

Champagne - Salon - 37/100 Only!!



Date : Tuesday, 13th May 2014

Time : 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm

Venue : 12/F Hong Kong Wine Vault (Wong Chuk Hang)

No. of Attendees : 80

Wines Tasted :

- Delamotte Brut NV Magnum
- Delamotte Blanc de Blanc 2004
- Delamotte Blanc de Blanc 2002
- Salon 2002

37/100

Everybody loves Salon, people glorify it, and to Wine Vault members it is like ant sees honey. All 50 allocated seats were fully booked within the first hour of our email invitation, and we have to arrange 30 extra seats to cater for this overwhelming event. Our apologies to those wasn't able to join us.



Owned by Laurent – Perrier, Salon is one of the greatest Champagnes available, and possibly the rarest, since only one cuvee is produced and it is exclusively vintage Champagne, thus it is not produced every year. To give you an idea how rare this is, in the 20th century, only **37 vintages** were produced, and 2002 marks the first vintage of the 21st century.

Only 62,000 bottles of the 2002 is ever produced, and for this special vintage it requires **Mr. Didier Depond**, the President of Salon and Delamotte, to fly all the way over from the Champagne country, to showcase the finest Champagne ever produced.

The 2002 Salon is phenomenal in quality. It is a subtle and intense Champagne that shows complex character of lilac, minerals, sliced lemon, apple, and white pepper. It is full bodied and dense yet racy and agile with lightness and freshness. It has a gloriously long finish and changes every moment in the glass. It is magnificent to drink now, but shows great texture and structure for aging.





Top French wine critics such as Michel Bettane said the 2002 Salon is comparable to the legendary 1982. In fact, it is much more stylish, refined and complex than the 1982, which some people would find it rather heavy. I find the style and structure of the 2002 to be closer to the 1997 and 1990, both of which are dense and lively Champagnes of amazing quality.

The total production is about 1 percent of Dom Perignon and 10 percent of Louis Roederer Cristal, which guarantees its rarity.

The next vintage will be 2004, followed by 2006, 2007 and 2008. Depond says 2008 is "Salon's best ever" and will be sold only in magnums. We just have to wait until the release to compare the 2 Champagnes side by side, in the meantime 2002 is already very close to perfection indeed.

Some say Delamotte is the second wine of Salon, because they share many similarities. They have the same owner, they are both blanc de blanc (made by 100% Chardonnay), they are next door neighbor, but Delamotte is not a second wine. Never the less, it is a highly underrated Champagne.

The 2002 Salon is still very young, and probably requires at least 10 more years to enter the drinking window, whereas Delamotte Brut NV magnum is already ready to drink. You might think, "Well its only a NV, nothing too special here", as Didier has explained, this NV is a blend of 3 vintages, and to maintain the consistent quality year after year and house style, it requires the best from the oenologist. Since Salon and Delamotte are so closely related, you can't stop thinking that in a vintage



where Salon is not being produced, the grapes may be passed over to Delamotte to make their NV. Who knows?

Nevertheless, the NV Brut is a gorgeous, deep wine endowed with an attractive core of rich fruit. This is a mid-weight, expansive Champagne with commendable balance and a long, fine finish. Smoke, minerals and earthiness add complexity on the finish, which some guests find this NV most enjoyable.

Next we tasted the 2004 Delamotte Blanc de Blanc. This is a champagne made with 100% Chardonnay. Hence we get a lot of fruit, and also quite a bit of biscuits, yeastily flavours. This is a sign that the champagne has been aged on lees. Whereas the 2002 Delamotte, I find hints of walnut, pistachio oils, bittersweet and subtle smokiness. It is more mature and complex than the 2004. By the way, did you know the 2002 Delamotte is only released in 2012? Hmm, why only 2 years before the Salon? We don't know. Many believe it offers 90% of the quality at 20% of the price? What a bargain!!

To sum up, any vintage of Delamotte is ready to drink now or any other day, whereas Salon needs age and therefore great for your children or grandchildren. Although some might think it is expensive, but look at it this way, the Champagne house has already paid for the storage for the past 12 years, and history tells us, this Salon will only go up in value, this is a drinkable IPO.

