









« Legacy is about passing on what we do best,  
the best of what we have in us. »

*Yann FILLIOUX*

**Hennessy·8**

## Hennessy·8

Since its foundation, more than 250 years ago, our Maison has never stopped reinventing itself. Driven by their passion for the exceptional, 2 families, the Hennessys and the Fillioux, share this adventure, relentlessly thriving for perfection and always ready to face new challenges.

While preparing to pass the legacy in to the hands of his nephew, current Master Blender and Taster Yann Fillioux wanted to create a unique cognac. Hennessy·8 was born.

Yann Fillioux has worked with Hennessy for 50 years, raising the art of blending to the highest level and combining his exceptional talent with creativity and consistency, passion and rigor, avant-garde daring and uncompromising loyalty to the house's history and to his predecessors. For half a century, he has been tasting and testing Hennessy cognac, innovating while protecting, developing and improving it.

Hennessy·8 is the culmination of his impressive lifework. It also represents a transfer from one generation to the next that has long been in preparation. Yann Fillioux has always believed that the importance of a heritage like the one he has tended for so many decades lies above all in its ability to be transmitted and enriched by his successors.

So we see that Hennessy-8 is both timeless and contemporary of a new generation of Master Blender and Taster, Renaud Fillioux de Gironde, future successor to his uncle Yann Fillioux. Renaud is the 8<sup>th</sup> generation of the Fillioux family, present within Hennessy since 1800, and who will be writing a new chapter of the Hennessy saga.

The fruit of 5 years of work, and the synthesis of 250 years centuries of savoir-faire, Hennessy-8 is the symbol of this legacy. It celebrates the continuity within generations and talents.

These values are summed up by a single number: 8.

8: the number of generations not only of the Hennessy family but also of the Fillioux family, the Maison Master Blenders.

Yann Fillioux represents the 7<sup>th</sup> generation and his dauphin and nephew Renaud Fillioux de Gironde will represent the 8<sup>th</sup>; 8: the number of exceptional eaux-de-vie used in Hennessy-8;

8: the symbol of perfection. According to Yann Fillioux, Hennessy-8 is “absolute perfection and absolutely simple.”

Finally, it is a hymn to freedom and originality: the creators of Hennessy-8 were free to develop it without worrying about replication. It is a unique masterpiece, the only one of its kind.

A fitting carafe was needed for this cognac fashioned by time, people and nature. This creation was entrusted to Arik Lévy, an artist who has collaborated with Hennessy for many years and whose approach is perfectly in tune with Hennessy’s values and “soul.”

It took 3 years to develop and realize this gem, the ultimate expression of minerality, the work of nature, the importance of time and human genius.

Everything in Arik Lévy’s design for Hennessy-8 has a meaning.

It includes a number of eloquent references to Hennessy’s history and values.

First of all, the carafe: a crystal sculpture with 8 inset rings. Each ring represents one of the 8 generations and 8 eaux-de-vie. Together with the other rings, it creates an impression of movement and constant change, enhanced by the piece’s symbolism: the chain of successive generations and the harmonious blend

of eaux-de-vie in a crystalline matrix that sparkles with reflected light.

The carafe is made of hand-blown Baccarat crystal.

Each carafe is a feat of technical prowess - a combination of “hot savoir-faire” and “cold savoir-faire” - and a real achievement for the master glassmaker who followed Arik Lévy’s design to make it.

A copper silk ribbon with a “H” seal circles the carafe’s neck, emphasizing its majestic bearing. A well-known savoir-faire mastered and realized by Guerlain, the famous French Perfume Maison.

An emblem of beauty, purity and perfection, the carafe stopper is engraved with floral motifs that symbolically echo the 8 rings.

A precious chest holds and protects the carafe, cradling it like a nourishing “shell” rich in natural elements and minerals. The artist used staves from La Sarrazine, Hennessy cooperage, to make the chest. Inside the chest, each of the 25 layers of wood represents 10 years of Hennessy’s history and corresponds to the 25 layers on the outside of the chest.

The chest refers to Hennessy and its expertise: the Maison still makes some of its own barrels and keeps pushing the boundaries on the distillation process. It also recalls the Maison origins: the chest is cut irregularly from top to bottom to symbolize the Charente River, with a “bed” of copper glowing from inside.

This work of art is an ode to nature, a historic setting and human creativity, designed by Arik Lévy and signed by Hennessy, the mark of excellence!

Every single detail of Arik Lévy’s ingenious, powerfully evocative design has been carefully thought out. He has even created a complete, finely crafted “tool box”. In it are among other things a set of Riedel tasting glasses, a fusil (pipette), a carnet describing the genesis and spirit of Hennessy-8 and the Maison values. The key for Hennessy-8 chest will also be handed over, opening this exceptional chest...



## ***DIALOGUE WITH***

Yann Fillioux, 7<sup>th</sup> generation of Hennessy Master Blenders  
and his nephew Renaud Fillioux de Gironde, 8<sup>th</sup> generation

### HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE HENNESSY·8?

**YF:** I don't like big words, but I'll make an exception because of its absolutely exceptional character: Hennessy·8 is a small miracle! It is a distillation of more than 2 centuries of transmitted savoir-faire and an uninterrupted pursuit of perfection.

It's a Taster's dream come true.

**RFdG:** *For me, it represents the essence of the selection of eaux-de-vie. It is a cognac of absolute purity and extreme rigor – you have to be uncompromising to keep only the most extraordinary eaux-de-vie. But it is also - and this may surprise you - perfectly simple.*

### LÉONARD DE VINCI SAID, "SIMPLICITY IS THE ULTIMATE SOPHISTICATION".

**YF :** That is so true! That is exactly the philosophy that guided us. Nothing more complicated than trying to achieve the sort of simplicity that is another name for perfection, even though we don't think of ourselves as artists in any way at all, as "inspired" people who jump out of bed in the morning thinking, "Today I'm going to make a masterpiece of cognac!" It doesn't work that way at all.

**RFdG:** It's also simple in that it seems obvious, with everything coming together perfectly from the beginning. The story of this cognac is the story of an uncommon success right from the very 1<sup>st</sup> day, the first day of each of the eaux-de-vie that go into it. It's a virtuous circle, in which we had the privilege of being the final link!



*Yann Fillioux & Renaud Fillioux de Gironde*

**YF:** That's very important. If you have a bad start, it's all over. With cognac, there is no 2<sup>nd</sup> chance. Everything is irreversible. There is no way to repair a mistake, and it's easy to make a mistake in our business. A cognac like Hennessy-8 requires an exceptional chain of events. That's another reason why I call it a "small miracle." It's also a miracle of temporality.



Yann Fillioux & Renaud Fillioux de Gironde

TIME IS, OF COURSE, A KEY VARIABLE...

*YF: In itself, age is nothing, just a marker. You have to know how to manage it and make sure it does not overwhelm or dominate. A cognac is worthless if it lacks one crucial dimension: elegance. This complex concept is difficult to define, and it's a state that is even harder to achieve, since elegance is something fragile and subtle by nature.*

*With Hennessy·8, elegance is not supplanted by the exceptional age of the eaux-de-vie. That's another part of its outstanding success.*

**RFdG:** The term “aging” is not necessarily relevant. Obviously, it is not enough to wait for the eaux-de-vie to age to create good cognacs. Just the opposite is true: we are constantly making decisions at each stage of the aging process. It's an active, ongoing creative process. Perfection through time is an endless quest, which the Maison and our predecessors have been pursuing for 250 years.

SPEAKING OF WHICH, CAN YOU SAY A FEW WORDS ABOUT HENNESSY?

**RFdG:** In our business, you have to think in the long term, which changes many decisions, including short-term ones. The Maison has always made a point of building for the long term and never sacrificed anything to this ambition. It's up to us to live up to that. It's essential.

**YF:** This business is based on an elitist vision. It requires high standards and great rigor – and having the means to build for the future.

*RFdG: It's not easy to push everyone to strive for quality and to make the best cognac in large quantities. But we enjoy the challenge every day. It is possible only in a Maison like ours, at the cost of a lot of work and a total absence of complacency.*

**YF:** Our worldwide reputation and the commitment of everyone are essential, but we have another great strength: the word of Hennessy. Our partners know that we have always kept our word, that the human relationship we have built with them is worth more than any formal commitment. Integrity, reliability and ethical behavior are always effective!

**RFdG :** I would add that talking about rigor is one thing, but applying it is another. For us, of course, it's a given.



*Yann Fillioux and his uncle, Maurice Fillioux*

#### WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

*YF: 2 things. The 1<sup>st</sup>: transmitting, transmitting and again transmitting what I know and what I learned from my predecessors.*

*The 2<sup>nd</sup>: to create such a good Hennessy V.S.*

**RFdG:** I graduated from Business School. I could have become a banker, worked abroad, etc. Although I am from a family of winemakers, I could see myself in a completely different career, but I chose this one, and I am proud of it, of being part of the continuity of the profession, of doing my bit. I hope I will be judged worthy to take over - in the end, I will be judged only by my successors!

#### YANN FILLIOUX, YOU MENTIONED TRANSMISSION. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

*YF : It's not just important, it's vital! Transmitting means passing Hennessy's centuries-old history on to those who come after us and who will continue to write the Maison's story, which is a story of transmission through and through.*

*Each one of us is a link in the chain, an heir whose mission is to protect and develop this extraordinary legacy for our successors. Transmitting our know-how is not about showing off. It's about sharing what we have received, passing on what we do best, the best of what we have in us. And it is much more difficult than learning. I am very happy to pass the baton on to Renaud.*

#### IS IT ALSO A SOURCE OF PRIDE FOR YOU?

**YF:** Of course! To say that Renaud is worthy of receiving this heritage is an understatement. He has many strengths that I don't have. He knows more about vineyards and winemakers. He is good at making connections with people, while I am an in-house man who is less expert at interpersonal relations.

#### WHAT DO YOU HAVE IN COMMON?

**YF:** I see myself as a Taster, a manager of eaux-de-vie, quality and vision. I think that description applies equally well to him.

**RFdG:** I agree that Yann is a man of vision! A word about tasting: our job has to do with the sense of taste, pleasure and strategy. Tasting can't be improvised or learned in school.

I think we both have a great capacity for asking questions and questioning ourselves.

We also have a certain form of courage. Choosing one thing means rejecting another, having the courage to say no. And it means refusing facility, both for oneself and for others.

#### WHAT IS YOUR MOTTO?

**YF:** *"Do everything well."*

**RFdG:** *"Look, learn, listen... and act."*

# Hennessy And Me

Arik Lévy



## A FAMILY

Our collaboration goes back almost 8 years. Hennessy and me? It's a long story, dating from the Mathusalem (for Hennessy X.O). Hennessy-8 opened a new chapter in this special relationship marked by total trust and shared values. As I like to say, I really feel I am part of the family, even one of its oldest members! I have been associated intellectually, emotionally and artistically with Hennessy for nearly a decade now.

## THE HENNESSY DNA

I wanted to get to know Hennessy DNA right away. I analyzed it, almost “sequenced” it. It really spoke to me and connected with my artistic concerns. The transmission of its savoir-faire is at the heart of its values, the keystone of its history. There is also an openness and a deep respect for nature. All those precious liquids owe something to nature and remind us of the importance of “refueling” it so it keeps on giving. This can be seen in its constant attention to all its elements (earth, minerals, water, seasons, etc.) and to the strong connection the people have with the land and its products. Cognac is a product of the relationship between the earth and the people that work it. All that requires a great deal of humility, patience, sensitivity and simplicity. The same values are also crucial to artistic creation.

## WHAT I LEARNED FROM HENNESSY

Hennessy taught me how to taste and test. I observed their rituals. Practicing made me discover my taste, and the tastes that developed during the experience turned back the attention to the quality.

## THE HENNESSY-8 ADVENTURE

3 years ago, I was asked to think about Hennessy-8. The first thing I did was to reflect on the 5 years collaboration so far with Hennessy, and pinpoint every element that appeared important? I quickly understood that I had created a story, a story I had to write. This story became the basis of all my actions. It connected nature, terroir, man, technology, history, know-how and poetry. I wanted my work to create “techno-poetry,” meaning an amalgam of advanced technology and a poetic creation

with great evocative power. I conceived it as a manifesto, not only sculptural, but also of light and visual magic. The line represents the Charente River. My goal was to create metaphors and correspondences, to depict life by using and glorifying elements of life, and to distill emotion. There are many ways to approach this work, as there are many ways to approach the history of this exceptional cognac and still more that of the Maison Hennessy. Basically, I designed something that engages all the senses – just like the tasting cognac it holds!

### AN EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE

I would like buyers of Hennessy-8 to be touched by this assemble of elements. For me, that is much more important than hearing them say, “It’s beautiful,” or, “It’s not beautiful.” The idea is that it speaks to them and touches their emotions even as it sharpens their thinking, since it is also a mind game. It is an invitation to discovery. Each person can appropriate this extraordinary piece, reveal the center of the chest by a simple action of the key holder, and taste Hennessy-8 following the ritual offered with the tool box.

### AFTER HENNESSY-8?

The piece designed for Hennessy-8 is a compression of 250 years of history and values. It encompasses matter and memory, minerality and spirituality. The commemorative dimension is also there. Still, this centuries-old history is far from over: this showcase that we have created is anything but a last will and testament. Hennessy-8 is a discovery through time. It is also a 1st step, an opening to the future, a new gene – I use this word from the world of biology deliberately – to help understand and build Hennessy’s future. 250 years centuries? That’s great. But now let’s look forward to the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary and lay the groundwork for our distant successors!











