

## JACQUESSON'S EXCEPTIONAL CUVÉE 700 SERIES EXTRA BRUT



The Champagne house of Jacquesson was founded in 1789, in the year of the French Revolution, by Memmie Jacquesson and resides to this day in the village of Dizy, in the heart of the Marne Valley. Monsieur Jacquesson was ahead of his time in the Champagne area, as he is credited with being one of the first producers to actually train his vines in trellised rows in his vineyard parcels (as is customary today), rather than allowing the vines to grow out octopus style from a “mother vine” in the ancient method that was known as *provignage*. Monsieur Jacquesson worked closely with Docteur Guyot in the early days of his career rationalizing the layout of the vines in his vineyards in rows, and after mastering this, he was also the inventor and patent holder of the wire basket that continues to this day to secure Champagne and other sparkling wine corks in their bottles prior to opening. The house of Jacquesson remained within the family through several generations, but by the late nineteenth century, it was purchased by business people outside of the Jacquesson family tree. Eventually, in 1974, it was purchased by its present day owners, the Chiquet family and today is co-directed by the brothers Jean-Hervé and Laurent Chiquet. Jean-Hervé Chiquet is the older of the two brothers, and after a period of time spent as the *Chef de Cave* for the house, he has passed on the winemaking baton to his younger brother Laurent and takes care of the business side responsibilities of the *maison*.

In 2004, the Chiquets dramatically changed the direction of the house in regards to their non-vintage bottling, as they instituted their “700 Series” of wines, with the inaugural release under this program being labeled as “Cuvée 728” and each year, a subsequent number has adorned this bottling. The “700 Series” wines are always from a single base year, with a significant percentage of reserve wines added to the blend to bring depth and added complexity to the finished wine. As Jean-Hervé Chiquet recalls, the inspiration for the new bottling was quite simple: “the idea for our 700 Cuvée came originally from the frustration we were experiencing with the classic Brut NV consistency concept” which basically amounted to “why try to improve things if it is (essentially) for producing the same wine every year?” As he noted, it sometimes felt like the final blend for the non-vintage Brut bottling was, in certain exceptional vintages, even a bit lesser in quality, so that the consistency of house style could be maintained year in and year out. The genesis of this cuvée had begun a few years earlier, as Jean-Hervé recalls that “in 2000 we decided to try to (just) make the best wine possible instead of trying to make the same wine as from the previous year”, which were “in fact, the wines we would prefer” to make each year and the results spoke for themselves and the direction of the house of Jacquesson was dramatically changed. After a year aging in *foudres*, the wine was bottled up and three years later the first iteration of the Cuvée 728 was released. Today, the 700 Series bottlings represent roughly ninety-six percent of the house’s production, with their vintage-dated, single vineyard cuvées only produced in small quantities and in years where their being bottled on their own will not materially affect the quality of the 700 Series bottling.

The percentage of reserve wine in each 700 Series blend fluctuates with the quality of the given base year, with stronger vintages relying less on reserve wines and less gifted years seeing the percentage of reserve wines in the blend rising to as much as forty percent or more. This is the flagship wine from Jacquesson since 2004, with the inaugural Cuvée 728 made from the base year of 2000 and released in the summer of 2004, after having spent two and a half years aging *sur latte*. The original release took its name from a ledger of non-vintage bottlings in the Jacquesson archives, which dated back hundreds of years, so that when it was time to fashion the 2000 Base Year blended wine, its chronological number in the old ledger would have been number 728. Over the years, the team at Jacquesson has extended the amount of time this bottling spend on its fine lees prior to disgorgement, so that the most recent edition, Cuvée 740, spent three years aging *sur latte*, in addition to the full year the *vins clairs* for this bottling age in cask prior to the blending of the cuvée and its *mise* for its secondary fermentation. As noted above, in addition to their numbered, “700 Series” bottlings of Extra Brut, the house Jacquesson now also produces a small amount of four different single vineyard wines, one each from *lieux à dits* in Avize and Aÿ, and two different wines from vineyards in Dizy.

It is important to understand that the “700 Series” from Jacquesson is not a standard “non-vintage Brut” bottling at the base of their quality pyramid, with vintage-dated wines higher up the scale, as is the case with most other Champagne houses. From its creation, the Chiquets took the decision that this cuvée would be their flagship wine and their sole blended bottling, so there are no longer any Vintage Brut bottlings from the estate, with the last one having been the 2002 Vintage. The “700 Series” is also philosophically quite apart from the standard version of a blended Brut NV bottling from most *Grandes Marques*, which so often is designed to show the same year after year (or as close as is humanly possible) with a recognizable “house style” and vintage variations mitigated as much as can be in the blending decisions for each release. At

Jacquesson, the “700 Series” wines seeks to turn this precept completely around, as the blending team at the *maison* strives to allow the maximum expression of each and every “base year” in the blend and embraces the concept of vintage variations in this bottling. It is a relatively novel approach to Champagne crafting and is based on the premise that while all vintages are not created equal, each and every one will eventually have something interesting to say when it has aged sufficiently. For, as this vertical tasting of every 700 Series bottling released so far from the *maison* emphatically proved, this is a *cuvée* that is designed to age long and gracefully and not reach its apogee of peak drinkability until at least a decade has passed since its initial arrival in the market.

The house of Jacquesson owns approximately thirty hectares of vineyards today, which is enough to supply eighty percent of their needs at the present time. Their holdings are in the top villages of Aÿ, Dizy, Mareuil-sur-Aÿ and Hautvillers in the Marne Valley and Avize and Oiry in the Côte de Blancs. The remaining twenty percent of their production needs, which they buy in each year on long-term contracts, hail from small farmers in these same six crus. The sustainable farming practices in the domaine’s own vines are now organic in nature, but the *maison* has not yet made the transition to being certified for its viticultural practices. When fertilizing is needed, it is always organic products that are used and grass now happily grows between the vines in the Jacquesson vineyards and chemical treatments are eschewed, except perhaps in dire circumstances where the loss of the entire crop might be at risk. The farming philosophy of the Chiquets and their vineyard manager, Sylvain LeBlanc, is to keep yields low to add concentration of both aromatics and flavors and allow the underlying *terroir* in their various parcels of vines to shine in the wines. This is in notable contrast to much of the Champagne viticultural world, where yields are routinely kept very high, so that if the allowable production figures for any given vintage (which are not set by the CIVC until mid-summer of each growing season and are based on the projected need of how many millions of bottles of Champagne are going to be required to service the market two or three years down the road!) are generous, the grower will have enough bunches on the vines to maximize profits from a given plot of vines. This present day practice of the CIVC to set yields at the height of the summer may makes sense from an economic standpoint, but is absolutely obtuse if producing high quality grapes is the goal, and happily, Jacquesson does not farm to this prevailing form of madness. Working with lower yields is very important for the house these days on another front, as they have moved to bottling all of their wines with very low levels of *dosage* and lower yields and concentrated flavors are a prerequisite for these very low *dosé* wines.

In the cellars, the team at Jacquesson barrel ferments all of their *vins clairs* in older oak *foudres* of varying sizes and gives the wines a long *elevage* prior to bottling for the secondary fermentation. There are a few older *demi-muids* and casks also available, if a particular lot requires a smaller oak vessel for its fermentation and aging, for as Jean-Hervé Chiquet comments, “a vine does not always produce a round number of hectoliters.” Indigenous yeasts are used for the first fermentation, and the *vins clairs* routinely go through complete malolactic fermentation as well. Only the first pressing of juice is used for all the wines at Jacquesson, with the second pressing (or *Tailles*) sold off to other houses or cooperatives in the area. For their flagship “700 Series” *cuvée*, the period of aging of the still wines in casks stretches out to the following autumn, at which time the *vins clairs* are blended and the wines are capped for their extended period of aging *sur latte*. This is quite an extended period of aging in barrel prior to

blending, as at most Champagne houses, the *vins clairs* will be blended in the spring following the initial fermentation, rather than giving the wines a full year in barrel, waiting until the autumn and the completion of the next year's harvest. During this long *elevage*, the *vins clairs* that will form the blend for the "700 Series" wine are treated to *battonage* once every two weeks to help the wines nurture more fully on the fine lees in cask, see no sulfur adjustments and are generally racked once, around May of the year following the harvest prior to the final blending of the new cuvée and its bottling for secondary fermentation. The Chiquets do start working on the blend for this cuvée in May after the racking, but prefer to give the wines that full year of *elevage* before instituting the blend. After disgorgement, Jacquesson will now give the new version of their 700 Series four more months to recover from the *dégorgement* prior to its release into the market.



*Laurent and Jean-Hervé Chiquet in the Jacquesson vines at winter pruning time.*

The blend of *vins clairs* for the 700 Series varies rather markedly from cuvée to cuvée, as the cellar team at Jacquesson is intent of having each wine accurately reflect the vintage's character, and certain grape varieties excel in certain vintages. However, as Monsieur Chiquet is quick to point out, "in fact, the Cuvée includes almost ALL of the wines of Jacquesson, except, from time to time, the single vineyards, which are produced when they are good enough and not needed in the Cuvée- which always has the absolute priority," so that blending sessions generally revolve around questions of how much reserve wine to include in each new release. This is the beauty of not trying to make the same wine year in and year out for the 700 Series. All of the reserve wines held back at Jacquesson are simply previous generations of the 700 Series, rather than separate examples of chardonnay, pinot meunier or pinot noir that were not used in past renditions of this flagship bottling. Interestingly, despite the efforts at Jacquesson to make this wine really be a reflection of each vintage in the region, at our vertical tasting in July, I was struck by how beautifully similar many of the releases were stylistically (particularly once they had some extended bottle age), with only a couple of the weaker base years (2003 and 2001) really showing dramatic vintage-generated variations from other cuvées, with many of the others

simply deeper, longer and a tad more complex in the very top years (such as 2002, 2004 and 2008) and the wine has certainly started develop its own “cuvée style” that carries through rather dramatically from year to year and is at least as pronounced as the varying vintage characteristics!

As alluded to above, one of the changes that has taken place with this bottling is the systematic reduction in the amount of *dosage* that the wine is finished with after disgorgement, though the wine has always been in the Extra Brut range since its inception with the 2000 vintage. The first few releases ranged from four to six grams per liter of *dosage*, but this amount has been reduced progressively, so that the middle releases in the series were in the 2.5 to 3.5 grams per liter range (obviously varying from year to year, as each wine will find its proper balance point with a slightly different level of *dosage* depending on the style of the vintage and the percentage of reserve wines used in each particular cuvée), while the last couple of releases have been down in the 1.5 grams per liter range of *dosage*. The Chiquets are now also aging the wine a bit longer *sur latte* prior to disgorgement these days, perhaps reflecting their preference to use a lower finishing *dosage* for the bottling and wishing to allow the passage of time to do a bit of the buffering of the acidity that a slightly more generous *dosage* might have handled in the past. While the differences in *dosage* are not all that dramatic over the evolution of the 700 Series at Jacquesson, they are indeed noticeable on the palate, with some of the middle releases in the series a bit overly brisk to my palate when first released and needing some extended bottle age to allow the snappy acidity in the wines to soften up a bit. With the first cuvées released in this series having only aged two years *sur latte*, the wines probably needed their slightly higher *dosage* levels to better balance them, but this has been progressively extended over the course of the series, with the wines first being given two and a half years aging on their fine lees and now fully three years prior to disgorgement. That said, a new release from the 700 Series, at its now customary 1.5 grams per liter of *dosage*, is still a very snappy customer when first released and built for extended aging.

As I have written about in the past, one of the elements that I am extremely curious about with today’s top Champagne bottlings that now use such low levels of *dosage*, such as the Jacquesson 700 Series, is how this change will ultimately effect the very long-term evolution of the wines in bottle. I do not have a lot of experience with twenty-five or thirty year-old Champagne bottlings with such low a levels of *dosage*, so I am not at all certain of how this minimal level of residual sugar in the wines will affect their personality when they have reached a ripe old age. It is only in the freakishly hot vintages, such as 2003, that Champagne really lacks for acidity, but in virtually all “normal” growing seasons, Champagne is a wine that always has more than enough acidity and how to best buffer this is always one of the key questions for the *Chef de Cave* when he or she is settling on a final blend for the cuvée, and then again after the wine is disgorged and the final *dosage* decisions are taken by each house. This is not a critique of the low *dosage* style, but simply an open question, as the great Champagne bottlings of yesteryear that have aged so gracefully from the decades of the ‘50s, ‘60s and ‘70s certainly all had dramatically more finishing *dosage* than what is currently fashionable at many addresses today, including Jacquesson. At our vertical tasting, the Cuvée 730, which hails from the superb base year of 2002 and which was finished with a *dosage* of four grams per liter was so brilliantly balanced that I would have been loathe, if I were helping make decisions at Jacquesson, to move away from this level of residual sugar and reduce the level of *dosage* in the more recent

iterations of this bottling. Particularly, given the fact that 2002 was a plenty ripe year in Champagne to begin with, and the wine was so gorgeously and seamlessly balanced at our tasting, that to my palate, this seemed like the perfect point of balance for the cuvée. It will be interesting to follow the evolution of the Cuvée 740 for instance (which hails from another very strong base year of 2012) over the coming decades and see if its much lower *dosage* of 1.5 grams per liter will allow it to evolve in the same magical direction as the Cuvée 730. But, this is a question that will require another ten years in the cellar to answer.

Despite my curiosity with how the decrease in *dosage* over the course of the 700 Series at Jacquesson will affect the evolutionary arc of the wines as they age in bottle, one thing that was made abundantly clear at our vertical tasting of the entire series to date was that this is a very, very consistent cuvée year after year, with the quality set at an impressively high level. In our tasting, it was really only the two vintage outliers of 2001 and 2003 base years that stood out from the others, as not quite having the same degree of class and potential longevity, but all of the other wines were remarkably similar in quality. As I mentioned above, while each iteration also shows a good degree of vintage-inspired personality, this is a wine that is nicely developing its own stylistic calling card and which is at least as important as vintage variables. With Jacquesson using fruit primarily from their own estate vineyards, and then only buying in grapes from like-minded farmers in these same six villages of Dizy, Aÿ, Mareuil-sur-Aÿ, Hautvillers, Oiry and Avize to furnish the last twenty percent of the house's needs, this has allowed the 700 Series to really set its feet down in the *terroir* of these villages and there is now a remarkable consistency of style to each and every iteration in the series from basing the wine in these top premier and grand cru villages each and every year. While the intent of the Chiquet family may well be to allow each vintage to shine through in the finished cuvée, it seems that the respective *terroirs* of the vineyards that they work with each year may well have their own ideas in this respect and the signature style of this cuvée from vintage to vintage may well end up being as strong as other blended bottlings, where the cellar team takes the opposite approach and overtly seeks to craft a wine in the "house style". But, the overall quality remains higher with the Jacquesson approach. Perhaps, with the 700 Series from Jacquesson, we could say that it does not have a "house style" *per se*, but rather a "vineyard style", as despite the proportion of fruit varying in the blend from each village, not to mention the variations of *cépages* each year, there is indeed a very distinctive and consistent personality to all of the Jacquesson 700 Series wines.

One of the relatively new practices that the Chiquet family has put into place for their 700 Series is to hold back a percentage of the production each year for an extended period of aging in the bottle prior to disgorgement, which they call their "*Dégorgement Tardive*" program, which allows the wine several more years on its fine lees before disgorgement and release into the market. As Jean-Hervé Chiquet mentions, "the aging starts, but never lasts long enough and this is one of the problems of the Cuvée- it never tastes better than when we are out of stock!" So, after five releases, the Chiquet family decided to start holding back some of the production for a later release. The first of the 700 Series to be released in this manner was the Cuvée 733 from the base year of 2005, with its initial disgorgement having been in the fall of 2009. The "DT" release of this same wine came four years later, as this was disgorged in September of 2013 and offered up with the special "*Dégorgement Tardive*" label. Since the Cuvée 733 "DT", each and every year has seen a later disgorged version sent out into the market after further aging in the Jacquesson cellars, with the difference between the two releases ranging from three and a half to

four years of additional aging *sur latte*. This is a marvelous practice that allows those of us without the requisite will power to not touch our bottles of 700 Series in the cellar an opportunity to revisit certain cuvées that we just may have drunk a little bit before their time. Typically, the house will now hold back fifteen to twenty thousand bottles, as well as eight hundred to a thousand magnums of each current iteration of the 700 Cuvée for the DT program. One should note that the practice of holding back a percentage of their production for extended aging *sur latte* at Jacquesson is hardly a new phenomenon that is particular to the 700 Series, as the Chiquet family has been doing this since they first bought the house of Jacquesson and I recently published a note on their 1985 Vintage Brut bottling that had not been released from the cellars until the last decade.

What the tasting notes below will so eloquently demonstrate, Jacquesson's 700 Series is definitely a wine that is built for cellaring and really will not reach its plateau of peak maturity until the wine has had at least twelve to fifteen years out from the vintage and had a chance to really blossom with bottle age. Given how stunningly well the Cuvée 730 was drinking in our tasting (base year 2002), it is hard not to argue that fifteen years out from the vintage is a perfect time to start enjoying this long-lived and very classy bottling. But, even the very first release of 728, from the far less heralded base year of 2000 was drinking with great style and complexity, with years and years or life still ahead of it, so one should not underestimate the aging potential of this flagship wine at Jacquesson. While it is still too early to say definitively, my gut instincts are that the more recent releases in the series, with their lower levels of *dosage*, are going to demand cellaring time even a bit more vociferously in their youth than the earlier releases, which had just a bit more buffering residual sugar, so that wines from top base years like the Cuvée 738 or 740 are going to really require at least a good decade's worth of bottle age before they really start to blossom properly and drink with overt generosity. But, based on how beautifully the younger releases have been showing upon release, they are going to be more than worth the wait!

Once the Chiquet family decided to do away with their Vintage Brut bottling after the release of the 2002, they settled on only producing a small quantity of single vineyard wines that would bear a vintage date on their labels. As Monsieur Chiquet mentioned, the priority at the house is always the 700 Series, so the single vineyard cuvées are only produced in top flight years and where it is ascertained that their being bottled on their own will not materially affect the quality of the 700 Series cuvée from the same vintage. He notes that the single vineyard wines "are produced when they are good enough and not needed in the Cuvée," so "if a Single Vineyard wine is good enough to be bottled on its own, but is needed in the Cuvée, it will go into the Cuvée." Jacquesson now produces four of these single vineyard wines, when circumstances allow, with each named for the *lieu à dit* from which it hails. These include their two bottlings from their home village of Dizy: the Corne Bautray from a one hectare parcel of chardonnay in this *lieu à dit* at the top of the slope (these vines were planted in 1960) and their Terres Rouges Rosé, from a 1.3 hectare section of their parcel of pinot noir in this vineyard, which sits on a limestone plateau just up above the town of Dizy and facing due east. The other two single vineyard wines are produced from *lieux à dits* in the family's holdings in the villages of Avize and Aÿ. From the former village comes the *lieu à dit* of Champ Caïn, which is a 1.3 hectare plot that was planted in 1962 and is naturally, a Blanc de Blancs. The parcel in Champ Caïn has a due south exposition, on the classic limestone bedrock of this grand cru in the Côte de Blancs. The fourth single vineyard cuvée at Jacquesson is their Vauzelle Terme from Aÿ, which is composed

entirely of pinot noir from thirty *ares* of vines planted in 1980. This bottling was first done on an experimental basis in 1996, and the first commercial release of Vauzelle Terme followed in the outstanding year of 2002. All of the single vineyard bottlings are handled exactly the same in the cellars as the wines earmarked for the 700 Series, with the exception that the decision on whether or not to bottle them on their own is taken during the blending trials in May and June and the wines are bottled prior to the next harvest, instead of just after, which is the case for the flagship 700 Series cuvée. Typically, the single vineyard wines are aged *sur latte* longer than the 700 Series, with the recent 2009 Rosé from Terres Rouges having spent six and a half years on its fine lees and the 2007 Blanc de Blancs from Corne Bautray having aged *sur latte* for eight and a half years. They are beautiful wines that nicely augment the superb 700 Series.



**Jacquesson Cuvée 740 Extra Brut NV (Dizy)**

**Disgorged Spring 2017**

The upcoming new release of Cuvée 740 Extra Brut from Jacquesson, due out in most markets in the spring of 2018, is from the base year of 2012 and only included twenty percent reserve wines in the blend. It was finished with an extremely low *dosage* of 1.5 grams per liter. The wine is obviously still very youthful and built for a long and profitable life in bottle, but offers up fine depth and nascent complexity in its aromatic blend of lemon, green apple, chalky minerality, warm bread, spring flowers and a nice topnote of citrus zest. On the palate the wine is crisp, full and promising, with a rock solid core, fine mineral drive, frothy *mousse* and a very well-balanced finish that closes with brisk acids and fine grip. The low *dosage* of this release is going to demand some extended bottle age to allow the wine to drink with a bit more gentle backend impression, but it should prove to be an excellent wine in the fullness of time. 2022-2055. **93.**



**Jacquesson Cuvée 739 Extra Brut NV (Dizy)****Disgorged June 2016**

The Jacquesson Cuvée 739 Extra Brut is from the base year of 2011, with nearly a third of the blend composed of reserve wines this year. The *cépages* is fifty-seven percent chardonnay, twenty-two percent pinot meunier and twenty-one percent pinot noir, with all of the *vins clairs* having been barrel-fermented and the finishing *dosage* the customary 3.5 grams per liter for this cuvée. The wine offers up a superb bouquet of apple, fresh-baked bread, chalky minerality, beautiful meunier-derived floral tones and a nice touch of incipient smokiness in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nascently complex, with a fine core, excellent mineral drive, frothy *mousse*, excellent focus and grip and a long, very nicely balanced finish. This bottling is already quite tasty, but like all of the Jacquesson wines, this is built to age and will be even better three to five years down the road. A really strong result for a base year 2011 wine. 2017-2035+. **91+**.

**Jacquesson Cuvée 738 Extra Brut NV (Dizy)****Disgorged March 2015**

The Cuvée 738 is from the base year of 2010, which saw the wine composed of a blend of sixty-one percent chardonnay, twenty-one percent pinot meunier and eighteen percent pinot noir. The wine was finished with a *dosage* of 2.5 grams per liter, after having aged *sur latte* for three and a half years. One-third of the blend was made up of reserve wines in this year. This wine is in pretty deep hibernation at the present time and really should be left alone in the cellar for three or four years, as its nose is quite reticent, eventually offering up scents of apple, incipient notes of orange, warm bread, a touch of sea shell, dried flowers and gentle upper register smokiness. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and shows nicely ripe fruit at the closed down core, with refined *mousse*, crisp acids and very good length and grip. My gut feeling is that my score for this bottling will go up considerably in a few years' time, as it is really quite hermetically sealed at the present time. 2020-2045. **91**.

**Jacquesson Cuvée 737 Extra Brut NV (Dizy)****Disgorged November 2013**

The Cuvée 737 is from the base year of 2009 and spent just over three years aging on its fine lees prior to disgorgement and a finishing *dosage* of 3.5 grams per liter. This has more red grapes in the *cépages* than the Cuvée 738, with the blend forty-three percent chardonnay, thirty percent pinot meunier and twenty-seven percent pinot noir. Thirty percent of the cuvée is composed of reserve wines in this vintage. This is far more ready for primetime drinking than the above wine, offering up a fine, nicely blossomed bouquet of pear, apple, nutskin, sourdough bread, dried flowers, chalky soil tones and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely ripe at the core, with fine focus and grip, crisp acids, elegant *mousse* and impressive length and grip on the complex and still snappy finish. This is a lovely drink today, albeit still climbing, and has plenty of life still ahead of it. 2017-2035+. **92**.

**Jacquesson Cuvée 736 Extra Brut NV (Dizy)****Disgorged November 2012**

Jacquesson's Cuvée 736 is base year 2008 and was finished with a *dosage* of 1.5 grams per liter. The *cépages* here is fifty-three percent chardonnay, twenty-nine percent pinot noir and eighteen percent pinot meunier, with just over a third of the blend being reserve wines. This wine has blossomed nicely and is even more ready to drink than the Cuvée 737, as the wine wafts from the glass in a wide open and complex constellation of pear, apple, fresh-baked bread, chalky minerality, a touch of fresh almond and that signature upper register smokiness of this bottling. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, crisp and focused, with a fine core, pinpoint bubbles, and a long, complex and vibrant finish. The Cuvée 736 is now entering its plateau of peak maturity, where it should continue to cruise along with style and grace for another couple of decades. 2017-2035+. **92+**.

**Jacquesson Cuvée 736 “Dégorgement Tardif” Extra Brut NV (Dizy) Disgorged Nov. 2016**

The Cuvée 736 “Dégorgement Tardif” is a half-step up in precision from the earlier disgorged version, but both bottles are outstanding and it is really hard to pick a favorite between the two, as most of their differences are probably a result of the wines now being at slightly different stages of their respective evolutions. Interestingly, there is more spice tones on the nose of the DT bottling, as it delivers a fine aromatic constellation of pear, apple, chalky minerality, brioche, citrus peel, smoke and those lovely, almost nutmeg-like spice tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully precise and focused, with a fine core, excellent cut and grip, elegant *mousse* and a bit more backend mineral drive than the earlier-disgorged version. This is really, really good juice, but I would give it a few more years in the cellar to allow the wine to fully blossom. 2020-2040+. **93+**.

**Jacquesson Cuvée 735 Extra Brut NV (Dizy) Disgorged February 2012**

The regular release of Jacquesson’s Cuvée 735 is now wide open on the nose and starting to drink with a fair bit of generosity on the palate. The slightly higher *dosage* of 3.5 grams per liter has buffered the girdle of acidity here nicely (and a bit more than subsequent releases, which are lower *dosage*) and makes the wine quite attractive at age ten. The bouquet is a fine blend of apple, lemon peel, plenty of smokiness, a fine base and the first vestiges of nutskin in the upper register which is the harbinger of maturity for this bottling. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and complex, with a good core, pinpoint bubbles and fine length and grip on the well-balanced finish. 2017-2035. **91**.

**Jacquesson Cuvée 735 “Dégorgement Tardif” Extra Brut NV (Dizy) Disgorged Nov. 2015**

Jacquesson’s Cuvée 735 “Dégorgement Tardif” is from the base year of 2007 and spent more than seven years aging *sur latte* prior to disgorgement. The wine’s *cépages* is forty-seven percent chardonnay, thirty-three percent pinot noir and twenty percent pinot meunier and the *dosage* was 3.5 grams per liter. The wine has developed beautifully on its fine lees and offers up a pure and complex bouquet of apple, pear, a hint of nutmeg, brioche, beautiful soil tones and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full and complex, with a fine girdle of acidity, a rock solid core, superb soil signature, frothy *mousse* and outstanding length and grip on the complex and perfectly balanced finish. This is terrific wine and I love the combination of secondary layers of complexity on both the nose and palate, coupled to a youthful chassis of acidity. This is drinking with great style today, but will also age for many years to come. 2017-2035. **93**.

**Jacquesson Cuvée 734 Extra Brut NV (Dizy) Disgorged April 2011**

The Cuvée 734 is from the base year of 2006, with twenty-seven percent of the blend composed of reserve wines. The *cépages* this year is fifty-four percent chardonnay, twenty-six percent pinot meunier and twenty percent pinot noir, and the *dosage* was 3.5 grams per liter, as was customary in this era for the bottling. Like so many examples of the 2006 vintage, this wine is now fully mature (and the first wine in the tasting that is truly at its apogee), offering up a nutty bouquet of apple, pear, walnuts, chalky soil tones and a topnote of smokiness. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and wide open on the attack, with a good core, elegant *mousse* and long, classy finish that closes with a touch of backend bitterness that recalls quinine a touch. My gut feeling is that just a touch more *dosage* might have worked wonders here on the finish. My score is a point or two lower, as that touch of bitterness is not overly attractive to my palate. 2017-2030. **90**.



**Jacquesson Cuvée 734 “Dégorgement Tardif” Extra Brut NV (Dizy) Disgorged Nov. 2014**

The Jacquesson Cuvée 734 “Dégorgement Tardif” follows the same pattern of delivering more precision on both the nose and palate, in comparison to its companion bottling from the initial disgorgement. This would have spent a bit more than seven years aging *sur latte*, with the bouquet offering up a more youthful patina of apple, lemon, chalky minerality, nutskin, dried flowers and that telltale smokiness. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, vibrant and focused, with a good core, fine complexity and grip, elegant *mousse* and a long, zesty, and again, gently bitter finish. The three and a half years of additional time on the fine lees that this wine spent prior to disgorgement has probably given this bottling at least another decade of further life in bottle on the backend. Good juice. 2017-2040. 91.

**Jacquesson Cuvée 733 Extra Brut NV (Dizy)**

**Disgorged September 2009**

The Cuvée 733 from Jacquesson is from the base year of 2005 and includes twenty-two percent reserve wines in the final blend. The *cépages* this year was fifty-two percent chardonnay and twenty-four percent each of pinot noir and pinot meunier. Interestingly, this release had lower *dosage* 2.5 grams per liter) than the subsequent two releases. This wine is a bit behind in its evolution than the Cuvée 734, so despite it drinking nicely today, it is still blossoming and will be even more generous on the palate with a couple more years of cellaring. The bouquet is fine and complex, offering up scents of apple, nutskin, peach, the classic smokiness of this bottling, chalky minerality and a topnote of menthol. On the palate the wine is deep, full, complex and quite minerally in profile, with a good core, pinpoint bubbles and a long, vibrant and still youthful finish. I had no problems drinking this wine with pleasure at our tasting, but if I

had bottles still in my cellar, I would be tempted to leave them alone for at least a few more years. 2017-2040. **91+**.

**Jacquesson Cuvée 733 “Dégorgement Tardif” Extra Brut NV (Dizy) Disgorged Sept. 2013**

Of all the Dégorgement Tardif examples, only the Cuvée 733 showed at a similar point of evolution from the earlier-disgorged version. The bouquet on the 733 DT is quite nutty today, wafting from the glass in a blend of peach, apple, smoke, walnuts, stony minerality, menthol and dried flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully balanced, with a fine core, elegant *mousse*, lovely complexity and a long, nutty and beautifully resolved finish. There is none of the issue with backend bitterness here that plagues the two 2006 vintage bottlings. Despite the nutty tones of maturity on the nose and palate here, I definitely would let the DT version of the 2005 blossom a bit more with further bottle age. This is a lovely wine. 2019-2040. **92.**

**Jacquesson Cuvée 732 Extra Brut NV (Dizy) Disgorged March 2007**

The Cuvée 732 is composed of a blend of thirty-nine percent chardonnay, thirty-six percent pinot meunier and twenty-five percent pinot noir, so this is the year with the lowest percentage of chardonnay for this bottling since the first two releases of the 728 and 729. This is from the base year of 2004 and the *dosage* is again 3.5 grams per liter (as was the case with the 2007 and 2006 versions) and the wine aged two and a half years *sur latte* prior to disgorgement. This bottling has the cut and mineral drive that is so characteristic of the 2004 vintage, as well as a fine bouquet of orange, apple, wet stone minerality, smoky overtones, wheat toast and a topnote of nutskin. On the palate the wine is deep, full, crisp and svelte, with fine complexity, elegant *mousse* and a very long, racy finish that closes with blossoming complexity and impressive grip. Like so many 2004s, this wine is not yet ready for primetime drinking, but it is aging very gracefully and will probably prove to be one of the best of the 700 Series to date, when it is fully mature. 2020-2045. **93.**

**Jacquesson Cuvée 731 Extra Brut NV (Dizy) Disgorged March 2007**

With the Chiquet family’s desired goal for the 700 Series for each release to accurately reflect its base vintage, it is not surprising that the Cuvée 731, from 2003, is a bit of an outlier stylistically. The wine did include fully forty-one percent reserve wines (one of the highest percentages since the 700 Series was created) and was comprised from a blend of fifty-two percent chardonnay, thirty-one percent pinot meunier and seventeen percent pinot noir. The wine was finished with a fairly low *dosage* of two grams per liter and offers up today a mature bouquet of orange, peach, walnuts, a touch of honey and a very discreet touch of chalky soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and just getting a bit oxidative, with good *mousse* and complexity and a respectable, but slightly short finish. This is a good, solid effort for 2003, but it will want drinking up in the next several years, as it is already starting to creep towards the far side of its plateau. 2017-2025. **88.**

**Jacquesson Cuvée 730 Extra Brut NV (Dizy) Disgorged March 2006**

The Cuvée 730 from Jacquesson, hailing from the base year of 2002, is absolutely superb and at this point in time, is the finest of the series that is now ready for primetime drinking. The *cépages* for this bottling was forty-eight percent chardonnay, thirty-two percent pinot noir and twenty percent pinot meunier. Surprisingly, given the outstanding quality of the 2002 vintage, the Cuvée 730 included fully forty percent reserve wines, which was nearly the same as was the case with the base year 2003 bottling. In our vertical lineup, this was by a good measure my favorite wine in terms of absolute quality for drinking today (with wines from the base years of 2008 and 2012 possibly positioned to ultimately reach this same fine level, but that will be many

years in the future), as the wine is really stunning. The bouquet jumps from the glass in pitch-perfect blend of pear, apple, chalky minerality, brioche, gentle smokiness and a touch of orange peel in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with impeccable focus and balance, bright acids, elegant *mousse* and a very long, poised and zesty finish. This wine was finished with a *dosage* of four grams per liter, and today shows such beautiful balance on the backend that it is hard not to conclude that this level of *dosage* could well be the sweet spot for this cuvée. 2017-2045+. **94.**

**Jacquesson Cuvée 729 Extra Brut NV (Dizy)**

**Disgorged March 2005**

This bottling is from the base year of 2001, which was not a particularly strong vintage in Champagne and the wine is now getting towards the far side of the plateau. The *cépages* of the Cuvée 729 is nearly a third each of each grape variety, as it is thirty-four percent each of pinot noir and chardonnay and thirty-two percent of pinot meunier. This wine was finished with a *dosage* of six grams per liter, for in its earliest iterations, the lower *dosage* philosophy at Jacquesson for this bottling had not evolved to today's far lower levels. The wine is fully mature and getting tertiary in its blend of yellow plum, walnuts, warm bread, tangerine and some overtly oxidative tones in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and more vigorous than the nose suggests, with a good core, sound acids, pinpoint bubbles and a touch of backend bitterness that suggests the wine is getting a tad long in the tooth. Drink up. 2017-2025. **87.**

**Jacquesson Cuvée 728 Extra Brut NV (Dizy)**

**Disgorged March 2004**

The Cuvée 728 was the very first in this series from Jacquesson, and having hailed from the base year of 2000 (with thirty-two percent of the blend being reserve wines), the wine is drinking with great style and complexity at age seventeen. The *cépages* here was thirty-six percent chardonnay, thirty-seven percent pinot meunier and twenty-seven percent pinot noir. Again, the *dosage* here is a bit more generous than is the case today, with five grams per liter utilized for the inaugural release of the 700 Series. The wine today is fully mature, but still bright and energetic, as it delivers a complex bouquet of pear, apple, warm biscuits, a hint of honey, dried flowers, chalky soil and a nice topnote of almond. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, crisp and still displays excellent mid-palate depth, with elegant *mousse*, zesty acids and a long, complex and beautifully balanced finish. This is really a lovely wine at its absolute apogee today. 2017-2035. **92.**

***Single Vineyard Vintage-Dated Bottlings***

**2007 Jacquesson "Dizy Corne Bautray" Blanc de Blancs Extra Brut Millésime**

The 2007 Corne Bautray bottling from Jacquesson was barrel-fermented in older casks and goes through full malolactic, like all of the Jacquesson *vins clairs*. This was the only single vineyard bottling made in 2007 at Jacquesson, and the wine was aged *sur latte* seven and a half years prior to disgorgement in January 2016. It is non-*dosé* in the 2007 vintage. The wine is outstanding, wafting from the glass in a very complex blend of pear, apple, chalky minerality, lovely notes of almond, brioche, fresh nutmeg, gentle smokiness in the upper register. On the palate the wine is superb, with a full-bodied and still nicely snappy format, lovely depth at the core, elegant *mousse*, superb focus and grip and a long, very nicely balanced and still fairly youthful finish. This is first class Blanc de Blancs. 2017-2045. **94+.**

### **2009 Jacquesson “Dizy Terres Rouges” Rosé Extra Brut Millésime**

The Dizy Terres Rouges Rosé bottling from Jacquesson is produced entirely from pinot noir, in a subsection of the Chiquet family’s larger parcel of this well-situated *lieu à dit*. This is made by the *saignée* method, with half of the juice seeing partial whole clusters and the other half completely destemmed. The wine was aged five and a half years *sur latte* and bottled in 2009 with zero *dosage*. It offers up the deeper color of the *saignée* method and a fine bouquet of cherries, rhubarb, rye bread, chalky minerality, a touch of smokiness and just a hint of cinnamon in the upper register. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and gently vinous in personality, with outstanding minerality, frothy *mousse*, bright, beautifully integrated acids and excellent length and grip on the nascently complex finish. This is already delicious to drink, but it will be even better with a handful of years in the cellar. This shows none of the overt generosity found in some bubbly from this ripe and buxom vintage. 2017-2040. **93+**.