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French and British luxury celebrated at cocktail reception jointly hosted by the French Chamber of Commerce, Walpole and the Financial Times

British and French luxury was the toast at a cocktail reception hosted at the May Fair Hotel on 10 October by the Luxury Club of the French Chamber of Commerce in Great Britain together with Walpole and in association with the Financial Times.

The event brought together for the first time an impressive group of chief executives of British and French luxury businesses, fostering connections and networking over glasses of Perrier-Jouët Champagne and Chivas Regal cocktails, generously provided by Pernod Ricard UK.

HE Mr Bernard Emié, French Ambassador to the United Kingdom addressed the gathering, noting the luxury companies represented made a decisive contribution to all economies. He remarked that luxury goods companies employ more than 200,000 people in France and around one million in Europe. The French luxury goods industry is the leader in export outside Europe with 75 companies alone accounting for €31 billion turnover in 2012, of which 84% were exports. 'So the luxury goods sector represents an undeniable competitive advantage for France and European countries in the face of international competition,' he said. 'We are today at the forefront of an already dominant European industry with a 70% market share and €440 billion turnover in 2010 that is 3% of EU GDP.'

Numbers aside, 'Luxury is a factor in France's influence around the world. The products of this industry have a strong symbolic value reflecting the expertise of French artisans. It is no exaggeration to talk about the genuine national industry and cultural heritage, and I know this can be shared in the UK as well.' He encouraged French and British luxury companies to work together to ensure they remain the best in the sector.

Guests were welcomed by Florence Gomez, Managing Director of the French Chamber of Commerce and Ben Hughes, Chairman of Walpole and Deputy CEO - Global Commercial Director of the Financial Times, who together initially had the idea of bringing together the best of British and French luxury brands at such an event.

About the Luxury Club of the French Chamber of Commerce

Launched in 2010, the Luxury Club's raison d'être is to be a leading platform for Chamber member companies operating within the luxury markets such as iconic brands, high-end hospitality services, prestigious cultural institutions and Michelin-starred chefs. It aims to encourage exchange of experiences, best practices and savoir-faire by providing exclusive networking and learning.