

## A toast to the market for champagne in Japan

### Yomiuri Shimbun's series on luxury brands

As part of their series on the world's top luxury brands, Yomiuri Shimbun Staff Writer Fuyuki Hiraishi interviewed Frederic Cumenal, president and CEO of Moët & Chandon.



Born in Bordeaux, France, in 1959 Frederic Cumenal graduated from Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris, Ecole Supérieure des Sciences Economiques et Commerciales and Harvard Business School. In 1995, he joined Moët & Chandon and has been in his current post since January 2004. According to historical records, the first Moët & Chandon shipments to Japan took place in 1905--300 bottles to Osaka and 250 bottles to Kobe. In this excerpt Frederic Cumenal discusses the market in Japan and his luxury brand.

*What is your view of the Japanese market?*

In Asia, the Japanese market is particularly important to us. Indeed, in Asia, the Japanese market is the most

accommodative to European culture, while Japan has a sophisticated culture of its own.

In the last 15 years, we have made plenty of investment in Japan. As a result, we have seen Japan's consumption of Moët & Chandon champagne increase constantly. Even young Japanese people find that our luxurious champagne is on the same wavelength with them.

*Do you expect champagne to penetrate further into the Japanese market?*

I think Japan is a country that has diverse dietary culture. As French cuisine has a great variety of styles, Japanese cuisine has a huge variety of delicacies, too. I visit Japan two or three times a year. I have found tuna sashimi perfectly matches with rose champagne. Matsutake mushrooms and fugu blowfish go so well with the Dom Pérignon champagne, one of the star brands of the Moët & Chandon portfolio, while tempura really tastes good with the Moët & Chandon Brut Imperial champagne. It's true that the delicacy of champagne is harmonious with Japanese cuisine.

*How can you blend your house's tradition with the change of the times?*

I like sumo very much, but I don't want the rikishi who wins a grand sumo tournament to toast his victory with a glass of champagne. It is their tradition to toast with sake.

Of course, we continue to be inspired by Japanese culture. It is no exaggeration to say that we are being cultivated by Japanese culture. We are serious about preserving tradition while making future-oriented studies.

*What strategy is your company employing to build up your brand?*

Frederic Cumenal: There is a luxurious, splendid, dazzling and marvelous time Moet & Chandon alone can realize. We define it as a "fabulous" occasion. In late 2005, we launched a worldwide "Be Fabulous" campaign, enticing people to "make a marvelous time more marvelous together with Moet & Chandon." This campaign has turned out to be extremely successful in the global marketplace.

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<http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/features/culture/20080420TDY05001.htm>