

FOOD AND BEVERAGE

Rmy Cointreau reveals sustainable Champagne house with ambitious plans

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Now part of Rmy Cointreau, Telmont is looking to become a 100 percent organic Champagne house. Image credit: Telmont

By SARAH RAMIREZ

French spirits group Rmy Cointreau is returning to the world of sparkling wines after unveiling the refreshed Champagne house Telmont.

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Best known for its Cognac brands, **Rmy Cointreau Group** acquired France's Champagne J. de Telmont in October 2020. Now after a rebranding and renaming, Rmy Cointreau is unveiling Telmont as its new Champagne brand with a laser focus on sustainable production and organic offerings.

"We hope that Telmont's legacy will be that of a true pioneer in holding the industry accountable for a more sustainable future," said Ludovic du Plessis, president and shareholder of **Telmont**, Paris. "A significant part of the French ethos is honoring our traditions, and we are holding ourselves accountable to ensure the craft of Champagne and winemaking continues, sustainably, for many generations to come."

Telmont and *terre*

Champagne de Telmont was founded in 1912 in Damery, France by Henri Lhopital. His great-grandson Bertrand will continue working closely on the vineyard, sourcing and production with Rmy Cointreau and Mr. du Plessis, who most recently served as global executive director for Louis XIII.

Telmont has prioritized preserving biodiversity, and in 2017 received its first organic certification for a portion of its vineyards. More than 70 percent of it the estate's 24.5 hectares are now certified in organic production or in the process of conversion.



Ludovic du Plessis helped led the Rmy Cointreau acquisition of Telmont. Image credit: Telmont

"Organic and sustainable production is vital to preserving land in Champagne," Mr. du Plessis said. "In order to continue the tradition of winemaking for years to come, implementing sustainable practices is crucial."

As a family-owned house, Telmont had previously only been available in France. With the support Rmy Cointreau, the brand will have a more global presence with a significant investment in the United States.

"The ambition is to develop the Telmont brand, particularly outside of France, while protecting its master craftsmanship and focusing on organic agriculture at a time when only 3 percent of Champagne vineyards are certified for organic production," Mr. du Plessis said. "The house will thus remain true to its motto, *Nec Pluribus Impar*' Unlike any other."

Telmont is the first Champagne brand to be part of Rmy Cointreau since the group sold the Piper-Heidsieck and Charles Heidsieck brands in 2011.

"Recognizing Telmont's unfailing commitment to the respect of its terroir, the Rmy Cointreau Group identified with the values of the Telmont and decided to join forces," Mr. du Plessis said. "Much like the Rmy Cointreau Group, Telmont is a house with character, boasting a legacy of craftsmanship and a strong ambition.

"Together, we are poised to become the standard bearer of a new relationship with nature, having one foot rooted in tradition, one in modernity and both feet on, and in, the earth," he said.

In its introduction to global consumers, Telmont will emphasize its ambitious eco-responsible project. In *Nomine Terrae, In the Name of Mother Nature*, focuses on five pillars: land and biodiversity preservation, eco-design, green energy, logistics and traceability.

"We are breaking the traditional codes of Champagne," Mr. du Plessis said. "Our objective is to reduce our environmental footprint at every stage, from the production to the distribution."

As part of its goals, Telmont is aiming to convert 100 percent of its estate to organic certification by 2025. The brand will also support its partner winegrowers responsible for 56.5 hectares in their shift towards organic agriculture, with 39 percent of vineyards already certified or in conversion.

Telmont is also rejecting the use and production of outer packaging and gift boxes as part of its commitment to sustainability. The brand is also ceasing production of transparent bottles, which had accounted for 15 percent of all bottles, in favor of solely using green bottles, which are 100 percent recyclable and made with 85 percent recycled glass.



Telmont has set a goal for 100 percent of its winegrower partners to be certified in organic agriculture by 2031. Image credit: Telmont

Additionally, each Telmont bottle will be numbered with new labels that allow for improved traceability and transparency, providing information on the Champagne's composition and winemaking process.

The house's current offerings include a Sans Soufre sourced exclusively from its original vineyard, Rserve Brut, Blanc de Blancs, Blanc de Noirs and other Champagne blends.

"The wines have a unique personality, presence, complexity and maturity, all the while preserving a remarkable ethereality," Mr. du Plessis said. "Telmont's style is defined by its tension and its freshness."

Toasting to sustainability

Telmont's commitment to sustainability mirrors the reputation Rmy Cointreau is building.

In fall 2020, the group was named Le Point magazine's most responsible French company in the agrifood sector, and 26th globally, based on social, environmental and governance criteria. Rmy Cointreau also received an "A-" rating from the Carbon Disclosure Project, higher than C average for Europe's food and beverage sector.

"The earth is the priority for us and our focus is on preserving our earth, our planet," Mr. du Plessis said.

According to the IWSR's Global Trends 2020 report, organic wine and spirits are a growth opportunity for the industry.

Post-pandemic, health-conscious consumers will likely opt for higher-quality spirits on the occasions they choose to indulge. The organic wine market should see continued interest from these drinkers, with the top markets being Germany, France, the United Kingdom, the U.S., Sweden and Japan ([see story](#)).

Other Champagne brands have also touted their environmental practices in recent marketing efforts.

LVMH's Veuve Clicquot recently shared the twists and turns of the Champagne-making process in a 10-part series. Each chapter of "The Ride" is about 90 seconds long and touches on various steps of the winemaking process, but with an emphasis on sustainability, savoir-faire and tradition ([see story](#)).

After its debut as part of the Rmy Cointreau portfolio, Telmont plans to let its Champagne and its eco-responsible strategy speak for itself. The brand's [YouTube page](#) includes several vignettes highlighting Telmont's heritage and dedication to the environment.

"If our wine is good, and our project 'In the Name of Mother Nature' is sensible, our clients will wish to share it with their circles," said Telmont's Mr. du Plessis. "We believe in word of mouth."

"We believe our project is very meaningful and speaks for itself, and we naturally wish to share it," he said. "Everything we do must be meaningful and have a purpose."