



COGNAC PRUNIER

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PRUNIER AGE STATEMENT COGNACS – INFORMATION PACK

Prunier and ‘La Vieille Maison’ (The Old House)

A happy coincidence or a twist of fate? The tale of two ‘Vieilles Maisons’.

With a history that can be traced back to Jean Prunier, who was shipping his wines and eaux-de-vie across the world as early as 1701, the Maison Prunier is one of the oldest cognac houses, earning the affectionate nickname of ‘*La Vieille Maison*’ (The Old House) in the town of Cognac.

Prunier is also the proprietor of the oldest residence in Cognac, La Maison de la Lieutenance, built around 1490 in the rue Grande at the heart of the old town and also known locally as ‘*La Vieille Maison*’. This historic building – the only half-timbered house in Cognac still in its original condition - has been the symbol of the Prunier brand for over a century.



The House was originally constructed as the private residence of a wealthy merchant in the wine and salt trade, which was the mainstay of the town in the 15th century, for cognac the spirit we know today would not come into existence for at least another 100 years. But in 1603 Pierre de Lacombe, the new Lieutenant-General of Cognac appointed by the King, decided to make the House his residence and thus the seat of government, giving the house the official name it still bears of ‘Maison de la Lieutenance’.

Ideally situated on the main street of Cognac at the time, between the royal château overlooking the river and the Church of St Léger higher up in town, the House placed the Lieutenant-General at the centre of life in Cognac, from where he could observe the movements of the inhabitants and tax the goods arriving for sale in the nearby market.

During his stay, Pierre de Lacombe embellished the House with many fine decorations, including the painted wooden ceiling and the colourful murals in the rooms, tangible signs of his high office and power over the town.

MAISON PRUNIER S.A., B.P. 70033, 7, AVENUE MARECHAL LECLERC - 30, RUE LEONCE LAVAL, 16102 COGNAC CEDEX

TEL. 33 (0)5 45 35 00 14 - FAX 33 (0)5 45 35 39 41

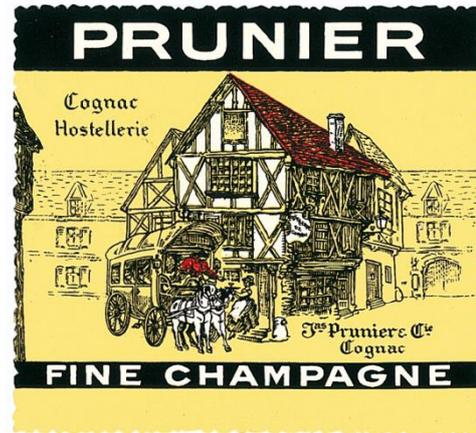
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After de Lacombe's departure, the House was for over 250 years a coaching inn, serving food and drink to travellers on the ground floor, with accommodation above. The horses were also catered for, as evidenced by the large drinking trough in the courtyard.

In the late 19th century the House reverted to being a private residence, whose owners were known by the Prunier family. An agreement was struck allowing Prunier to use the 'Vieille Maison' motif on bottle labels and in advertising for the brand.

Finally in 1971 the House was sold to Prunier by the owner – a cobbler by trade, who worked downstairs and lived above – on his retirement.

The House is now open to the public and a major attraction for the many tourists in Cognac.



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