



Louis Roederer Turns 250

September 1, 2026 | By Fran Edicott Miller

This year, as the United States celebrates its 250th anniversary, one of France's most celebrated Champagne Houses is marking a milestone of its own. **Louis Roederer** was established in Reims in 1776, the same year the Declaration of Independence was adopted. Two and a half centuries later, the House remains family-owned, independent, and very much in the business of making Champagne its own way.

Louis Roederer has never been particularly interested in following the crowd. Its history is filled with decisions that challenged the conventions of Champagne, from investing heavily in its own vineyards to creating **Cristal** for a Russian tsar to experimenting with organic and biodynamic-inspired farming and collaborating with contemporary artists. In other words,

250 years have given the House plenty of time to perfect its traditions. They have also given it plenty of time to break a few.



A House Built on Its Own Grapes

The Louis Roederer story began in 1776, but the man whose name is now on the bottle entered the picture later. Louis Roederer inherited the Champagne House in 1833 and quickly put his own stamp on it.

At a time when Champagne producers often relied heavily on purchased grapes, Roederer took a different approach. He began acquiring vineyards, including Grand Cru parcels, because he believed that controlling the source of the grapes was essential to making exceptional wine. In 1841, he purchased his first three hectares in Verzenay. That decision still defines Louis Roederer.

Today, the House farms approximately 250 hectares, or more than 600 acres, across 420 vineyard plots in the Montagne de Reims, Vallée de la Marne and Côte des Blancs. The vineyards are tended by hand, with an emphasis on understanding individual plots and their soils. It is a distinctly hands-on approach for a Champagne House of this scale.

Louis Roederer began organic growing practices in 2000 and converted the vineyards used for Cristal to organic farming in 2006. By 2023, 135 hectares had received French organic

certification, representing more than half of the House's vineyard holdings and making it the largest organically certified vineyard area in Champagne at the time. The philosophy is simple enough: great Champagne begins in the vineyard.



Cristal

If Louis Roederer has a calling card, it is Cristal.

The wine was created in 1876 at the request of Tsar Alexander II of Russia, a devoted Champagne drinker who wanted a bottle designed specifically for him. The result was unlike anything else in Champagne: a transparent, flat-bottomed bottle that allowed the tsar to see what was inside and, according to the House's history, made it more difficult for an assassin to conceal something beneath the bottle.

More important, it contained a wine that would become one of Champagne's most recognizable prestige cuvées. Louis Roederer describes Cristal as the first prestige cuvée in Champagne history. The bottle remains distinctive, but the real luxury is what is inside. Cristal comes from 45 Grand Cru plots covering approximately 80 hectares. The House produces it only in years when the grapes reach the required level of maturity and quality.

And 2026 happens to mark another big birthday: 150 years of Cristal. That makes this year a particularly celebratory one in Reims.

Champagne Gets a Little Artsy

Wine and art have long overlapped at Louis Roederer. The House established the Louis Roederer Foundation in 2011, supporting photography and contemporary artistic creation,

and its collaborations have included designers and artists whose work pushes beyond traditional ideas of luxury. One of the better-known examples is Philippe Starck. His collaboration with Louis Roederer helped inspire [Brut Nature](#), a Champagne created around the idea of minimal intervention and a particularly direct expression of its terroir. The project began in 2003, with Starck's creative vision influencing the wine's development. The first Brut Nature vintage was 2006.

For the 250th anniversary, Louis Roederer is taking that relationship with art in a new direction. The House has commissioned two contemporary artists, Lee Shulman and Bianca Bondi, for projects created specifically for the anniversary. Shulman's participatory work draws on intimate family photographs to create a collective portrait of the people connected to the House. Bondi has created an immersive installation inside the Hôtel Particulier, the family home in Reims.



The Family Business

There is another reason to raise a glass to 250 years: Louis Roederer is still independent and family-owned. The House is led today by CEO Frédéric Rouzaud, the sixth generation of the family to oversee the business.

Louis Roederer established the House's vineyard-focused philosophy. Camille Olry-Roederer, who led the House from 1932 to 1975, brought a distinctly modern energy to the business and helped restore its international prestige during a turbulent period. Jean-Claude Rouzaud later expanded the family's wine interests and helped develop the infusion technique associated with Cristal Rosé. Frédéric now carries that history forward

with Jean-Baptiste Lécaillon, Louis Roederer's Chef de Caves and Executive Vice President, who has played a central role in the House's vineyard and winemaking philosophy.



A Very Long View

There is something appropriate about a Champagne House celebrating 250 years at the same time the United States is doing the same. America's anniversary is a celebration of a nation that was just getting started in 1776. Louis Roederer's anniversary is a reminder of what can happen when an idea survives long enough to become a legacy. After 250 years, Louis Roederer is still raising the bar, and giving the rest of us a very good reason to raise a glass.

Photos courtesy of Louis Roederer