



THE PARTNERS of Champagne Barons de Rothschild (left to right): Camille Ogren (Mouton), Benjamin and Ariane de Rothschild (Clarke), Philippe Sereys de Rothschild (Mouton) and Eric de Rothschild (Lafite). (Photos: Courtesy)

Five arrows, three Rothschilds, one champagne



• ADAM MONTEFIORE

At the end of the 18th century, Amschel Rothschild sent his five sons out of the Frankfurt Ghetto to establish banks in the main cities of Europe. The symbolism of the emblem of five arrows, pointing in different directions, but remaining attached at the center, was clear. He might have had an inkling they would influence the financial world, but he would clearly have had no idea the family would become arguably the No. 1 wine family in the world!

It began in 1853, when Nathaniel Rothschild, from the English Rothschilds purchased Chateau Mouton. Today the parent company is called Baron Philippe de Rothschild SA, and it includes Chateau Mouton Rothschild, Chateau Clerc Milon, Chateau d'Armaillac from Bordeaux, Opus One from California, Almaviva from Chile and Mouton Cadet, the largest selling Bordeaux brand in the world. The company is named after Baron

Philippe de Rothschild, who in my book was the most influential wine figure of the 20th century. He was the first to Chateau bottle, the first to declassify and produce a branded wine (Mouton Cadet). He was one of the first to use the canvas of the label for art and marketing, and also did the high-profile joint venture with Robert Mondavi, resulting in the founding of Opus One.

In 1868, the French Rothschilds began their foray into wine when Baron James de Rothschild purchased Chateau Lafite, arguably the most prestigious winery of all. Today the company Domaine Barons Rothschild (Lafite) owns Chateau Lafite Rothschild, Chateau Duhart-Milon, Chateau L'Evangile, Chateau Rieussec from Bordeaux, Vina Los Vascos from Chile and Bodegas Caro from Argentina. The most influential person during a key period was arguably Baron Eric de Rothschild. During his wise tenure, Lafite returned to its greatest days and the company DBR grew and expanded.

From 1882 onward, Baron Edmond de Rothschild

established a modern wine industry in Israel, built the two largest wineries and planted vineyards throughout the country. He also founded Societe Cooperative Vigneronne des Grand Caves, otherwise known as Carmel Winery. In 1957, his son James Rothschild donated Rishon Le Zion and Zichron Ya'acov Cellars to Carmel.

In 1973, Baron Edmond de Rothschild, grandson of the original Baron Edmond, purchased Chateau Clarke. His Compagnie Vinicole Baron Edmond de Rothschild now includes Chateau Clarke, Chateau Malmaison, Chateau des Laurets from Bordeaux, Bodegas Macon from Spain, Bodegas Flechas de los Andes from Argentina, Rupert & Rothschild Vignerons from South Africa & Rimapere from New Zealand.

LIKE ALL families, the Rothschild family were not always of one mind and for many years there was acrimonious rivalry, particularly in the days when Elie de Rothschild managed Lafite and Philippe de Rothschild managed Mouton. In the classification of 1855, Lafite was made a First Growth (Premier Cru Classe) and