

Gamble that paid off

Although it was formed only a few years ago, this small company has already made a name for itself in Asia Pacific duty-free

trebled to more than 3,000 cases and with the range - Extra, Napoléon, VSOP Superior Quality and VS joining the original XO - now complete, he expects to ship between 12-15,000 cases to duty-free and domestic markets (split about 50-50) the vast majority going to Asia Pacific where the main customers are in Taiwan, China, Japan, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Cambodia and Indonesia (Bali).

The quality of Denis Charpentier's cognac has not gone unrecognised winning in the 1994 International Wine & Spirit Competition four awards (including a Gold). This year in the same competition the brand collected six awards including two Golds (one each for XO and VSOP), a Silver (for Napoléon) plus, for good measure, two trophies: the Cyril Ray Trophy for the best cognac 1995 and the Drinks International Design Trophy 1995 for the most impressive spirits presentation. There was also, incidentally, a Silver award for the company's newly launched Robert



For a small company in a fiercely competitive business, The Denis Charpentier Group has made a big impact in a short time.

Starting as a wine broker in the mid-1980s and later running his own agency, it wasn't until the early 1990s, with the wine trade wavering, that Charpentier decided to go into the high-risk business of investing in his own brand. That finally happened in 1993 with the launch of an XO cognac.

'I wanted to create a full range but I had to do it one step at a time,' says Charpentier. 'I knew success was a long-shot, a gamble, but I believed if I could come up with a bottle and packaging designed to make a strong impact and produce an exclusive product from grande champagne and very old eaux-de-vie, it was half the battle.'

During the first year, Charpentier exported a little over 1,000 cases of his brand. Last year this number had



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Top: The recently-introduced Robert Loston XO brandy

Above: The award-winning Denis Charpentier Extra

Left: The VSOP which also won an award