesmerizing intensity will complement dishes that combine rarity with beauty, such as the finest seafood – lobster fragrant with seaweed; scallops; freshly-roasted cod sprinkled with a few drops of green olive oil – great Parma and Ibérico ham (fat and aromatic), a delicious potato gratin with caviar or a veal casserole with morel mushrooms.

With its green, shimmering hue, its full yet lively personality, Salon Le Mesnil 1996 has already reached new summits, and there it will stand for the next 50 years.

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