

Worksheet Thirty Four

AN ILLUSTRIOUS HOUSE

This tasting aims to identify House style across Roederer's range, which springs from high fruit quality allied with painstaking and thoughtful winemaking. The vintage champagne can be cellared for many years while the non-vintage also repays careful cellaring. The Louis Roederer website maintains a good collection of sheets about recent vintages as well as the currently released non-vintage. You can find out more about a particular bottle by identifying it with its number on the Roederer website. If you have an older, unnumbered vintage and would like similar information, or to know more about the circumstances of an individual year, email the company. As you would imagine, it is a very efficient and responsive organisation.

A lone drinker will have a difficult time choosing for this tasting. Those in this position should identify the Roederer style, described below, with your chosen bottle. Those tasting more than one bottle should review what, in my opinion, are the identifying characteristics of all Roederer champagnes (these are identified by asterisks in the tasting sheets). Open a newly released Blanc de Blancs a few hours before the tasting to allow it to breathe, and swirl it gently in your glass to aerate it.

Generally speaking, tasting order should move from least complex to more complex, from youthful freshness to the complexity of age. In this case, the cellar master recommended the tasting order.

THE ROEDERER STYLE

A voluminous, soft mousse, a long-lasting creamy cordon, crystalline clarity and a wonderfully fresh attack are the essentials of the Roederer style, which is light and fruity. First there is a light and creamy dance across the tongue, which at the same time seems to fill the mouth, followed by textural grip as well as aromatic length. An impression of balance, purity, delicacy, freshness and fullness is carried in a long, clean aftertaste.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Louis Roederer Brut Blanc de Blancs Vintage

100% Chardonnay

From company vineyards in Le Mesnil and Avize in equal parts, some Cramant; 20% fermented in wood. There is a low-pressure mousse of 4 atmospheres instead of usual 6. It has 4 years' ageing on lees, 6 months on cork. It is pale with a light green hue; there are aromas of fresh citrus, oyster shell, ozone and light vanilla; it is full-flavoured, supple and mouth-filling; has elegant minerality, is harmonious and has exceptional finesse. After breathing it is nutty and honeyed, with a chalky, gripping saline length. Dosage is 8–10 g/L. N.B. Each vintage will be slightly different.

Louis Roederer Cristal Vintage

30–47% Chardonnay, 53–70% Pinot Noir

All grapes are Grand Cru from Roederer's own vineyards. 20% is cask fermented. There is no MLF. White flowers, soft spices, white fruits and light woody notes disappear with age, being replaced by cocoa, brioche, nutty, biscuity, buttery caramel. It is smoky, generous, palate-coating; a perfect balance between rich and fresh, light, vivacious and lingeringly seductive. Dosage is 8–10g/L. Ageing on lees has been shortened to 5 years to cope with demand; it really responds to cork ageing, which reveals the wine's extraordinary nature.

Louis Roederer Cristal Rosé Vintage

30–40% Chardonnay, 60–70% Pinot Noir

20% is cask fermented. There is weekly *bâtonnage*. *Saignée* cold maceration on skins for 5–8 days. No MLF. Dosage is 8–10 g/L. It spends 6 years on lees, then 8 months ageing on cork.

Louis Roederer Brut Premier NV

30–40% Chardonnay, 40–56% Pinot Noir, 10–20% Meunier

Made from 60 *crus*, 95% vinified in small stainless steel tanks by *cru*, 5–10% cask fermented. Includes 10–35% reserve wines from seven former harvests, aged in oak *foudres*. It spends 3 years on lees, followed by 6 months ageing on cork. Dosage is 10–11 g/L. Hallmarks of the wine are: sustained effervescence, generous aromas, fresh and delicious aperitif style, delicately fruity, biscuity, toasted/roasted almond touch and smoky notes. It gives an impression of soaring over the palate but has a firm mid-palate; it is creamy, balanced but with a touch of vinous complexity and sensation of maturity, excellent length. It is always fresh and cellars well.

Louis Roederer Millésime

Usually 30% Chardonnay, 70% Pinot Noir

As a vintage, the composition varies year on year, but grapes are always from company vineyards in Verzenay and Verzy. There is 30% wood fermentation of best parcels, but all are of high calibre. It spends 4 years on lees, then 6 months on cork. Dosage is 8–10 g/L. It tastes fresh, pure, elegant; its complex unfolding aromas include citrus, red berries and grilled nuts. Silky, full-bodied, long and concentrated. Condensed energy. Do age these wines; they respond beautifully.

Louis Roederer Rosé Vintage

30–34% Chardonnay, 66–70% old-vine Marne Pinot Noir

Grapes undergo 20% cool maceration, in oak casks for 5–8 days. The wine spends 4 years on lees, then 6 months on cork. Dosage is 8–10 g/L. It has a pale salmon-pink colour, is aromatic with red berries, redcurrants, strawberries, white cherries and with grilled notes. The palate has complexity: it is concentrated, rich, ample, mature, balanced and powerful. The finish is long, lean, citrussy and mineral.

Roederer 'Carte Blanche' NV

33–40% Chardonnay, 40–57% Pinot Noir, 10–20% Meunier

5% is cask fermented. It spends 3 years on lees, 12 months on cork. Dosage is about 38 g/L, ideal for pairing with rich desserts or *foie gras*.

	Champagne 1	Champagne 2
Appearance		
Colour/hue		
*Clarity		
*Quality of effervescence		
Aromas		
Primary (fruit-derived, first fermentation)		
Secondary (from second fermentation)		
*Tertiary (from extended lees time, and/or cork time)		
*Complexity of aromas		
Taste		
*Fresh attack, lightness		
*Effervescence in the mouth		
*Structure, purity		
*Body		
*Texture (wood influence?)		
*Balance – sweetness, acidity		
Aftertaste		
*Length		
Overall Impression		
*Complexity		
*Harmony		

Comment on features these two champagnes have in common

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	Champagne 3	Champagne 4
Appearance		
Colour/hue		
*Clarity		
*Quality of effervescence		
Aromas		
Primary (fruit-derived, first fermentation)		
Secondary (from second fermentation)		
*Tertiary (from extended lees time, and/or cork time)		
*Complexity of aromas		
Taste		
*Fresh attack, lightness		
*Effervescence in the mouth		
*Structure, purity		
*Body		
*Texture (wood influence?)		
*Balance – sweetness, acidity		
Aftertaste		
*Length		
Overall Impression		
*Complexity		
*Harmony		

Comment on features these two champagnes have in common

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	Champagne 5	Champagne 6
Appearance		
Colour/hue		
*Clarity		
*Quality of effervescence		
Aromas		
Primary (fruit-derived, first fermentation)		
Secondary (from second fermentation)		
*Tertiary (from extended lees time, and/or cork time)		
*Complexity of aromas		
Taste		
*Fresh attack, lightness		
*Effervescence in the mouth		
*Structure, purity		
*Body		
*Texture (wood influence?)		
*Balance – sweetness, acidity		
Aftertaste		
*Length		
Overall Impression		
*Complexity		
*Harmony		

Comment on features these two champagnes have in common

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