

HUGH JOHNSON

Born in 1939, Hugh Johnson began his life-long passion for wine as a member of the Wine & Food Society at Cambridge University, where he gained an honors degree in English literature at King's College (a constituent college of Cambridge University) in 1960. Degree in hand, Hugh became a feature writer for *Vogue* and *House & Garden*.



In 1963, as a result of his close friendship with the octogenarian André Simon, founder of The International Wine & Food Society, Hugh became general secretary of the society and succeeded the legendary gastronome as editor of its magazine *Wine & Food*. At the same time, he became wine correspondent of *The Sunday Times* in London and started work on his first book, "Wine," whose publication in 1966 established him as one of the foremost English gastronomic writers. After a year as travel editor of *The Sunday Times*, he became editor of *Queen Magazine*, doubling the circulation in just two years. Hugh was invited to write "The World Atlas of Wine" in 1969. The research involved took Hugh all over the world; the result was a best-seller that might justly claim to have put wine on the map. It was during this travel period that he visited Hungary for the first time, in 1970, and was taken with Tokaji wines. "I thought they were the finest wines I'd ever tasted. They possessed a combination of richness and finesse with incredible age and just got better," he says of the experience.

After a move to Essex with his young family and wife, Judy, Hugh became deeply involved in the study of trees, and by 1973, published his first book on this new passion, "The International Book of Trees," with new editions published twice since. By 1979, with the inspiration and challenge of restoring his fine but neglected gardens, Hugh wrote "The Principles of Gardening" (published in 1983; translated into six languages). He also founded *The Plantsman* quarterly in 1979. The garden and arboretum at Saling Hall have since gained an international reputation and are open to visitors during summer months.

From 1975 to 2005, Hugh was editorial consultant of *The Garden* (the Journal of The Royal Horticultural Society). Since 1977, he has annually produced "Hugh Johnson's Pocket Wine Book," which has now sold more than eight million copies and appears in 13 languages. And from 1986 to 2001, he served as a director of Bordeaux first-growth Château Latour.

In 1990, Hugh co-founded Royal Tokaji with a group of investors to revive the revered but almost-forgotten aszú wines of the Tokaj region in Hungary. It became a private limited company in 1993. Hugh and his partners, later joined by fellow Englishman Ben Howkins, have been credited with the renaissance of Tokaji wines and returning these decadent sweet wines to their noble, coveted stature. Hugh is joint owner of Royal Tokaji's Mézes Mály Vineyard, one of Tokaj's two great first growths, which he purchased in partnership with Royal Tokaji in 1993.

Hugh was named a Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Mérite by President Chirac of France in 2004. In 2006, he released "A Life Uncorked," an intimate autobiographical tour decanting his life in the world of wine. Hugh was named an Officer of the British Empire (OBE) by Queen Elizabeth II in the 2007 New Year's Honours List for his services to winemaking and horticulture.

Hugh spends much time updating his existing books. For the last 30 years he has also written a monthly column for *The Garden* under the pseudonym Tradescant. In addition to his duties with Royal Tokaji, he currently serves as editorial advisor to *The World of Fine Wine* magazine and writes a bi-monthly column for *Decanter*. He is considered the world's best-selling writer on wine, with total sales of about 15 million.