

The story of Denis Charpentier is like a modern Cinderella story.

Twenty years ago he was peeling potatoes in the kitchen of Gateborg's Johanna restaurant, dreaming of a better future; Now the future is here.

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When the photographer first places the crown on his head, he doesn't want to wear it. But on being told that a King is never without his crown, he smiles doubtfully but submits with royal grace and leaves it there. In the twinkling of an eye he is transformed into the Cognac king- "Le roi de Cognac" - and poses in regal majesty in the heart of Paris, Champs-Élysées. The role suits him.

A good cognac is not good enough for Denis Charpentier - he must have the best. The best quality in the best packages at the best price. It's the only choice.

It was in 1992 that he decided to make the best cognac in the world.

"If I have the ghost of a chance, I'm going to make "the Rolls Royce of cognacs", but at the right price," he said, "An elegant cognac, an XO. Just Grande Champagne and with a very old eau de vie will be right."

So he said, and so he did. Denis Charpentier is a man who enjoys a challenge.

"But I'm not a fighter," he adds, protesting that he's not the sort of man who tramples over dead bodies to get his way.

"I always aim to make my own choices. And I have chosen to go without what I don't like. I don't like unpleasant people who only think of themselves. And I despise cowards, If you want to achieve anything, you mustn't be afraid to take risks."

Denis Charpentier wasn't afraid to take risks.

Even though he had no funds of his own to speak of, he managed to get hold of what he needed and set up making his own cognac. Denis Charpentier designed the extraordinarily well conceived, elegant bottle that has become Denis Charpentier's Trademark. Shaped like an oversized perfume flask, it is an ornament to almost any decor.

In 1994 Charpentier began selling his cognac in taxfree stores in Asia. It sold 1,000 cases in the first year, 4,500 in the second, and so far the third year 15,000 cases.

That it is a first-class cognac he makes is confirmed by all the awards he has won at **The International Wine and Spirit Competition in London** Four of his products were submitted in 1994 and all four won medals.

"Last year I won four," he reports. Only the best counts", he says, "We have won **two trophies and two gold awards:**

The Cyril Ray Trophy for the Best Cognac 1995 and,

The Drinks International Design Trophy - for The Most Impressive Spirits Presentation for our Denis Charpentier Cognac VSOP. Also we have won two gold medals, one for our Denis Charpentier Cognac XO and one for our Denis Charpentier Cognac VSOP Superior.

"Also in 1994, I have established a new company - Robert Loston Co. Ltd. to commercialise my new brandy. My Brandy Robert Loston Extra and XO are also top quality products and each won a prize for it."

He is very Latin Lithe, proud and elegant. With quick movement, eloquent gesture, and very dark eyes. Well-dressed and well-spoken. He talks of his life, his work and his philosophy.

"I started work as a stevedore at Bordeaux in the beginning of the 1970s," he says, adding that he never asked his father for a single franc.