

Building The Next Great Champagne Maison

An Interview with Rodolphe Frerejean-Taittinger, Cofounder, Champagne Frerejean Frères



Rodolphe Frerejean-Taittinger

EDITORS' NOTE Each *cuvée* from Maison Frerejean Frères (frerejeanfreres.com) tells a unique story, shaped by the dual heritage that Guillaume, Richard and Rodolphe Frerejean-Taittinger passionately carry forward. From their mother, descended from the prestigious Taittinger lineage, they inherited the craft of winemaking and a deep connection to the Champagne terroir. From their father, a native of southern Burgundy, they inherited the boldness and entrepreneurial spirit of a family of Master Forgers, whose lineage dates back to 1778. Their ancestors manufactured the renowned Frerejean Frères cannons, which played a decisive role in the Napoleonic battles. At the crossroads of these two legacies, Guillaume, Richard and Rodolphe represent a new generation of winemakers, proud to honor their family heritage. Each *cuvée* thus becomes the expression of an unwavering pursuit of excellence, driven by their desire to pass on a unique *savoir-faire* and shape the future of Maison Frerejean Frères.

Will you discuss your career journey?

My journey is first and foremost a family and entrepreneurial story. I grew up with Champagne as part of my family culture and history, but with my brothers, Guillaume and Richard, we had a very strong desire to create something of our own, something that would respect where we came from while expressing our own vision of Champagne. That is how Frerejean Frères was born. We started with a very simple ambition: to make the kind of Champagne we personally wanted to drink - precise, gastronomic, low-dosage wines, deeply connected to the terroirs of the Côte des Blancs.

Since then, my journey has really been about building the House step by step, without shortcuts: developing our vineyards and long-term grower relationships, creating increasingly ambitious *cuvées*, and personally building our presence with great sommeliers, chefs, restaurants, hotels and collectors around the world.

Today, I spend a huge amount of my time in the markets, particularly in the United States, because I believe a Champagne House is built through personal relationships and credibility.

We are still a young House compared with many historic Champagne names, and that is actually very exciting. We have the heritage behind us, but we are writing our own chapter.

Will you highlight the history and heritage of Champagne Frerejean Frères?

Frerejean Frères is first and foremost a family story. We are based in Avize, in the heart of the Côte des Blancs, surrounded by some of the greatest Chardonnay terroirs in Champagne. Our family has deep roots in Champagne and wine, and when my brothers and I created Frerejean Frères, we wanted to build a House that would respect that heritage while having its own identity.

We didn't want to create simply another Champagne brand. We wanted to build a true Maison, deeply connected to its terroir, its vineyards, its growers and its community.

For us, heritage is not about looking backwards. It is about transmission. It is about taking what previous generations have given you, adding your own vision, and hopefully passing something even stronger to the next generation. We think about Frerejean Frères in decades, not years.

What have been the keys to Frerejean Frères' leadership?

I would probably use the word distinctiveness rather than leadership. Champagne is an



extraordinary industry with Houses that have been building their reputations for centuries, and we have enormous respect for that. Our strength has been to remain extremely focused on our own philosophy: exceptional terroirs, long ageing, low dosage, precision and gastronomy.

We have also been very selective in the way we grow. We want Frerejean Frères to be present in the right restaurants, hotels, wine merchants and cellars around the world rather than simply chasing volume. And we spend a



Rodolphe and Richard Frerejean-Taittinger (above and top)



lot of time in the field. We build relationships directly with sommeliers, chefs, collectors and wine lovers.

Ultimately, in Champagne, credibility is built bottle by bottle, sommelier by sommelier, and market by market.

How do you define the Frerejean Frères difference?

For me, the Frerejean Frères difference can be summarized in three words: terroir, time and precision. We work predominantly with Chardonnay and Pinot Noir from Premier Cru and Grand Cru terroirs, with a very strong attachment to the Côte des Blancs. Time is also fundamental. We give our wines significantly more ageing than required because we believe time creates complexity, depth and texture. And finally, precision. We favor low dosage because we never want sugar to mask the identity of the wine or its terroir.

Our ambition is to produce Champagnes that are first and foremost great wines - wines with tension, minerality, complexity and the ability to accompany an entire gastronomic experience. We don't want people simply to say, "This is a good Champagne." We want them to remember the wine.

Will you provide an overview of Frerejean Frères' offerings?

Our range expresses different dimensions of the House. Our Grande Réserve and Premier Cru cuvées introduce the Frerejean Frères signature: freshness, precision, minerality and complexity. Then we have more gastronomic and terroir-driven expressions, particularly our Blanc de Blancs and vintage Champagnes.

At the top of the range, we produce extremely limited cuvées such as Hussards, Éclipse and VV26, where we can go much further in terms of ageing, rarity and expression of terroir. VV26 is particularly emotional for us. It is produced from very old, century-old Chardonnay vines and in extremely limited quantities. For me, VV26 represents perfectly what Frerejean Frères is about: heritage, patience, rarity, exceptional terroir and transmission.

How do you focus your efforts leading Frerejean Frères?

I spend a lot of my time in the field. I don't believe you can build a great Champagne House exclusively from an office in Champagne. You have to be with the people who represent, serve and drink your wines. So, I spend a significant amount of time traveling, meeting our distributors, sommeliers, chefs, restaurateurs, collectors and clients. The United States is a major priority for us today, so I am personally spending a great deal of time here developing relationships and opening doors for the House.

But another essential part of my role is protecting the long-term vision. There are always opportunities to grow faster, but luxury is also about knowing when to say no. Our objective is not to become the biggest Champagne House. Our ambition is to build one of the most respected Champagne Houses of our generation.

How critical is sustainability to Frerejean Frères?

It is fundamental because everything begins with the vineyard. Without healthy soils, biodiversity and responsible viticulture, there is no great wine and certainly no long-term future for Champagne.

For us, sustainability is not simply a marketing subject. It is about the way we work our vineyards, our relationships with our growers, our choices in the cellar and, more broadly, the responsibility we have toward the terroir. When you work with very old vines, including century-old vines, sustainability becomes something very tangible. Those vines existed long before us. Our responsibility is to protect that heritage so that it can continue long after us. In that sense, I see ourselves more as custodians than owners.

What are your priorities for Frerejean Frères?

The first priority will always be the wine. We want to continue raising the quality and precision of every cuvée we produce, strengthen our vineyard holdings and secure access to exceptional terroirs.

The second priority is international development, particularly in strategic markets such as the United States, Japan and Europe, but always with very selective distribution.

The third is establishing our most iconic cuvées, VV26, Hussards and Éclipse, among the great gastronomic and collector Champagnes.

And finally, Avize. Avize is the heart and soul of Frerejean Frères, and we want to create an increasingly strong connection between the House, the Côte des Blancs and the people who come to discover us.

We are building Frerejean Frères with a very long-term perspective. I don't think about where the House will be in three years. I think about where it can be in 30 or 50 years. That is the privilege, and the responsibility, of building a Champagne House. ●



Frerejean-Frères Champagne