

Press release

FRATERNITIES THE ST VINCENT GUILD OF CHAMPAGNE WINEMAKERS ON SHOW

A unique photographic exhibition about the St Vincent Festival is going to travel around the entire Champagne Region.

At last January's St Vincent Festival, the Champagne Committee decided to ask the Italian photographer Paolo Verzone to showcase the traditions underpinning this festival in the Champagne Region.

Following the Champagne Slopes, Houses and Cellars being granted UNESCO World Heritage status in 2015, the portraits in the *Fraternities* exhibition depict the region's living heritage, a history and tradition being passed on, a moment of friendship and interaction, the men and women of Champagne, the champagne houses and wine growers all coming together around their shared asset, the Champagne appellation.

In the words of the co-presidents of the Champagne Committee, Maxime Toubart and Jean-Marie Barillère, *"Paolo Verzone's sensitivity and talent showcase the men and women of Champagne, winegrowers and champagne houses, who pass on our values of excellence from one generation to the next. The dignified nature of these portraits reveals the collective strength which has always driven forward the region."*

Alain Rondeau, vice-chair of Groupama North-East said, *"We are very proud to be supporting this exhibition which showcases the men and women who make our wonderful Champagne, all gathered together because of a living heritage and traditions encapsulated in this case by the members of the St Vincent Guild"*.

Hervé Jacquinet, chair of CDER, *"The Fraternities exhibition perfectly encapsulates Champagne's living heritage: a history and tradition being passed on, a moment of friendship and interaction, the men and women of Champagne, the champagne houses and wine growers all coming together around their shared asset, the Champagne appellation."*

Paolo Verzone is an Italian portrait photographer who is based in Paris and is represented by the Agence VU. Verzone was born in 1967 and has built his international reputation around his portraits of cadets in military academies. Paolo Verzone scooped World Press Photo awards in 2000, 2009 and 2015. His works can be found in the collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and Rome's Istituto Nazionale della Grafica.

Aurélie Melin is an ethnographer for the Villa Bissinger and the Marne Valley Combined District Council. Melin has travelled extensively through the Champagne wine-growing region to research know-how, practices and portrayals. As a front-line observer of the 2016 St Vincent Festival, particularly the major gathering in Reims, she interviewed the wine-growers who had come to celebrate their patron saint.

The exhibition will open on 10 June 2016 at the Villa Bissinger in Aÿ and will then travel to the Musée Saint-Remi in Reims, the Mémorial Charles de Gaulle in Colombey-les-Deux-Eglises, the Maison de l'Amitié France/Amérique in Château-Thierry, the Ville d'Épernay and the Musée de l'Outil et de la Pensée Ouvrière in Troyes.

Epernay, 25 May 2016

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Attachment: Exhibition photos © Paolo Verzone / Agence VU'
Attachment: Invitation to the private viewing on 9 June 2016

Exhibition locations and dates

10 June – 3 July 2016 at the Villa Bissinger – 15, rue Jeanson in Aÿ

5 July – 18 September 2016 in the cloister at the Musée Saint-Remi – 53, rue Simon in Reims.

8 July – 30 September 2016 at the Mémorial Charles de Gaulle in Colombey-les-Deux-Eglises

**8 October – 20 November 2016 at the Maison de l’Amitié France/Amérique
2 Place des Etats-Unis in Château-Thierry.**

7 December 2016 – 14 January 2017 on Avenue de Champagne in Epernay.

**21 January – 19 February 2017 at the Maison de l’outil et de la pensée ouvrière
7, rue de la Trinité in Troyes**