

Terroir, People, and Time

An Interview with Baptiste Loiseau, Cellar Master, LOUIS XIII



Baptiste Loiseau

EDITORS' NOTE *Baptiste Loiseau became Cellar Master of LOUIS XIII in 2014. At the age of 34 at the time of his appointment, he became the youngest ever Cellar Master of LOUIS XIII. Growing up in the Cognac region, Loiseau has had a respect and understanding of the complex nature of cognac from a young age. In his role, he uses eau-de-vie from a curated selection set aside by the previous cellar masters, which he blends using experience and intuition to recreate the signature LOUIS XIII flavor profile. In turn, he creates a new eau-de-vie that will eventually be used by his successors.*

Will you discuss the history of LOUIS XIII and what has made LOUIS XIII so special?

The history behind LOUIS XIII with its creation in 1874 is what makes LOUIS XIII so special. It is a long history for the brand which is highlighted by the superiority of the land and the superiority of being aged longer. This is what is transferred from one cellar master to another over many years. The role of the cellar master is to make sure that the product is consistent and to preserve the legacy of the past, while building for the future. It is the priority of the cellar master to focus on quality above everything else – the quality of the land, the quality of the grapes, and the quality of the wine. We have built a team of incredibly talented and passionate people at LOUIS XIII and I balance my time between

working with the team to make sure we are performing at the highest levels, while also focusing my time on inspection and creation, where I concentrate on the final blend.

Will you highlight the commitment to sustainability and social responsibility for the brand?

This is a part of our DNA. This is at the essence of what we make every day and what the previous generations have done. When you have something that dates back to 1874, it shows the focus and responsibility that was given to preserve the terroir in order for the terroir to be able to continue for decades and decades. When you plant vineyards, it is for the next 40 to 50 years, so we must think long term and focus on sustainability. We use the words terroir, people, and time. We need to take care of our terroir, need to have people internally and externally that understand our vision, and need to focus for the long term.

You mentioned the team at LOUIS XIII. Will you elaborate on the talent and expertise of the team?

We have our own estate and a key for us is the partnership that we have with our growers which is something that was created more than 50 years ago. There was the understanding and vision at that time that in order to have the quality and quantity we wanted, it was necessary to build a mutually beneficial partnership with our growers. When I first joined the company, my role was to work with the growers and to make sure they had the tools to produce the quality and quantities necessary, since without these growers and all the other people on our team that focus on different areas of the business, there would be no LOUIS XIII.

We spend a great amount of time on explaining our culture, training, and being transparent with our people which is why our team has been with us for many years.



LOUIS XIII, a tradition since 1874



How do you describe the LOUIS XIII experience?

For me, the LOUIS XIII experience starts by talking about the history and the location of where it comes from, and I like to start with a map to explain where Cognac is located since many people still do not realize that Cognac is a city. It is helpful to know where the product comes from in order to appreciate the essence of the brand. When you are tasting LOUIS XIII, it is important to take the time to experience all the aromas. There are all these flavors that come one after another and you need to have time to appreciate the full LOUIS XIII experience.

The LOUIS XIII experience is iconic from the very beginning when you witness the decanter. From the first days in 1874, the shape of the decanter has remained the same so everywhere in the world, if you go to a high-end venue, you will see the LOUIS XIII decanter highlighted in the middle of the bar and it makes you feel that something special is happening in the place. We work with Baccarat in France and each decanter is handcrafted and unique.

I recommend for people tasting LOUIS XIII to go slow and to first discover the aromas on the nose and then on the palate. You will start to appreciate the aromas as soon as the glass approaches your nose, and each person will describe what they are experiencing in a different way. The power of LOUIS XIII is how it impacts your senses and emotions, and it brings back memories of special occasions and experiences. This is the power of LOUIS XIII – you will discover something new every time you open a decanter.

I often make a parallel between LOUIS XIII and a perfume. I like to say that LOUIS XIII is the perfume of time. Similar to the different aromas you will experience when you first smell a perfume, you will experience different aromas when you first bring a glass of LOUIS XIII to your nose. With both LOUIS XIII and perfume, you let time provide an opportunity to appreciate all the senses and emotions that come from the product.

The importance of taking time to experience the aromas is to prepare the palate for LOUIS XIII and it is best to take a small sip and to let LOUIS XIII take the space and lead the way to show all its facets – it may be fruity, floral, oaky, nutty – the flavors will come one after another. This is the power of LOUIS XIII.

Will you discuss the impact that your predecessor, Pierrette Trichet, had on your career?

She taught me so much, from ripeness of the grapes all the way to the final blend of LOUIS XIII. It was an amazing apprenticeship. She taught me about the importance of being demanding and always being committed to producing the highest quality. She also told me to trust my feelings and beliefs.

I learned from her the importance of staying true to the brand and to maintaining the quality and consistency that LOUIS XIII is known for. I see it as my responsibility to find and train the next generation that may become future cellar masters and hope to impact them in the same way that Pierrette impacted me. ●



LOUIS XIII Time Collection (top), The Magnum (above)