



MARIO REIS

**Hommage au Champagne
ein alphabetisches Diarium**

GALERIE AUGARDE



Markus del Monego

Champagne - hardly any other sparkling wine combines the special with a unique attitude to life to such an extent. It is sparkling pleasure at its best and art in bottles. Champagne, with its famous town of Reims, is a landscape that has given its name to the grapes pressed there. But Champagne means more than just a liquid delicacy. It is a philosophy and a way of life that - even if it sometimes seems to be only a fleeting moment - remains in our memory for a long time. Champagne crowns life's big and small festive occasions and is the epitome of lifestyle, luxury and simply pure enjoyment. Whether as a vintner's champagne, "grand marque", whether Brut, Grand Cru or a special cuvée, this sparkling experience is always deeply imprinted in our memory.

The task of capturing these fleeting impressions for a long time is what Mario Reis has set himself with his works. His tools of the trade here seem conceivably simple and are probably one of the least noticed components of the bottle: the branded cork! Of course - it's the content that counts.

There is no question about that. Nevertheless, empty bottles with neat labels are collected, sometimes even the labels alone make it into an album and even the "plaques de muselet", the little plates in the agraffe, collectors devote all their energy and even special exhibitions and swap meets. So far, only one has fallen by the wayside, the little-noticed cork. Mario Reis has now put it in the limelight with his artistic idea. With each opened champagne bottle, he could not only enjoy the sparkling drop, but he was also inspired again and again and used each of his corks as a unique tool for one of his next works.

And so works of art were created that are as complex and profound as the champagne themselves. New optical effects and resulting arcs of tension give the large and small works a unique and special touch that goes far beyond the mere enjoyment of champagne.

With his paintings, the artist has created a small monument to a region and a cult drink, as well as to the champagne houses and the people who stand behind and enliven these special growths. For every day of the year, a work of art in its own right, best enjoyed and explored together with the accompanying bottle.

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Andreas Erb

The Méthode champenoise of Mario Reis

Every alcoholic beverage has its special punch; champagne is the only one that does not evoke ordinary metaphors.

(Amélie Nothomb: Pétronille)

1

It is the bubbles that provide the information. When the champagne bottle is opened and the pressure drops, the liquefied and now dissolved carbon dioxide produced by the bottle fermentation forces its way to the surface, ideally in fine pearls; and it is precisely their nature, their size, their number, and their rate of rise that provide information about the quality of the champagne. For example, storage or the reduction of sugar can also reduce the CO₂ content, which in turn gives rise to finer bubbles - just as carbon dioxide in general has an influence on the taste of champagne by counterbalancing the wine's sweetness.

Each bubble rising in the glass thus contains the complete story of the entire and complicated transformation from grape to champagne. It is medium, messenger of the gustatory sensation, it transports to the surface the aromas that are released with its bursting. And it is this aerosol effect that tells the story of each gas bubble, the story that belongs to that bacchanalian frenzy that for moments balances the forces of earth's gravity. This also includes the optical perception, the play of the pearls in the glass, the lightness, the unbridled order in which the bubbles strive towards the surface: in criss-crossing strings, undulating as „a meandering jewel“ or straight, regular or chaotic; and entirely according to the nature of the glass interior, the estimated nearly 50 million pearls per bottle thus dissolve as an optical event into spectacular pleasure.

2

"To understand champagne properly, you must be able to describe it in detail," says champagne house owner Bruno Paillard. Mario Reis has taken up this apodictum.

March 11, 2020. The SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus forces a worldwide lockdown - including in Germany. Curfews, closing of restaurant businesses, bans on gatherings ensure that public life shifts to private indoor spaces. Habits of the everyday, for example of enjoyment, have to take on new forms, hedonism is integrated, domesticated. Against the background of these world events, 2020 will also be the year of crisis for champagne. And this despite the fact that the dry winter, the short spring and the hot summer lead to a rapid ripening process that gives a grape harvest of high quality. But harvesting and annual production are down, sales are stagnant in distribution, and many Champagne growers are facing major business losses.

It may be coincidence, but this spring Mario Reis is starting his Hommage au Champagne project. The idea is charming: champagne corks are repurposed as stamps and thus undergo a change of function. Dipped in document ink, he uses them to print on Bristol board (615 g/m², acid-free, non-aging) in various sizes. Originally planned were 111 works, made with corks from 111 champagne producers. The project has expanded, first to 162, then to 255 - in the meantime an abecedarium of a special kind is available: In the course of the pandemic year, Reis processed 366 corks from different champagne brands, with only a few previously unused

corks among them. And so the alphabetically arranged champagne primer conceals a diary of the corona year 2020/2021.

3

Stamping means writing - and a stamped sheet is like a piece of writing that must be read. The stamp and the way it is guided to the object change its surface structure. If, as in the case of Mario Reis, the stamp is applied several times in succession, a texture is created and the printed sheets appear as a fabric, as a sequence of letters that abandons the conventional letter system. The fabric, which emerges from the interplay of warp and weft threads and thus from a certain order, is subject to a specific grammar, just as it is fundamental to every linguistic texture. It is the normative rules and the handling of them that determine the shape of such fabric writings. It is therefore always necessary to ask what organizational decisions lie behind each piece of writing, which in the case of Mario Reis in turn determine how the stamp impressions spread out on the sheet of paper. For this gives the text its direction of travel; and so part of the reception is the play of the eyes or gaze, which involuntarily wants to recognize the reading direction of each document.

Nothing else happens with the champagne works of Mario Reis, whereby the perlage of the champagne is a valuable reading aid. First of all, the movement from bottom to top dominates; in addition, it leads from bottom left to top right in the production process, which already names an essential element of the grammar of champagne homages. This upward dynamic is, however, only one component of the works, which are all characterized by a tremendous liveliness. Common to all the sheets is a flickering, caused by a rhythm that must be studied, by an order of signs that consistently undercuts and questions itself, whereby each individual stamp impression, comparable to each linguistic sound, has its own history, its own volume, its own expressive power. And yet a set of rules underlies all of this. It is established by the sequence of stamp impressions, that is, by the number of stamps after the document ink has been applied. In this way, there is a gentle transition from dark to light per series, depending on how much ink still remains on the cork. In this way, Mario Reis uses variations in the rhythm of the stamp to produce sheets that have a completely different appearance: The light and temperature that blow through the works are influenced solely by the stamping. There are almost no limits to the variations possible. I read the sheet "Guerlet-Deguerne" in front of me: 4 - 3 - 4 - 4 - 3 - 4 - 3 - 4 - 4 - 4 - 4 - 3 - 4 - 4 - 3 - 2. This sequence leads to an airy, light-flooded pictorial structure in which no particular pattern of progression imposes itself - each individual bubble blends harmoniously into the whole of the picture (pictura). And as a signature (subscriptio) could stand the self-statement of the house: "Un champagne de connaisseur. Élégance et raffinement. Assemblage: 40% Pinot Noir, 35% Pinot Meunier, 25% Chardonnay. Vieillessement: 30 mois de cave minimum. En bouche: Notes de pomme et de fruits exotiques. Superbe équilibre." In this interplay of image and text, the attempts to approach the essence of champagne through different systems of notation become clear; and as different as they sound, as alien as they are to each other, they are related in their efforts to characterize the object with their own means of expression; in this respect, the title of Mario Reis' project is to be taken seriously: An homage is not merely a bow, it is a translation effort that undertakes, beyond its own (here:) aesthetic value, to convey the idiosyncrasy of the one being honored.

In terms of texture, the Champagne Works group contains far more dynamic sheets than "Guerlet-Deguerne." Sheets on which the movements of the beads seem to become autonomous, on which they suddenly mix or repel. Here the actually closed system of bubbles rising in rows gets into disorder, it expands into an open play of freely swirling movement. Gaps

appear, overlaps condense the space, the clear structure gives way to partial confusion. Then the gradient lines caused by the stamp rhythm, which translate the play of pearls in the glass/bottle, no longer dominate; the prints are increasingly transformed into images that obtain their dynamics not through gesture, but through the color of the superimposed stamp impressions. This is supported by the processing of the stamp pad, to which - depending on the champagne - different shades of color are partially applied. Ultimately, color spaces are created whose inner movement can no longer be deciphered; the boundaries of the individual corks (pearls) dissolve and combine into a whole; the linearly organized two-dimensional (type) surface is expanded by the depth dimension. And suddenly color dominates as an expression of the correspondences between the individual beads. Ultimately, however, even these denser works are merely aesthetic variations, all subordinated to the goal of describing the champagne "in detail." By means of stamp beading, Mario Reis transfers the level of palate taste to the level of the moment - a flavor transfer of a special kind.

4

Each individual champagne pearl is the result of a long and elaborate production process - and it tells of this on its way to the glass surface and during its final atomization. Transferred to the champagne tributes of Mario Reis, each leaf can only be understood through the individual stamp imprint, which is unrepeatable in its uniqueness. The decisive key here is the cork.

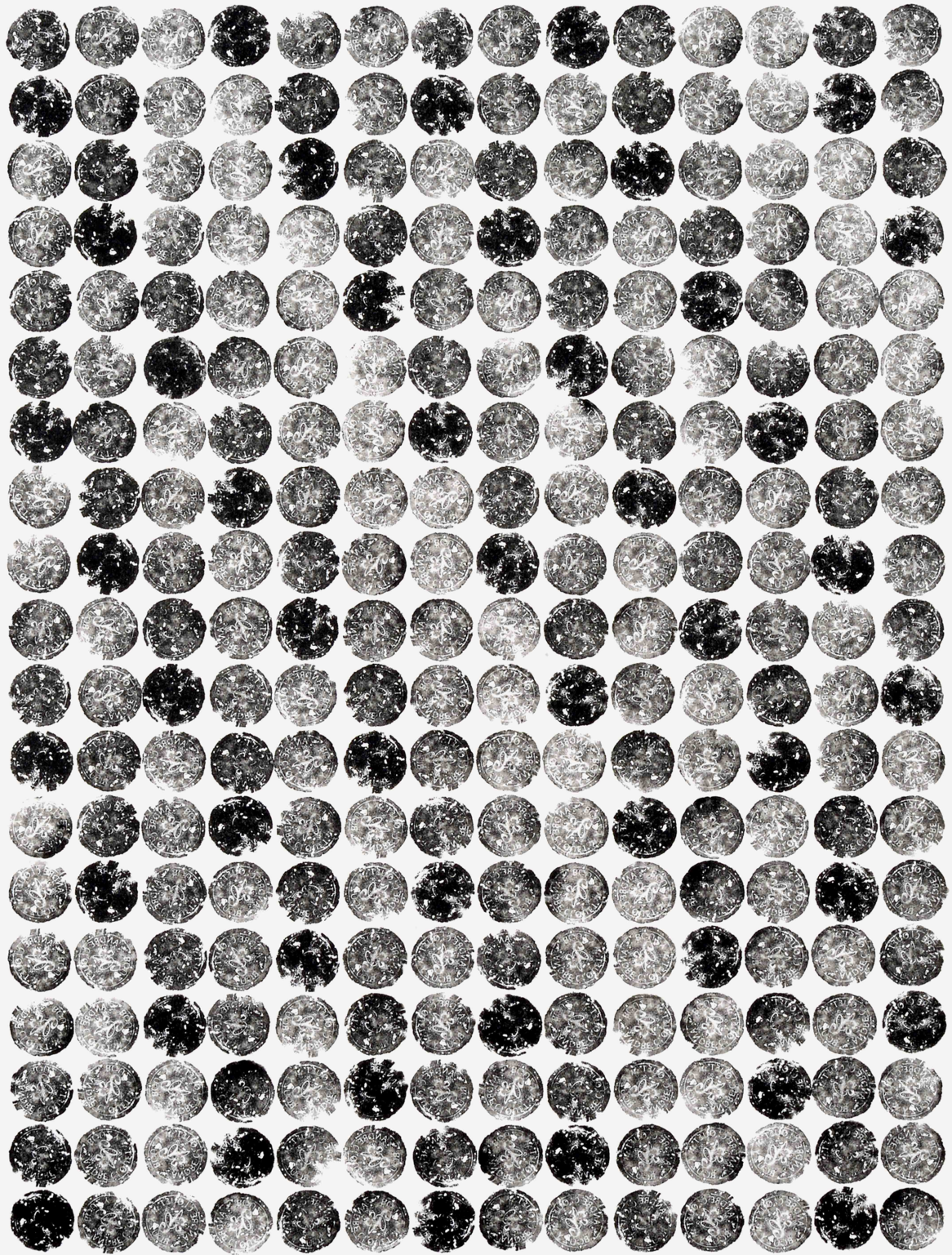
The history of champagne is inextricably linked to the story of the Benedictine monk Dom (Pierre) Pérignon, who was admitted to the monastery of Saint-Pierre d'Hautvillers in 1668, where he was responsible for economic matters; this included the care of the agricultural estate, with viticulture (and, accordingly, the preparation of wine) playing a central role. The legend that makes him the "inventor" of champagne has long been overwritten, but he nevertheless has an essential role in the development of cultivation and aging; among other things, he is credited with introducing the bottle closure with a natural cork. Its origin alone (cork oaks, *Quercus suber*, i.e. from the Mediterranean region), its age and thus its history (the trees must have grown for at least 25 years before they are peeled; before they are suitable for use as champagne corks, a further three peelings, i.e. around 27 years, must pass) make the cork a speciality. Added to this is its actual oenological function, which includes, for example, its structure. Ideally, it is a composite cork, the upper part of which consists of glued cork granules, which is then terminated with two grown cork discs, so that no adhesives can get into the bottle and influence the taste. This end piece is ultimately the interface - this is where the champagne touches the cork, which in this way can provide information about the content and essence of the bottle's contents; and it is not for nothing that this end piece is also called "miroir": What a wonderful idea that this final disc can reflect the champagne back to itself and at the same time tell about what has taken place in the bottle. And after all this, it is not surprising that some things can be read from the cork, such as how long the champagne has been in the bottle; the longer, the more it loses elasticity: the result is then the "Cheville", the very narrow cork, quite unlike the "Juponne", which still retains its original girth because it has spent only a short time in the bottle. And that's not all - the importance of the cork also becomes visible in its representative function as an advertising medium: the imprint "Vin de Champagne"/"Champagne" must be recorded, in addition, all vintage champagne corks are still marked with the vintage and in many cases the corks still receive names, coats of arms, initials or graphic elements, which refer to the producer in each case. The homage works of Mario Reis also tell of all this. According to the dictionary, one meaning of "stamping" is: "to bring forth by imprinting a stamp, to make appear". The stamp imprint thus reveals the secret of the mirror, as it were, and bundles all the messages in each individual imprint. In addition, there is the

individual handwriting of the artist, the way he guides the cork/stamp, the way he puts it on, the force with which he presses it onto the paper. The hand print of Mario Reis thus gives the champagne picture its final, its gestural appearance. And so it is also understandable that no two bubbles (and thus no two sheets) are alike. But it also requires a re-reading: Now the view is no longer concentrated on the overall print with its directions of movement and its light or color conditions - the decisive factor is then rather the individual bead, its internal structure, the color gradient, which is always different, the manner of compression, the nature of the edges, which are sometimes closed, sometimes break up. In short, each individual stamp impression is a small universe with its own internal dynamics, which - like the champagne bubble - unites everything in itself, the essence of champagne and the artistic expressiveness.

5

The first cork works can be found in the complete oeuvre of Mario Reis already at the end of the seventies. During his scholarship stays in Paris, the artist began to write. On the one hand, the letters to the Seine are created here, at the same time the first river works, with which he explores the texture of the river; on the other hand, he writes his first champagne works while stamping. But they differ significantly from the 2020/21 homage project: the direction of the prints does not yet follow the path of the pearls, but rather the direction of Latin writing from top left to bottom right. Moreover, they are printed on square paper, which means that the format also does not support the direction of movement of the beads. During this time, Reis explores the Champagne region, studies the aging process, visits wineries and their cellars, works out his subject matter. All in all, however, he does not yet systematize his approach to the same extent, does not yet play so extensively with different champagne brands, nor with the variety of movement of the bubbles themselves; consequently, his *méthode champenoise*, that is, the technique of describing or translating champagne into a printed (type) image, is laid out but not yet developed.

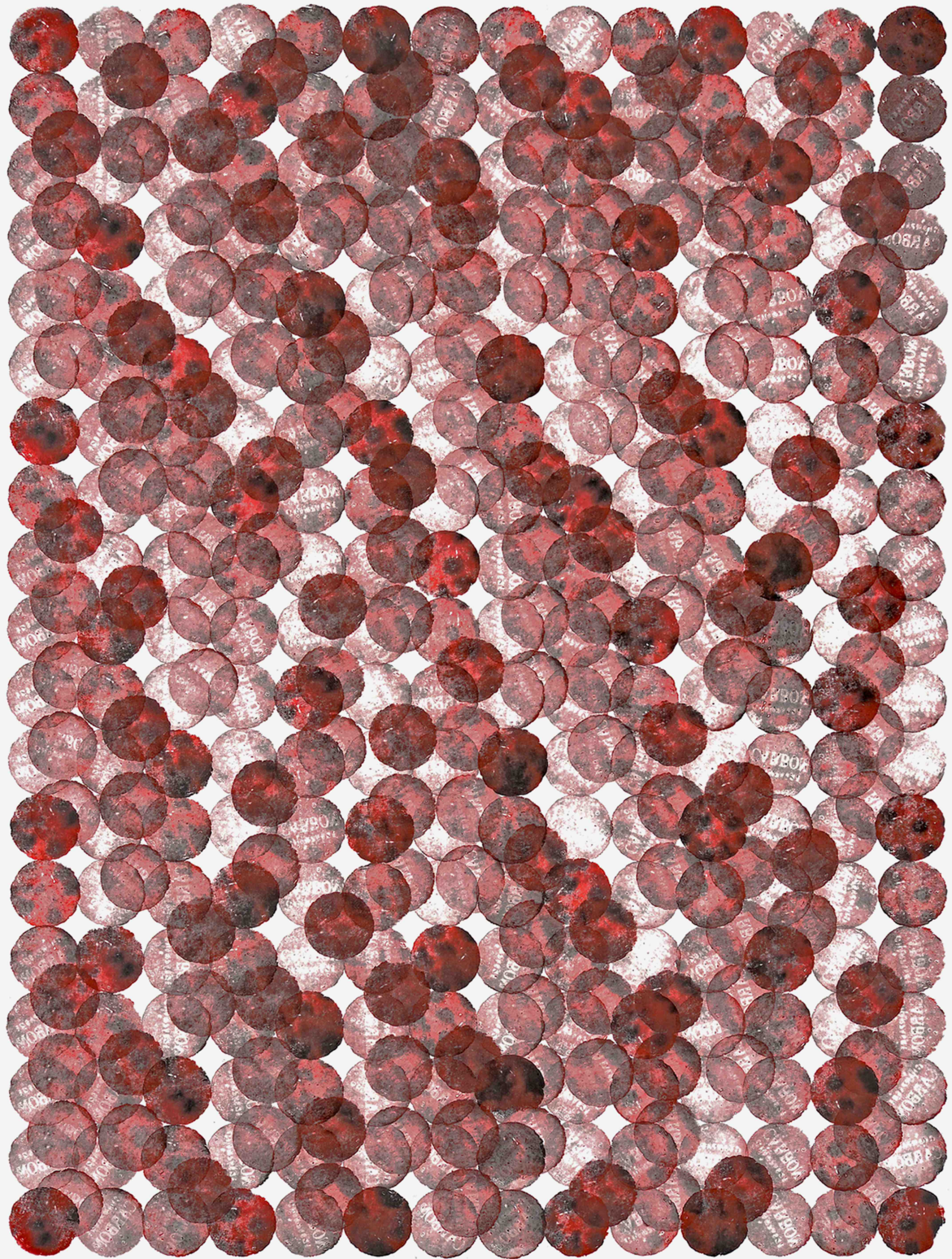
What is striking about *Hommage au Champagne* is the inner connection that links this group of works with the others by Mario Reis. Underlying all of them is a fundamental need to lend an aesthetic signature to certain phenomena of the external world by means of a previously worked out and then fixed experimental arrangement and by means of the principle of seriality. It is precisely in the sequence of repetition and variation that underlies the production process that Mario Reis manages to present an overall view in which the individual work always corresponds with the entire series, just as the series at the same time co-determines the legibility of the individual image; This is epistemologically as plausible as the fact that the sum of all the works is not intended to convey an idea of closure (which is ultimately coincidental here due to the number of anniversaries), but rather a fundamental conceptual openness that is necessary in order to understand certain contents, phenomena - here the champagne - without hierarchy.



André Clouet

November 2020

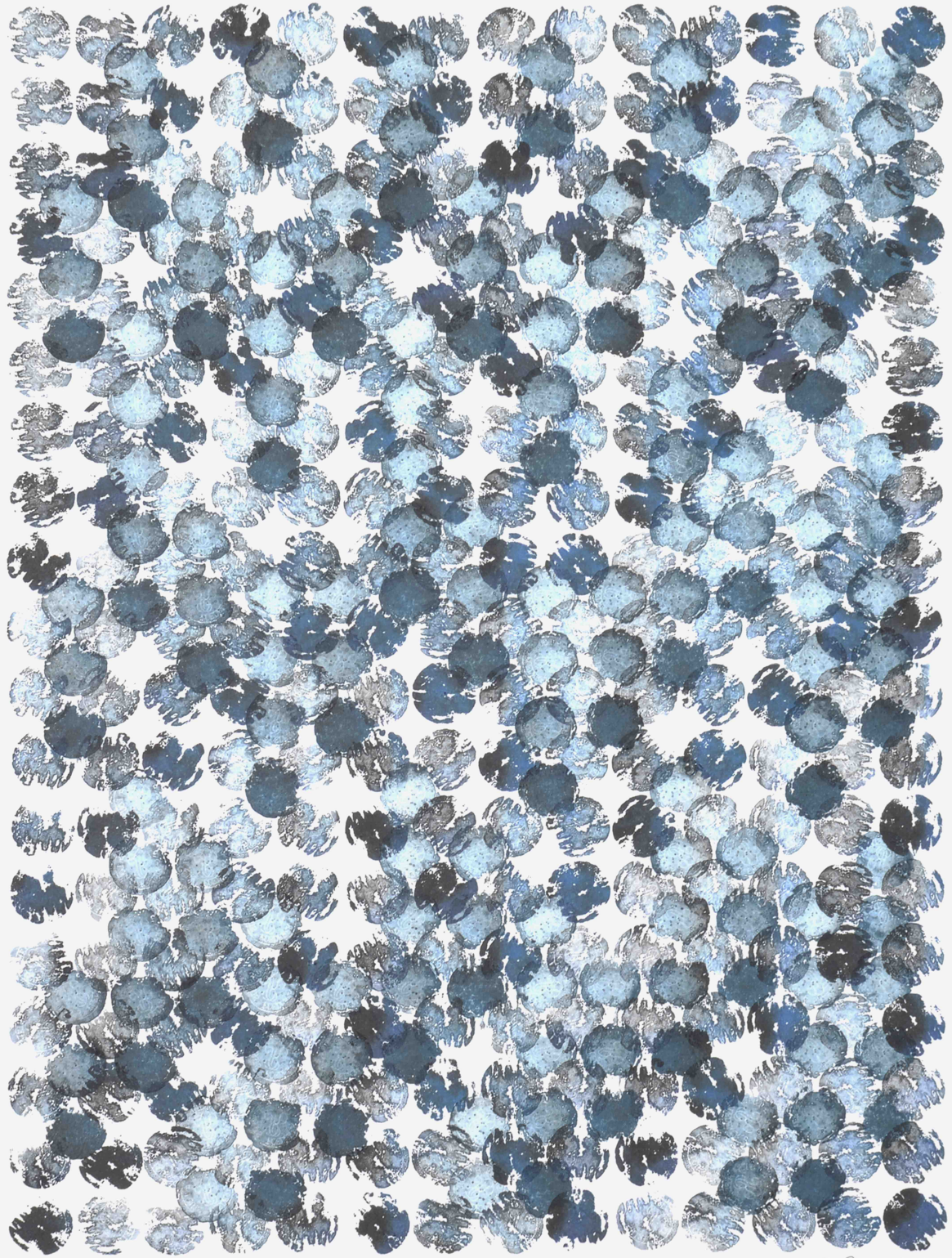
André Clouet



Carbon

Sam Re 2021

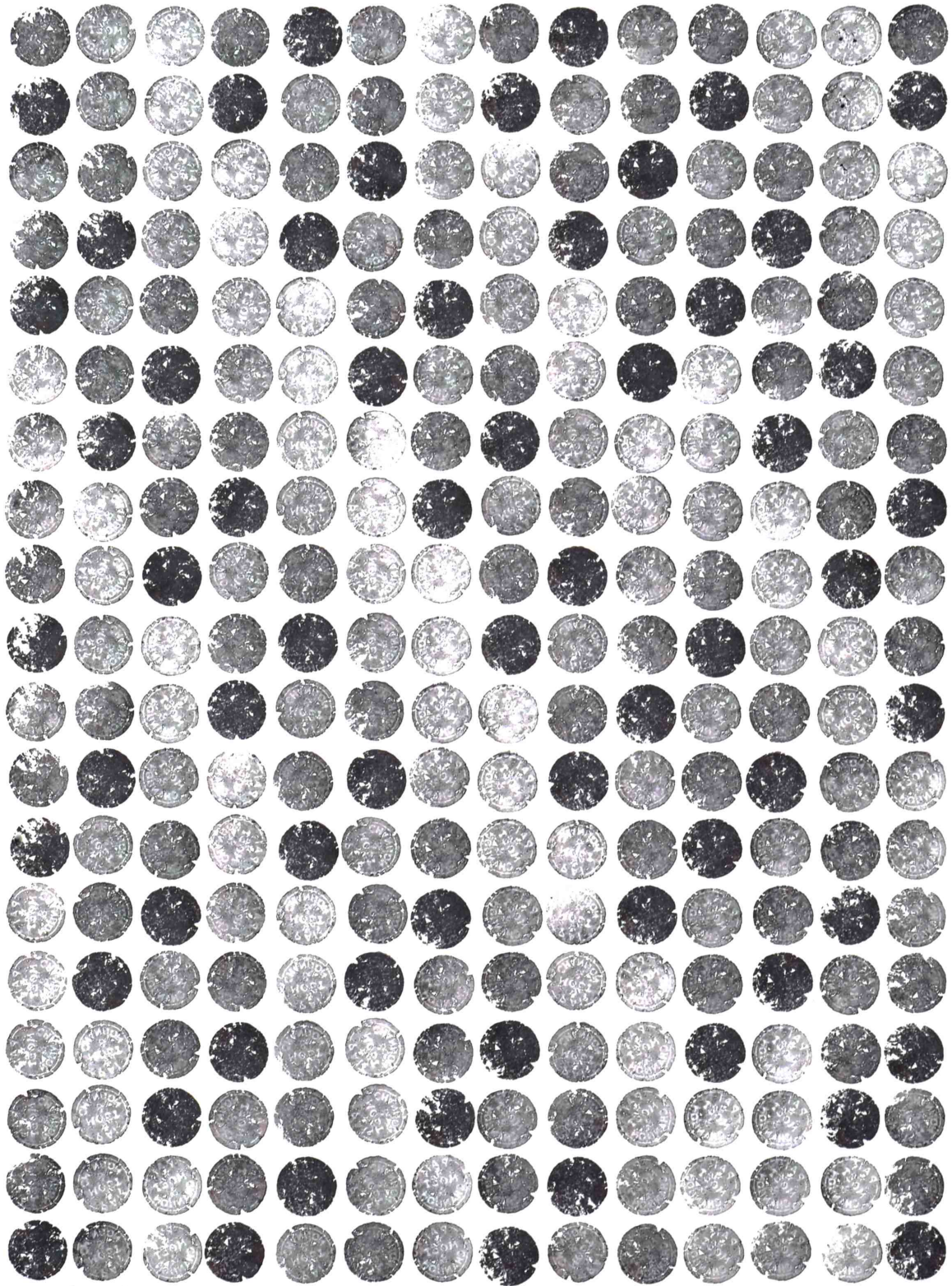
Carbon



Louis Roederer

Paris - Ran 2020

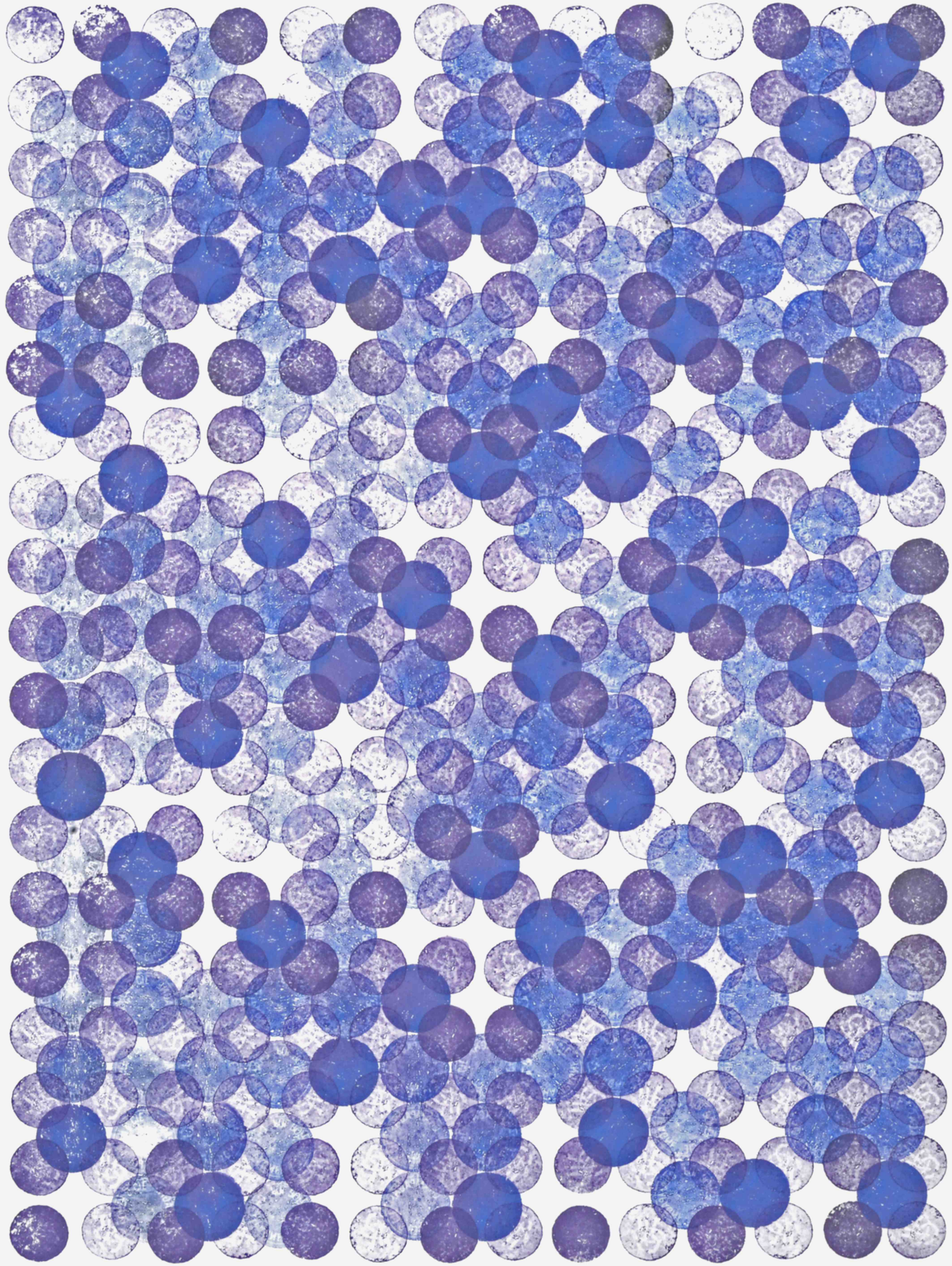
Louis Roederer



Moët & Chandon

Ram Ram 2020

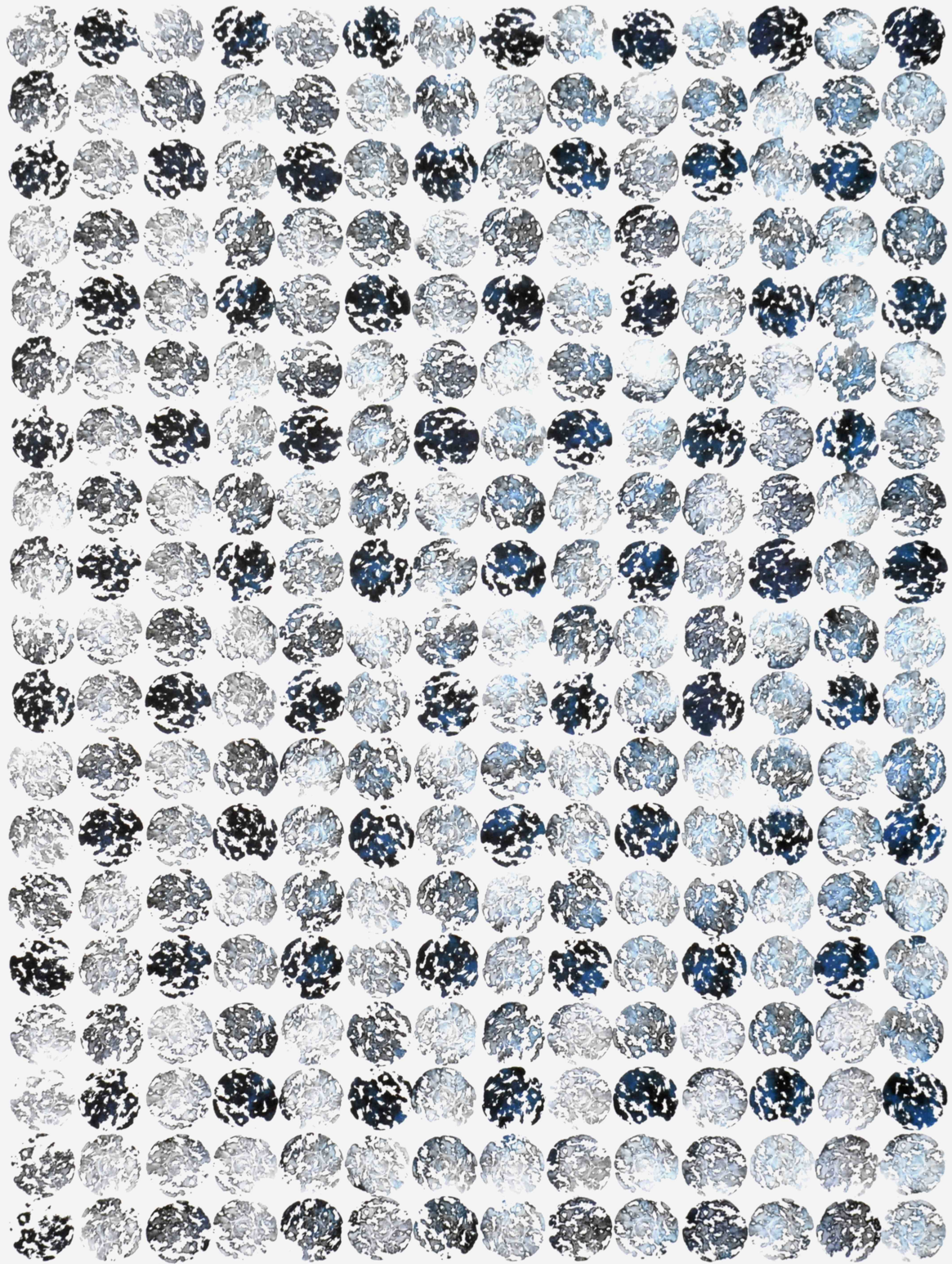
Moët & Chandon



Pol Roger

Paris Rain 2020

Pol Roger



Veve Clicquot Réserve

Paris Rév 2020

Veve Clicquot

"Hommage au Champagne"
ein alphabetisches Diarium

Format 65x50 cm
Bristolkarton 615g² und Dokumentenfarbe

Abelé Henri
Agrapart & Fils
Yann Alexandre
Amyot
Apollonis - Michel Lorient
Armand de Brignac
Michel Arnould & Fils
Aubry
Decotte Augé
Autréau
Autréau-Lasnot
Ayala
Charles Bach
Jean Baillelte-Prudhomme
Louis Ballincourt
Paul Bara
Robert Barbichon
Barbier-Louvet
Barnaut
Baron Albert
Baron de Rothschild
Baron Fuente
Sophie Baron
Barthélemy-Pinot
Herbert Beaufort
Beaumot des Crayères
Françoise Bedel
Bêrêche & Fils
Alain Bernard
Lamandier Bernier
Pierre Bertrand
Besserat de Bellefon
Billecart-Salmon
Hubert Billiard
H. Billiot & Fils
Bissinger
Henri Blin
Jerôme Blin
André Boever
Pierre Boever
Boizel
Bollinger
Bonnaire
Bonnet-Ponson
Franck Bonville

Bouché Père & Fils
Thierry Boumault
Bourgeois-Diaz
Bernard Brémont et Fils
Leclerc Briant
Brice
Brimoncourt
Louise Brison
Brisson-Lahaye
Pierre Brocard
Emmanuel Brochet
François Brossolette
Edourd Brun
Roger Brun
Guy Brunot
Caillez Lemaire
Calzals
Canard-Duchêne
Carbon
Frédéric Caron
Pol Carson
Cattier
Roland Champion
Chanoine
Chapuy
Guy Charlemagne
Robert Charlemagne
J. Charpentier
Chartogne-Taillet
Château de Bligny
Mark Chauvet
Cheurlin-Dangin
Georges Clement
André Clouet
Paul Clouet
Pol Cochet
Chopin
Collard-Picard
Collet
René Collet
Collin-Guillaume
Comte de Brismant
Comtesse Lafond
Marie Copinet
Corbon
David Coutelas
Louis Danremont
Dauby Mère & Fils
De Castellane
De Castelnau
Charles de Cazanove

Guy de Forez
De la Renaissance
Bertrand de Lagnac
Philippe de Lonsac
Louis de Sacy
De Saint Gall
De Sousa
J. de Telmont
De Venoge
De Watère
Elise Dechannes
Dehours & Fils
Déhu
Delamotte
Bertrand Delespierre
Thevent Delouvin
Demièr
Demonge
Lionel Derens
Dericbourg
Deutz
Devaux
Gisèle Devavry
Deville
Richard Dhondt
Dhondt-Grellet
Didier Doué
Diebolt-Vallois
Domain Vincey
Dom Pérignon
Doré
Dosnon
Christian Douard
Doyard
Drappier
Henri Dubois
Hervé Dubois
Floance Duchene
Jean Duclert
Charles Dufour
Jean Dumangin
Duménil
Duval-Leroy
Egly-Ouriet
Charles Ellner
Esterlin
Christian Etienne
Daniel Etienne
Férat-Crochet
Nicolas Feuillatte
Fleur de Miraval

Fleury
Fleury-Gille & Fils
Vielle France
Frerejean Frères
Huré Frères
Froment-Griffon
Michel Furdyna
Philippe Gamet
Gardet
Gatinois
Gauthier
René Geoffroy
Eugénie Gerber
Pierre Gimonnet
Gimonnet-Henry
Henri Giraud
Lacourte Godbillon
Hugues Godmé
Paul Goerg
J. M. Goillard & Fils
Philippe Gonet
Gonnet Gimonnet
Christian Gosset
Gosset
Gosset-Brabant
Gustave Goussard
Grand Plaisir
Alfred Gratien
Gratiot & Cie
Gratiot-Delugny
Gremillet
Alain Grilliat & Fils
Gruet
Maurice Grumier
Guerlet-Deguerne
Nicolas Gueusquin
Haton & Filles
Marc Hebrart
Heidsieck & Co Monopol
Charles Heidsieck
Pascal Hénin
Henriet-Bazin
Henriot
Stephane Herbert
Hervy-Quenardel
Heucq Père & Fils
Oliver Horiot
M. Hostomme
Louis Hurtebisse
Tristan Hyst
Irroy

Ivernel
Jacquart
Jacquesson
Jacquinot & Fils
Janisson-Baradon
Jeanmaire
Jeuniaux-Robin
René Jolly
Joly
Perrier Jouet
Juget-Brunet
Juillet-Lallement
Krug
L'Hoste Père & Fils
La Chapelle
Lacourte-Guillemart
Lacroix-Triaulaire
Charles Lafitte
Benoit Lahaye
Jean Lallement & Fils
Lallier
Lamblot
Lamiable
Lamotte
Larnaudie-Hirault
Jean-Jacques Lamoureux
Vincent Lamoureux
Lancelot-Pienne
Lanson
J. Lasselle
Laurent-Perrier
Le Brun de Neuville
Noël Leblond-Lenoir
Pascal Leblond-Lenoir
Alain Lebouf
Albert Lebrun
Assilly Leclair
Fromentin Leclapart
Daniel Leclerc & Fils
Lecomte Père & Fils
Xavier Leconte
Lecounte-Guillemart
Legras & Haas
Pierre Legras
R & Legras
Lejeune-Dirvang
Fernand Lemaire
Gaillez Lemaire
A•R Lenoble
Charles Leprince
Michel Littière

Paul Ludovic
Nicolas Maillart
Roger Mailliard
Mailly
Maison Burtin
Mandois
Benoit Marguet
Jean Pierre Marniquet
Marquis de la Fayette
Olivier et Laëtitia Marteaux
G. H. Martel
Olivier Martin
Thierry Massin
Hervé Mathelin
Serge Mathieu
Maxim's
Pascal Mazet
Guy Méa
Alain Mercier
Mercier
Guy Michel & Fils
Charles Mignon
Pierre Mignon
Moët & Chandon
Pierre Moncuit
Robert Moncuit
Monial
Monmarthe
Montaudon
Arnaud Moreau
Morel Père & Fils
Moussé Fils
Moutard Père & Fils
Mouzon-Leroux & Fils
Mulette-Corbon
G.H. Mumm
Alain Navarre
Louis Nicaise
Nicolo & Paradis
Carole Noizet
Francis Orban
Oudiette
Ouriet-Pâtur
Bruno Paillard
Palmer
Pannier
Jean-Pierre Patigny
Paul-Sadi
Joseph Perrier
Perrier-Jouët
Perseval-Farge

Bernard Pertois
Pertois-Moriset
Pierre Péters
Theophile Petit
Philipponnat
Robert Pierrel
Pieson-Cuvelier
Piot-Sévillano
Piper-Heidsieck
Emmanuel Pithois
Pommery
Roger Pouillon
Yveline Prat
Yannick Prévot
Jérôme Prévost
Prince Laurent
Proy-Goulard
Quatresols-Gauthier
Ernest Rapeneau
Bernard Remy
R. Renaudin
Adrien Renoir
Vincent Renoir
John Charles Ricciuti
Richardot
André Robert
Rochet-Bocart
Eric Rodez
Thierry Rodez
Louis Roederer
André Roger
Pol Roger
Rogge-Cereser
Alfred Rothschild
Roualet Père & Fils
Jacque
Royer
Ruinart
Salmon
Salon
François Secondé
Jean Marc Sélèque
Jacques Selosse
Cristian Senez
Mary Sessile
Simart-Moreau
Solemme
Soutrian
Marie Stuart
Suenen
Chartogne Taillant

Taittinger
Tarlant
Thevenet-Delouvin
Thiénot
André Thomas
J. M. Tissier
André Tixier
Frédéric Torchet
Ghislain Tribaut
Pierre Trichet
Alfred Tritant
Tsarine
Michel Turgy
Urbain
Jean Valentin
François Vallois
Vauversin
Vazart-Coquart & Fils
Jean Velut
J. L. Vergnon
George Vesselle
Vessier
Veuve Bonneval
Veuve Clesse
Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin
Veuve de Saint Clair
Veuve Durand
Veuve Duroy
Veuve Emille
Veuve Fourny
Veuve Monsigny
Veuve Pelletier
Veuve Reuther
Vignon Père & Fils
Vilmart & Cie
Voirin-Jumel
Vollereaux & Cie
Vouette & Sorbée
Vranken
Waris-Hubert
Waris-Larmandier
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