

Worksheet Seven

THE MYSTERIOUS RESERVE

For this session, prepare any of the following NV wines, but if only one champagne is chosen, select the Charles Heidsieck.

- » Delamotte Brut NV (no reserves)
- » Piper-Heidsieck NV (about 15% reserves)
- » Henriot Brut Souverain NV (20%)
- » Charles Heidsieck Brut Réserve NV (40%)
- » Louis Roederer Brut Premier NV (10% barrel reserves)
- » Francis Boulard Petraea Brut Nature NV (25% solera reserve in barrel)¹

The champagnes for this session have been chosen for a reason: they are in order of reserve wine content, with stainless steel stored reserve first, followed by barrel stored reserve wines. The reserve wines included in the Piper-Heidsieck, Henriot and Charles Heidsieck have been stored in stainless steel tanks, in contrast to Louis Roederer (barrels) and the Francis Boulard (solera in barrel) examples. You should therefore be able to appreciate what a gradation of reserve wines from stainless steel storage achieves, and also the added variable of barrel-ageing reserve wines. The solo drinker will be able to find half bottles of Delamotte, Piper-Heidsieck and Louis Roederer champagnes if desired.

Delamotte Brut NV

50% Chardonnay, 30% Pinot Noir, 20% Meunier

Delamotte is a House where the style 'does **not** rely on reserve wines for character, but finds personality in its roots'.² It stands to reason that a wine so described may vary from year to year, like those of small growers without the resources to hold large stocks of reserves. Such a wine may always be a pleasurable surprise, but it may not be predictable when weather brings so much to the outcome of champagne.

Piper-Heidsieck Brut NV

10–15% Chardonnay, 55%–60% Pinot Noir, 15–20% Meunier

Contains 10–15% reserve wines, depending on the year. Charles Heidsieck's former winemaker makes it, in the same winery as that of Charles Heidsieck. It will be very interesting to assess the differences between the two wines: both are very well made, but in very different styles.

Henriot Brut Souverain NV

50% Chardonnay, 50% Pinot Noir

Contains 20% reserve wines, which may be selected from a range going back to the 1990s.

Charles Heidsieck Brut Réserve NV

33% of each Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Meunier

Contains a minimum of 40% reserve wines.

Louis Roederer Brut Premier NV

40% Chardonnay, 45% Pinot Noir, 15% Meunier

Includes 10% reserve wines that have been aged in large oak barrels.

Francis Boulard Petraea NV

20% Chardonnay, 60% Pinot Noir, 20% Meunier

Contains 25% reserve wines, from a solera system going back many years.

Allow the wines to open in their glasses. Now look for the mature influence of reserve wines, and select descriptions of aromas and flavours from the list of qualities below, applying them to the different champagnes.

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|------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| » Almond kernels | » Honey | » Spices |
| » Baked apple | » Marzipan | » Tarte tatin (slightly caramelised apple tart) |
| » Cigar box | » Mushroom | » Macaroon |
| » Citrus rind | » Nougat | » Tobacco |
| » Cold tea | » Polish | » Toffee |
| » Fig | » Preserved, diced or candied fruit | » Truffle |
| » Forest floor | » Raisin | » Vanilla |
| » Fruit cake | » Sherry hint | » Vegetal |
| » Hazelnut | | |

Delamotte Brut

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Henriot Brut Souverain

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Piper Heidsieck

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Charles Heidsieck

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Louis Roederer

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Francis Boulard Petraea

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Which champagne do you like best?

Why?

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Which wine is the most complex?

If you were to put the wines in order of complexity, what would that order be?

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Which wine has the lightest style?

Which wine is the richest?

Which wine is the most elegant?

Which is the richer of Piper Heidsieck and Charles Heidsieck?

Which is the richer of Delamotte and Piper Heidsieck?

Which wines have a faint aldehydic aroma (nutty, sherry)?

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Which wine has the most vinosity (wininess)?

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ENDNOTES

1. You may need to check your wine store's catalogue under the old name of Raymond Boulard Petraea
2. Champagne Delamotte tasting notes supplied by the House