

(preview)

Perrier-Jouët's Living Legacy

Tom Stevenson
discovers an
imaginative and
highly personalized
Champagne experience
for you, your children
or grandchildren

Frankly, I did not understand the concept of this project (part of Perrier-Jouët's series of 200th Anniversary events), when it was first reported in the press in March of this year. Perhaps I just scanned the news items too briefly, but they all seemed rather boring and not a little blingish. Something about selling 100 bottles of 1998 Belle Epoque in sculptured boxes for €10,000 each. Why should I care? I have tasted the 1998 many times and I haven't got €10,000 to waste on a box to keep one bottle in. However, while on a short trip for a vertical tasting of Belle Epoque in Jeroboams (see pp.48-49), I was taken around the "Living Legend" cellar and thought I might as well pay attention, just in case there was more to it than I had read. And a

good job that I did, because there are not 100 bottles, there are 200 magnums, and the €10,000 is not so much for the sculptured pack in which each magnum is housed, as the 100 years that Perrier-Jouët will keep one of the two magnums you will in fact be purchasing. Well, not so much keep it for you as for one of your descendants, if indeed the magnum remains at Perrier-Jouët for a full century. The idea is that you get to keep one of the magnums yourself. You can drink this at any time you like, but as part of the package you will be tasting the 1998 with the *chef de cave*, Hervé Deschamps, who will give you a guided tour of Perrier-Jouët's cellars, then entertain you and your partner or another guest for lunch at the wonderful Maison Belle Epoque, just across the road, where you will get to drink the 1998 again, and see how it accompanies various dishes. Take lots of photos, because you might want to include them with the document you will receive certifying that you are the owner of the other magnum (which will be numbered) and which you may bequeath to your children, and they may do likewise. On the other hand, you would be equally entitled to turn up the next day and demand your

second magnum in its sculptured case. However, the cool thing is that the other magnum will be kept under ideal conditions for up to 100 years, so your great-great grandson could reclaim it by presenting the documentation to Perrier-Jouët, who will match the number in the documentation to the numbers kept in a safe next to the Bicentennial cellar housing the magnums. Your great-great grandson will be able to read the notes you made in the visitors' book, and he might well have photos taken by you at the time that have been handed down together with a menu of the lunch you had the Maison Belle Epoque. Imagine the reverse: you turning up at Perrier-Jouët with the documentation necessary to release a magnum of 1898 your great-great grandfather enjoyed in that very room in 1911 and drinking exactly the same wine he did. Not just the same vintage, but the same disgorgement of the same vintage. And the really cool thing is that the twin of your magnum will not just be kept in a Champagne cellar, but locked up behind a glass thermal barrier where the environment will be perfectly controlled. If you can afford €10,000, I would say that was worth the money.



Perrier-Jouët's *chef de cave* Hervé Deschamps with one of the 200 available "Living Legacy" magnums, some of which may be kept in a special cellar for 100 years