



LOUIS ROEDERER
CHAMPAGNE

The 50th anniversary of the creation
of CRISTAL ROSÉ



1974-2024. HALF A CENTURY HAS PASSED.

50 years of reflection, evolution and transformation;

50 intense harvests, sometimes provident, sometimes more challenging.

50 years of listening and observing, close to the vineyards and Nature.

50 years of learning, evolving, innovating and progressing.

50 years of silence and wonder, joy and success.

A single *cuvée* endures,
each time “re-enchanted”:
Cristal Rosé.

Chapter 1: 1974-1997.
In the beginning, the quest for ultimate finesse

- The turning point in 1974
- The first vineyard plot selections
- The first step towards a new technique: infusion

Chapter 2: 1998-2006.
The full power of the terroir

- Perfecting the infusion technique
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- Evolving winegrowing practices and the terroir effect

Chapter 3: 2007-2017.
The gentle infusion revolution

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- In the vanguard of massal selection, “In Vinifera aeternitas”
- Continuous experimentation
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“Cristal Rosé reveals
a breathtaking expression
in a feather-light body.”

1974-1997.

In the beginning,
the quest for
ultimate finesse

THE TURNING POINT IN 1974

A masterpiece from the Louis Roederer Champagne House, Cristal Rosé is an ode to lightness and refinement. Like a great perfume, this champagne is crafted like an essence, with softly nuanced fragrances that reveal a breathtaking expression in a feather-light body.

Created by Jean-Claude Rouzaud in 1974, Cristal Rosé was an instant hit with wine connoisseurs.

An emanation of Cristal, this iconic champagne pushes the boundaries of fragrance, energy and texture, taking concentration and finesse to new levels. Jean-Claude Rouzaud, then in charge of the vineyards and cellars, quickly recognised the importance of putting the vines back at the centre of the creative process. He identified and selected iconic plots of Pinot noir in Aÿ and Chardonnay in Avize and Le Mesnil-sur-Oger, and created the first Cristal Rosé blend with the 1974 harvest.

His intuition laid the foundations for a long evolution, introducing a daring method known as “infusion”, which would soon become the main thread running through the production of Cristal Rosé.



THE FIRST VINEYARD PLOT SELECTIONS

Nicknamed the “Musigny of Champagne”, the Bonottes area in Aÿ is the heart of Domaine Cristal. Its limestone ridges produce well-textured, juicy Pinot noirs with vibrant aromas and a beautiful balance of finesse and concentration.

It was in this area that the first plots of the earliest ripening Pinot noir - Bonotte Pierre Robert, Gargeotte and Côte du Moulin - were selected for Cristal Rosé.

A few years later, these same historic plots would be the source of our massal selection vines.

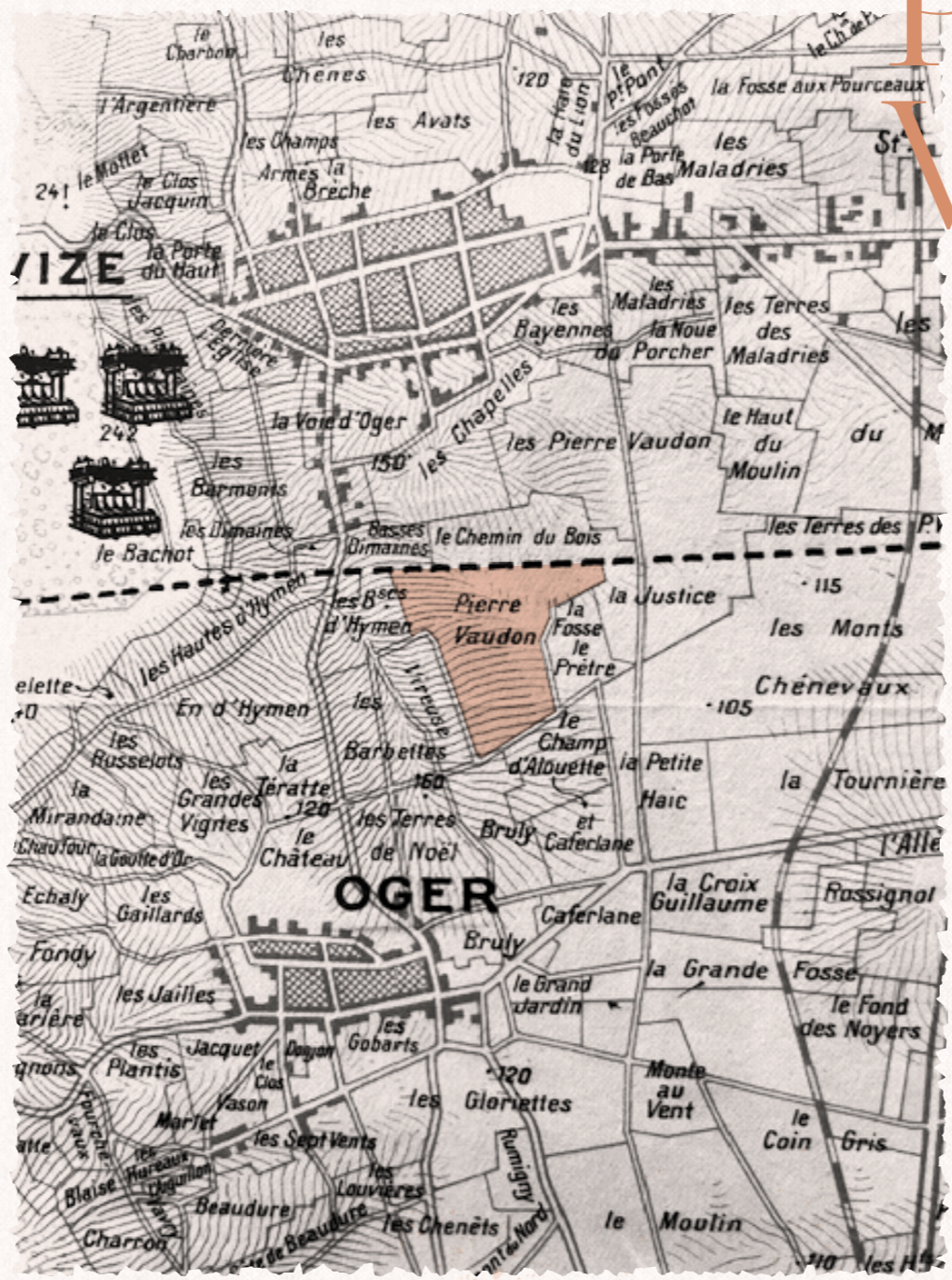
To contrast and refine the aromas of these exceptionally concentrated Pinot noirs, they were combined with the later ripening, chalkiest and most saline Chardonnays, picked at the end of the harvest in the Montmartin (Mesnil-sur-Oger) and Pierre Vaudon (Avize) vineyards.



La Villers



Pierre Vaudon





THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS A NEW TECHNIQUE: INFUSION

The first vintage of Cristal Rosé was a skilful blend of contrasts hailing from Champagne Louis Roederer's oldest and best-exposed vineyard plots. It was also the result of a special, pioneering method, gentle infusion, which would later become the hallmark of this champagne.

Infusion is a new concept in the world of rosé champagne production: to extract the very best aromatic precursors contained in the grape skins, a quick and careful extraction of the Pinot noir grapes is carried out, during the liquid phase, without mechanical intervention, using only the osmotic pressure of the grape juice. This first step preserves all the delicate Pinot noir aromas without the risk of extracting tannins that might come through too aggressively in contact with alcohol. The juices are then “bled” (i.e. removed from contact with the skins) and blended with the Chardonnay juices before the aromas are released during the alcoholic fermentation stage.

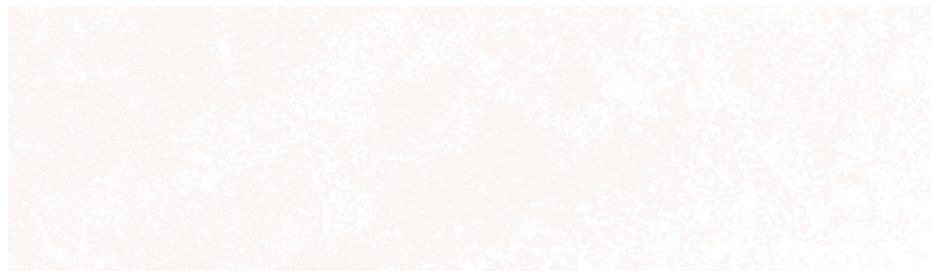
This revolutionary process has since been perfected and today, more than ever, it is the identity of Cristal Rosé.

1998-2006.

The full power
of the terroir

PERFECTING THE INFUSION TECHNIQUE

From the mid-1990s onwards, as a result of climate change, the maturities intensified and the grapes became more concentrated. Short infusions, lasting one or two days at high temperatures (25-30°C), were gradually giving way to lower-temperature infusions (18-26°C), as the grapes' substance and colour were being extracted more easily. The goal was also to minimise oxidation of the juices to preserve as much aromatic finesse as possible. The juices were therefore protected by CO₂ during the infusion phase, which was extended to 3-4 days. It was a balancing act enabled and supported by our technical resources and years of careful thought.



PREPARING FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

At the turn of the millennium, we realised that climate change was starting to have an impact and that new plant material was needed. Long committed to sustainable and responsible growing practices, Champagne Louis Roederer therefore began its important yet quiet evolution. For this reason, in 1998, a plot known as “La Villers”, located higher up on the Aÿ hillside, was replanted with young vines derived from massal selection, after being left fallow for several years. This was the beginning of a continuous redefinition of the plots destined for Cristal Rosé.

The rigorous selection of the best vines from Cristal Rosé’s historic vineyards was based on massal selections that produce low yields and dense grapes with more concentrated aromas.

This fine-tuning creates a ballet in constant transformation:
a vine nurtured with patience and a gently tilled soil that produces bright,
flawless and vibrant fruit.



EVOLVING WINEGROWING PRACTICES AND THE TERROIR EFFECT



At the same time, in 2006, Domaine Cristal began a transition to regenerative organic growing, starting with the Domaine Cristal Rosé plots. This new practice amplifies the terroir effect: the vines are more balanced, the yields are lower and the grapes ripen better, producing juices that are more concentrated and richer in substance and mineral salts. This change in viticulture was a major turning point in the history of Cristal Rosé, as the wine expresses more fragrance, nuances and energy thanks to a better expression of its terroir.

2007-2017.

The gentle infusion revolution

GENTLE INFUSION, A REVOLUTIONARY AND PIONEERING TECHNIQUE

The aromatic expression of Cristal Rosé was already wonderfully enhanced by the infusion technique used since its creation, but we wanted to go further by separating the two phases of infusion and fermentation with even greater precision.

Jean-Baptiste Lécaillon, our cellar and vineyard manager since 1999, has continued to perfect the technique, inspired by the work of the great Japanese tea masters who have mastered the art of preparing and infusing tea leaves to extract even fresher, cleaner and brighter flavours. For almost 25 years, this continuous process of reflection has guaranteed even greater purity in the infusion.



In 2008, a new experimental winery was built, equipped with state-of-the-art equipment to prepare the grapes for infusion with even greater precision. The grapes are harvested in small racks and then quickly cooled, slowing the oxidation process and preserving the intensity and purity of the original fruit. They are then carefully sorted to eliminate any under-ripe or weather-damaged grapes; stalks, stems and leaves are all removed, and the grapes are “pinched” as they go into the vat to release the juice needed for the infusion. Protected from oxidation, the infusions become gentler and longer, lasting for up to 6 or 7 days before being “bled” and blended with the Chardonnay juices.

While the infusion has become gentler, the fermentation itself has been reinvented to be more dynamic, tumultuous and expressionistic: the yeasts reveal the aromas with a clean, firm and precise stroke while developing a velvety, perfectly smooth texture and a saline finish; champagne at its best!



THE TURNING POINT OF THE 2008 VINTAGE

The gentle infusion process was introduced in 2008. The resulting juices became more fragrant, fresher and brighter in colour. The aromas now fully capture the freshness of the fruit and the ageing potential of the wine has been extended.



The year 2008 was both a pivotal year and one of triumph: that of a legendary vintage, undoubtedly one of the greatest Cristal Rosé vintages ever produced, and that of a change in the nature of the infusion and paradigm. Helped by the beauty of the year and the changes made in viticulture and vinification, Cristal Rosé 2008 remains a landmark vintage in the history of this champagne.





REPLANTING HISTORIC PLOTS

The Cristal Rosé vineyard plots are tended like a garden, they are a laboratory of ideas and innovations from which the Champagne House's great viticultural advances germinate.

In 2016, a vineyard replanting programme was launched to ensure the future of Cristal Rosé; La Gargeotte was replanted with Cristal Rosé massal selections. This work in the vineyards was the beginning of a long process of experimentation by Champagne Louis Roederer, designed to preserve its plant heritage.

This heritage management is an integral part of the long-term development plan for our wines. Cristal's identity is unique and stands apart within the history of fine wines from the Champagne region.

2017-2024.

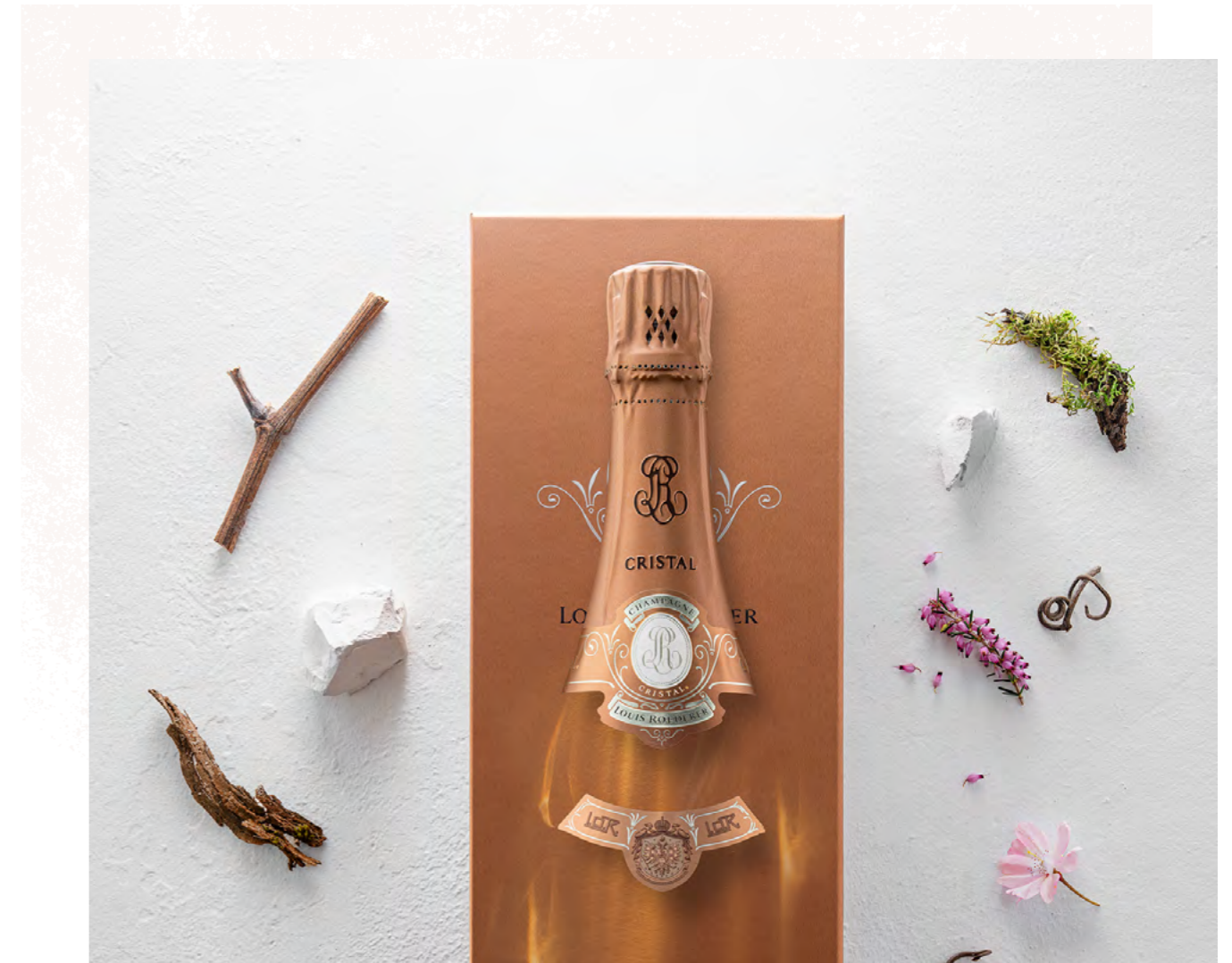
An ever-changing
story

AN ODE TO THE PRESERVATION OF PLANT HERITAGE

The history of Cristal Rosé is intertwined with that of the Louis Roederer Champagne House and its various transformations over the years.

50 years ago, the plots selected for the Cristal Rosé blend were those with the oldest vines, producing perfectly ripe grapes. The very existence of this new champagne meant that these historic vines could be preserved and, a few years later, used for massal selections.

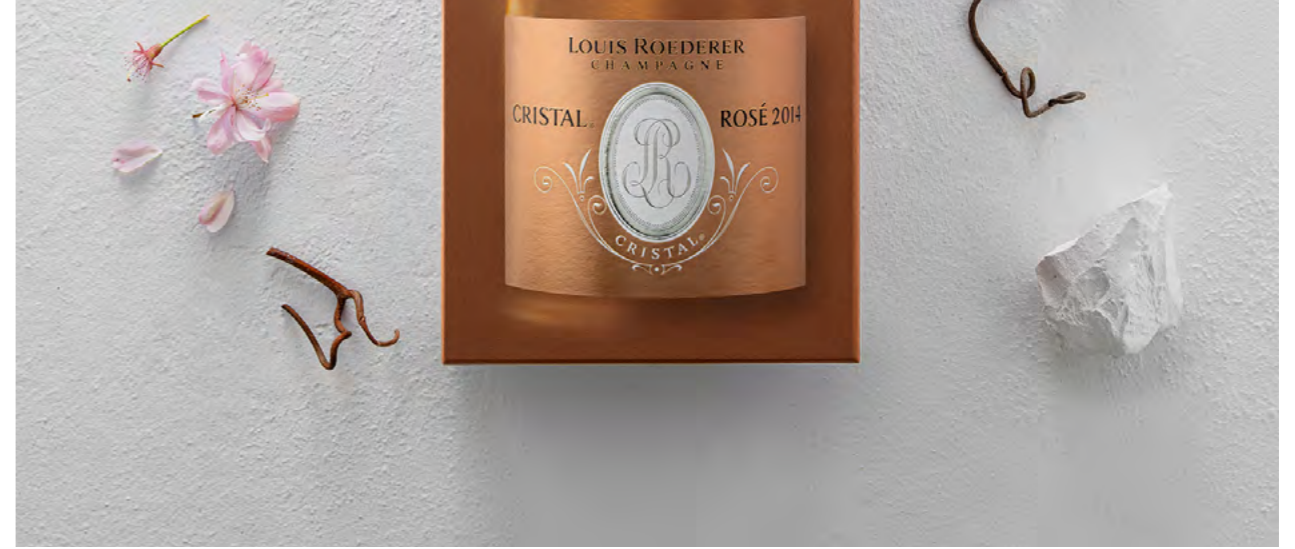
Today, we are convinced that we must maintain a conservatory of plants and practices in order to preserve a legacy and a plant heritage that can be passed on to future generations. Cristal Rosé has therefore played a key role in the history of the Champagne House.



IN THE VANGUARD OF MASSAL SELECTION, “VINIFERA ÆTERNITAS”

The Champagne House's credo has always been to work hand in hand with nature and to use the most responsible practices: preserving the genetic diversity of the vines utilising mass selection, growing the rootstock - the plant on which the vine is grafted - directly on the Domaines (the skilled work of a nurseryman in its own right), pruning to respect the sap flow, the maintenance of hedgerows and stone walls, the installation of beehives, the planting of fruit trees (old varieties of peach, pear and apple trees), the alternation of cultivation and fallowing, and the preservation of the vineyard plots as the geological patchwork that they are.

2018 marked an important milestone in the preservation of our legacy and plant heritage. It took 20 years for the vines of La Villers, planted in 1998, to develop their root system deep in the limestone bedrock. As of the 2018 vintage, La Villers has become the heart of the Pinot noirs destined for Cristal Rosé.



In 2021, the Bonotte Pierre Robert plot was replanted with a higher density and larger foliar hedges to further concentrate the aromas of the grapes. The selected vines have also benefited from the Louis Roederer team's extensive massal selection work, producing grapes that are smaller but loose enough to prolong the ripening process.

As you may recall, at the end of the 1990s, the Rouzaud family and Jean-Baptiste Lécaillon undertook a review of their viticultural methods for the coming years. "We had to regenerate the plant material and recover some of the uniqueness of our style through massal selection," says Jean-Baptiste Lécaillon.

Champagne Louis Roederer used the old pre-clonal vines on Domaine Cristal, planted before the 1960s, to create plant conservatories and an in-house nursery. In 2015, a collection of 112 healthy specimens was assembled and the same work is currently being carried out on the rootstocks.

Anticipating a change of era and paradigm, Cristal Rosé has enabled the emergence of these responsible practices and underpinned Champagne Louis Roederer's constant quest for quality.





CONTINUOUS EXPERIMENTATION

Cristal Rosé is ushering in a new era, foreshadowing a new age and a radical change in the way we work and in the way we look at and support nature... Today, the know-how endures while the vintages just keep coming, each one revealing a new facet of the vineyard plots, always uncovering another unexplored side, to offer drinkers the very best of the Champagne region.

In the cellar, this quest for excellence is reflected in the precision of the infusions, which are constantly evolving to create even crisper and more aromatic wines.

Each new vintage reveals the character of Cristal, but each time through a different lens, like a kaleidoscope of flavours and textures.



THE GENIUS OF CRISTAL ROSÉ

Since 1974, Cristal Rosé has offered the purest expression of a very fine champagne with a unique energy, a captivating presence and great finesse: the absolute mastery and foundation of a fine Champagne wine destined for long cellar-ageing.

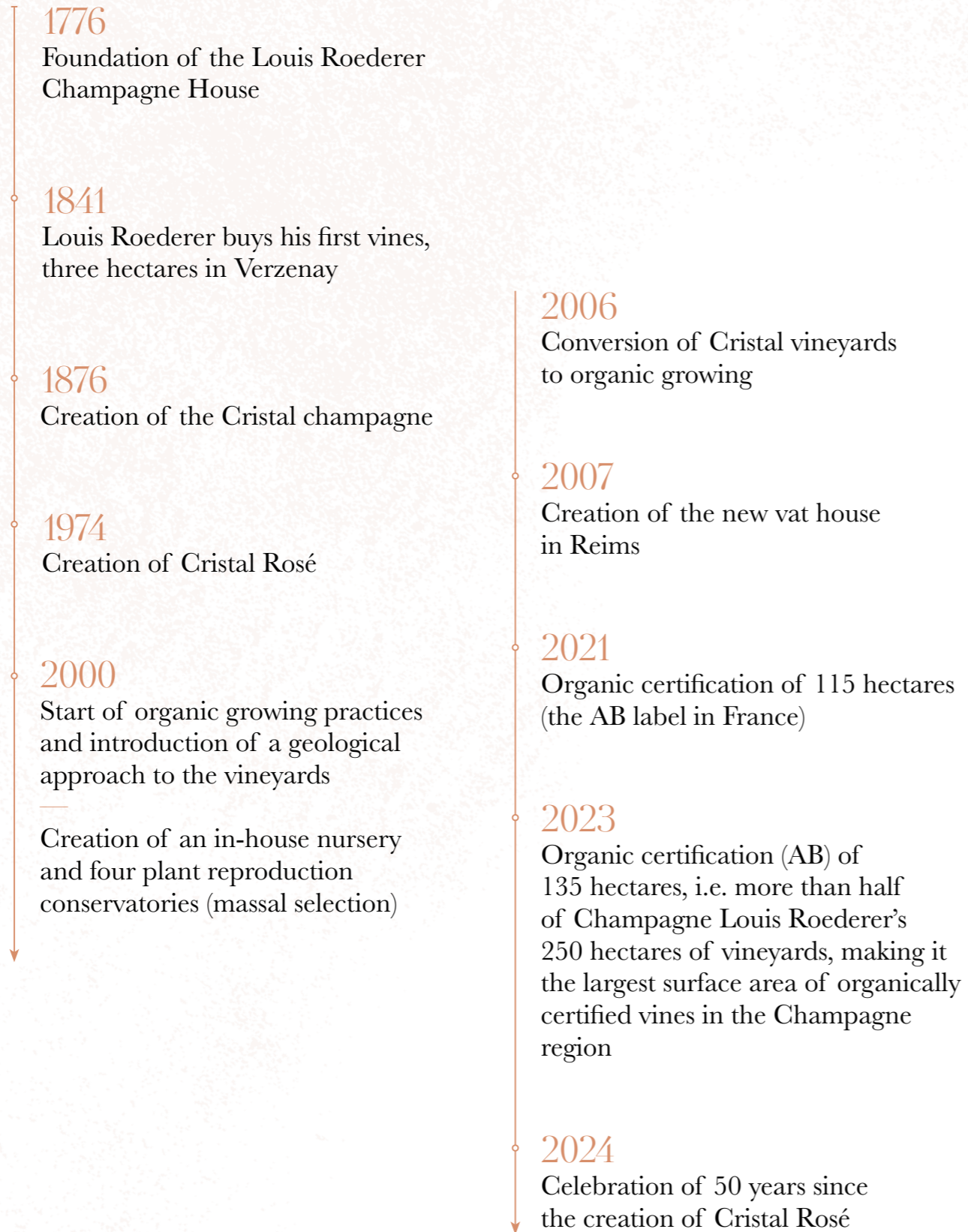
Cristal Rosé is a very fine champagne in which the chalk is at its purest, combined with a gentle infusion to create a unique energy, refinement and a powdery texture of ultimate finesse.

Fresh and extremely precise, Cristal Rosé reveals a complex spectrum of flavours ranging from wild peaches to wild berries. It is a silky, ethereal wine of great aromatic purity with hints of stone and red fruit, a piercing salinity and a captivating silkiness: a virtuoso Champagne that radiates tension and truth.



This ever-changing story of Cristal Rosé parallels that of the Louis Roederer Champagne House itself, creating a constant dialogue between the vineyard and the cellar. Jean-Claude Rouzaud was the first to recognise the importance of this reciprocal relationship and laid the foundations for a continuous reinterpretation.

The quest for excellence and the fine-tuning of techniques have continued to this day, constantly enhancing the precision and finesse of the wines. It is this artful cross-fertilisation, this constant back-and-forth between the reality of the vineyard and the creative freedom of the winemaking, that makes this family-owned Champagne House so unique.



The Cristal Rosé vintages produced during its half-century of existence:

1974, 1975, 1976, 1978,
1981, 1982, 1983, 1985, 1988, 1989,
1990, 1995, 1996, 1999,
2000, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009,
2012, 2013, 2014

CRISTAL®

LOUIS ROEDERER
CHAMPAGNE

#CristalChampagne

Photos : @Louis Roederer / Emmanuel & Quentin