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the drinks business

• WINE

WINE TRADE CELEBRATES CAREER OF POL ROGER MD

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Last night, members of the UK drinks trade celebrated the career of Nick James, managing director of Pol Roger Ltd, who is retiring this month.



Nick James with a bottle of Glenfarclas from 1971 – the year he started in the drinks trade

James, who joined Pol Roger in 1998, and has spent the last seven years as head of the Champagne brand's UK office, hit retirement age in November, but has remained on the Pol Roger board until now.

In total he has spent 44 years in the wine trade, representing Champagne houses from Taittinger to Lanson, as well as Port brands such as Graham's.

Pol Roger president Laurent d'Harcourt described James as a "true, great professional" during the dinner in London last night, which was held at the Armourers' Hall, and comprised a group of friends and colleagues who have worked with James over the course of his impressive career.

Acknowledging James's achievements during his management of Pol Roger Ltd, D'Harcourt mentioned James's successful integration of spirits Glenfarclas and Hine into the agency business, while at the same time augmenting the operation's reputation for wine and Champagne.

"Under your stewardship Pol Roger Ltd has become one of the most respected companies in the UK," he said.

James, who spoke briefly during the evening, said that he owed his career in the wine trade to a godfather who owned sherry business González Byass, while admitting that his academic record was poor – he was "chucked out" of Cirencester College twice.

He also said that his "turning point" was attending the [Champagne Academy](#) in 1976, and he described his period at Pol Roger from 1998 onwards as "the most amazing final part of my career".

Then, stressing the friendly nature of the wine trade, he commented, "What trade could have their competitors at their retirement dinner?" before noting the presence at the dinner of Simon Leschallas from Charles Heidsieck, Charles King from Louis Roederer, Peter McKinley from Gosset, and Jo Thornton from Moët-Hennessy.

He also said about the celebration, "This is not duty-driven, you are all here because I want you here; you have enriched my life."

As [previously reported by *the drinks business*](#), James Simpson MW has become managing director of Pol Roger Ltd.

Simpson was formerly sales and marketing director, and has worked for the company since 1993. You can read more about Simpson [here](#).