



CHAMPAGNE
HILLSIDES, HOUSES
& CELLARS

NOMINATION FOR INSCRIPTION ON
THE 2015 WORLD HERITAGE LIST

OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE DECLARATION

In north-east France, on cool, chalky land, frequently devastated by wars, the Champagne Hillsides, Houses and Cellars form a very specific agro-industrial landscape, with the vineyards, as the supply basin, and villages and urban districts concentrating the production and trading functions. The imperatives of Champagne wine production have resulted in an original, three-pronged organisation, based on functional town planning, prestigious architecture and an underground heritage.

This agro-industrial system, which has structured not only the landscape but also the local economy and daily life, is the outcome of a long process of development, technical and social innovations, and industrial and commercial transformations which speeded up the transition from an artisanal crop to mass production of a good sold around the world.

Women and the Franco-German heirs of the old Champagne fairs played a special role in this evolution, which has its roots in Hautvillers, among the hills of Aÿ, the heart of the wine-growing sector. In the 18th and 19th centuries, it then spread to the two nearest towns, to Saint-Nicaise Hill in Reims and to Avenue de Champagne in Épernay, which were entirely built on the wine-growing activity of Champagne.

The three ensembles that make up the Property embody the Champagne terroir and serve as a living environment, a working environment and a showcase for traditional know-how. This is the place where the benchmark Champagne method («méthode champenoise») was born, a method that would spread and be copied across the world from the 19th century up to the present day. Champagne is a product of excellence, renowned as the universal symbol of festiveness, celebration and reconciliation.



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CRITÈRES PROPOSÉS POUR L'INSCRIPTION

CRITERION (III):

The Champagne Hillsides, Houses and Cellars are the outcome of expertise perfected over the generations, of exemplary inter-professional organization and of the protection of the appellation, as well as the development of inter-cultural relations and social innovations over a long period of time.

Through the development of traditional knowhow, the people of Champagne have overcome a number of obstacles both in the vineyards (a harsh climate and rather infertile chalky soils) and in the wine-making process, through their mastery of sparkling wine production techniques, in assembly and bottling. Over the centuries, the people of Champagne have constantly strived for technological innovation not only in wine-growing and making but also in the related professions and industries, to reach an extremely high level of quality. The balance between wine-growers and the Champagne Houses led to the development of a pioneering inter-professional structure that is still active today.

The history of Champagne is marked by a very clear international outlook. For example, the British played a significant role in technological development (glass industry and the railway) and in changes to taste. The Germans brought their entrepreneurial spirit and trade networks. Women have also played a key role, whether famous widows of the big Houses or lesser-known female wine-growers. Patronage has also been a source of social innovations, the greatest emblem of which is the Chemin Vert garden city in Reims.

CRITERION (IV)

As the legacy of wine-growing and wine-making practices perfected over the centuries, production in Champagne is founded on its supply basin (the vineyards), its processing sites (the vendangeoirs where grapes are pressed and the cellars) and its sales and distribution centres (the headquarters of the Houses). These various elements are functionally intertwined and intrinsically linked to the chalky substratum, where the vines grow, which is easy to hollow out and which is also found in the architecture.

The production process specific to Champagne, based on secondary fermentation in the bottle, required a vast network of cellars, linked to the transport infrastructure. In Reims, the use of the former Gallo-Roman and medieval chalk quarries, and the digging of suitable cellars in Épernay or on the hillsides, lead to the formation of an exceptional underground landscape —the hidden side of Champagne.

As Champagne has been exported around the world since the 18th century, trade development resulted in a special kind of town planning. The sites included in the Property are particularly representative of this. With rationalisation and representation as their goal, new districts were built around the production and sales buildings, and the remarkable underground heritage, closely linked to the vineyards and to transport routes.

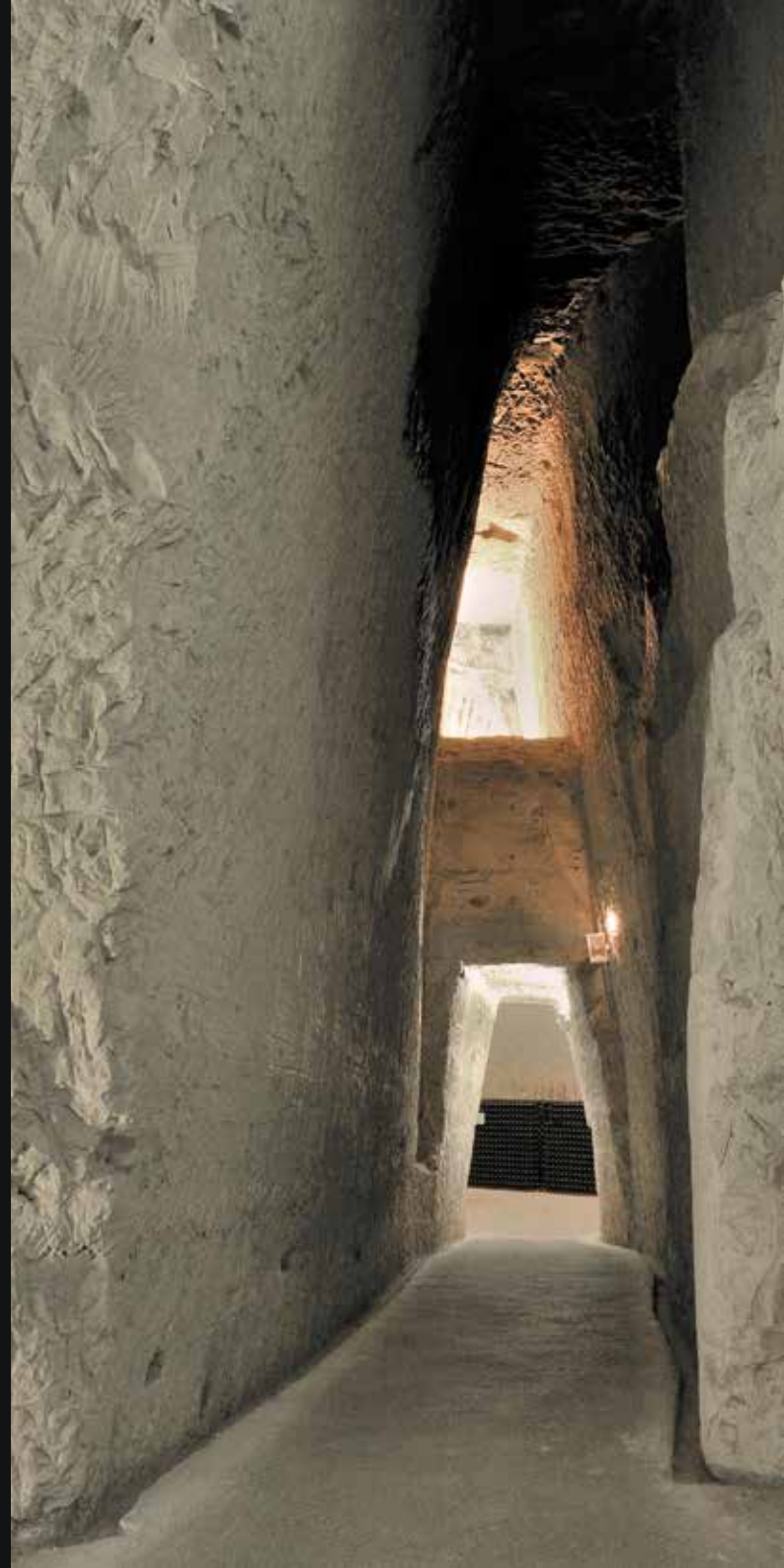
CRITERION (VI)

Champagne has a unique symbolic image across the world. Among sparkling wines, Champagne remains the universal benchmark both in terms of brand awareness and prestige.

From the time it was first commercialised, in the 18th century, it was associated with the elite, with the royal and imperial European courts, and with the French art of living. While maintaining its image of excellence, Champagne became more accessible over the 20th century and underwent changes to the ideas it embodies. It became the symbol of festiveness and celebration, of reconciliation and victory (particularly in sport).

Literature, painting, caricatures, posters, music, cinema, photography and even comics all testify to the influence and the constancy of this unique wine's image, which also conveys that of France.





INTEGRITY AND AUTHENTICITY

The Property includes the most representative and best conserved elements, testifying to the birth, production and spread of Champagne, through symbiotic functional and territorial organisation.

The entire Property has recovered from wars, the phylloxera crisis and the wine-growers' revolts. It has constantly been rebuilt and maintained. The hillside villages, limited by the topography and high value of the vineyards, remain well conserved within their original limits. Landscape and plots have changed very little and the built heritage is still in good condition.

Although it was bombed during the First World War, Saint-Nicaise Hill was restored and has maintained its function, its architectural value and its role as a kind of green belt. The buildings were rebuilt exactly as they were before. The chalk quarries are still used in Champagne production. They are well maintained and often enhanced, and many of them are open to the public.

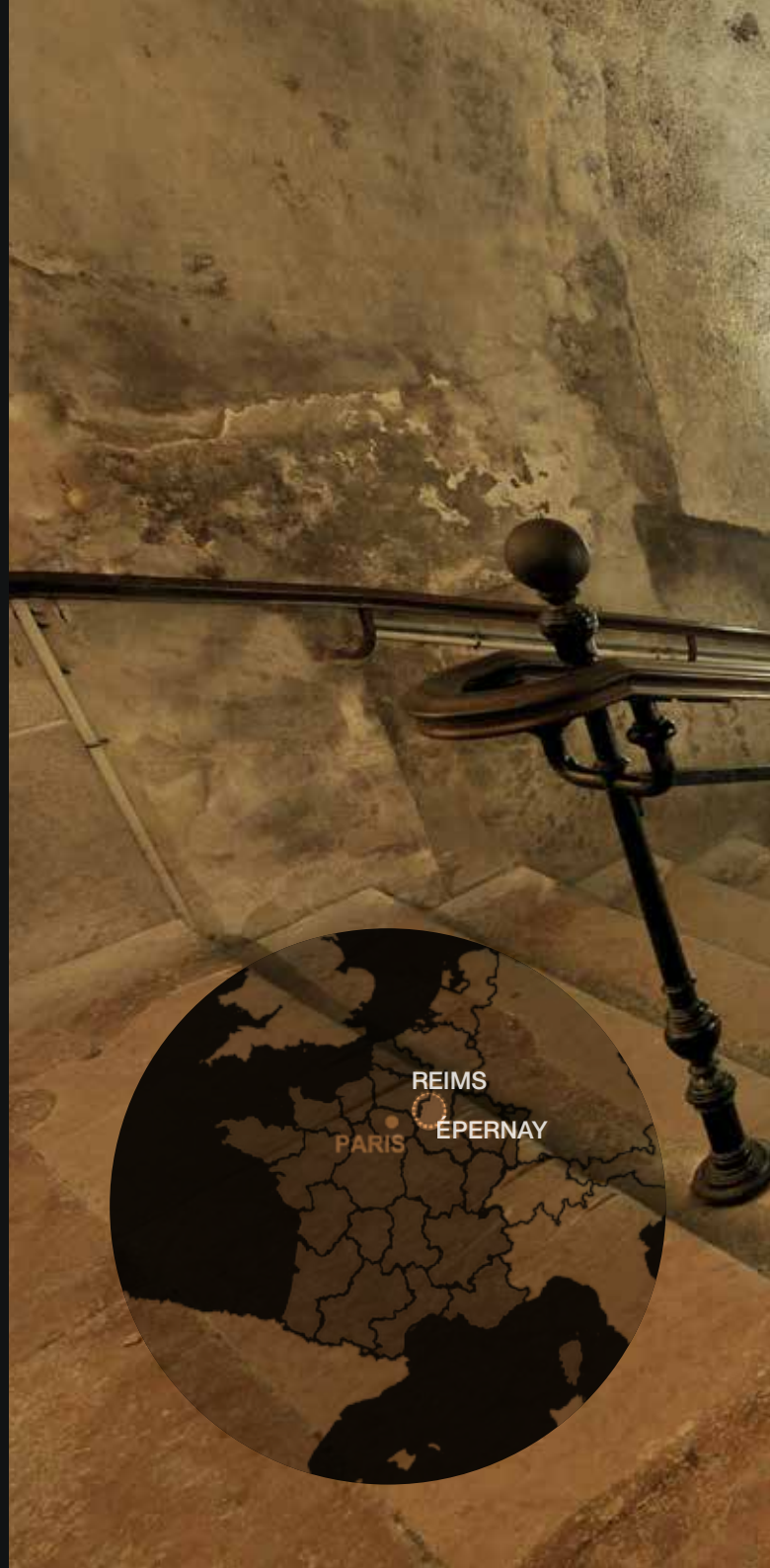
Recent requalification of the public space on Avenue de Champagne has gone hand in hand with a major renovation programme covering the buildings that line the avenue. The network of cellars is well conserved and still perfectly operational.

There is a vast amount of documentation concerning the Property. The Champagne Houses,

public inventory services and the Inter-Professional Champagne Wine Committee all have considerable archives. At the time of nomination, an inventory of the architectural heritage was carried out and an initial listing of the cellars was undertaken. A study of 16th century engravings, along with a comparison of panoramic views from 1887 with the current environment based on a field survey, show that the landscape has changed very little.

As was the case across Europe, phylloxera decimated the vines. The replanting of grafted, trellised vines, to replace ungrafted, bulk vines, did not lead to much visible change, although it does bear witness to this major crisis in wine-growing history. Some pre-phylloxera vines remain in the enclosed urban vineyards.

The hillsides of Hautvillers, Aÿ and Mareuil-sur-Aÿ have exported their wine continuously for at least 4 centuries and testify to the wine-growing monoculture based on the oldest form of external trade in Champagne. The Champagne Houses have ensured the safeguard of their architectural heritage, including the original decor and furniture, or have otherwise reconstructed it. After the First World War and the wine-growers' revolt in 1911, some buildings were devastated and then either rebuilt exactly as they were before, apart from a few exceptions, or otherwise rebuilt to a new model and thus today provide significant examples of Art Deco architecture.





MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION

The Property benefits from a comprehensive protection scheme, applying the tools provided by regulations, contracts, land management and heritage-listing and backed by French and European legislation.

Other tools have been adopted to strengthen this scheme, for example: designated Aires de mise en Valeur de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine (AVAP) area —zones recognized as enhancing architecture and heritage—, one on the historical hillside sites and another on Saint-Nicaise Hill; a site listed under French environmental legislation on the buffer zone of the the

historical hillside; and protective measures under the historical monument legislation covering Avenue de Champagne.

The boundaries of the official Champagne appellation, comprising over 300 towns and villages, has been defined as a “commitment zone” within the management system. Here the local communities, the wine-growing profession and other stakeholders undertake, on a voluntary basis, to conserve and enhance their landscape and heritage. This commitment zone constitutes the setting and surroundings of the Property, and is also a coherent historical and geographic ensemble, embodied by the Property and without which its value cannot be understood.

It allows for the implementation of extended management and ensures actions taken to enhance the landscape, heritage and the environmental are consistent with one another.

To ensure effective conservation of the OUV, a management structure has been set up, bringing together public and private stakeholders, project managers and representative bodies. The management plan for the Champagne Hillsides, Houses and Cellars is a tool for regional development as well as for protection. It incorporates the overall framework associated with the history of the Property and its territory as it is both conceived and experienced.

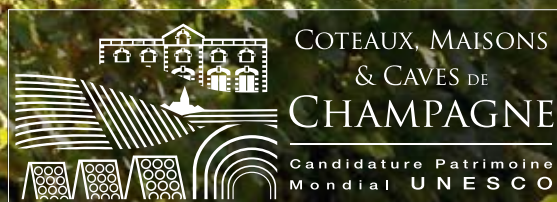
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