

*Chateau Montrose, the "Latour of Saint Estephe"*



Date : Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2014  
 Time : 6:00 to 8:00 pm  
 Venue : 21/F Hong Kong Wine Vault (Hing Wai)  
 No. of Attendees : 100  
 Wines Tasted : 2010 Château Tronquoy Lalande 92pts  
 2010 Dame de Montrose 94pts  
 2008 Dame de Montrose 89pts  
 2005 Dame de Montrose 88pts  
 2011 Château Montrose 91-93pts  
 2010 Château Montrose 99pts  
 2008 Château Montrose 95pts  
 2005 Château Montrose 95pts  
 1998 Château Montrose 90pts

In 1976 a group of French, American and British wine professionals and judges gathered 4 red wines from France and 6 red wines from America for a competition to see which is “better”. The American wines were considered the underdog back in the days, at the end they have clinched the first prize, and Ch. Montrose (1970) came third, outscoring Ch. Haut Brion (1970) and Ch. Leoville Las Cases (1971). The results came as bit of a surprise to the wine community all over the world. It is not only the American has beaten the French, but a second growth has outscored a first growth.

If Parker score is anything to go by, ever since the Paris judgement, Ch. Montrose hasn’t been making the best wines of the world. With the exception of 1990, other vintages have not been outstanding. This got many people questioning, *“For a terroir that is able to produce a wine that can outperform one of the finest labels, how come it cannot reach the heights again?”*



Mr. Herve Berland, - CEO of Ch. Montrose sharing the Montrose story with us.

The Bouygues brothers saw this and think it is an opportunity to turn things around, so they purchased Ch. Montrose and made various changes to the property; implementing vast renovation to improve on the microclimate, lot of underground work on the soil, and also aligning and planting the vines differently so that the wind from Atlantic Ocean and Gironde can act as a natural air conditioner for the sloping vineyard.



Soon the nickname “Latour of Saint Estephe” has been passed around in the wine community. Mr. Berland explained, “The power, strength, massive concentration, depth and long finish, all of which are very similar to Ch. Latour.”



*2010 Ch. Montrose 99 pts. What do you think?*

There is no competition, no blind tasting and no judges here tonight. Mr. Berland has generously offered us a selection of wines coming direct from the Chateau cellar, to show us the differences between the Grand Cru and the second wine, as well as how these wines will age over time.

Having walked around the hall and talked to a few guests, we seem to have a general conclusion that most of the vintages from Dame de Montrose is already showing a lot of character can be enjoy now, whereas the Grand Cru will need a few more years for it to mature on most of the vintages tasted here. Drinking the Grand Cru today is giving us a taste of the deep potential and complexity of these wines.

There are some wines which taste “better” with food, and this is one of them. This is what some people refer to as a “food wine”, it is a pleasure to drink the wine by itself, but it tastes a whole lot better with food and friends.



*Over 50 bottles of wines opened!*

For everyday drinking, some would prefer Ch. Tronquoy Lalande. It is another property owned by the Bouygues brothers, the same team who produces the Ch. Montrose. However the production of is only about 7,500 cases. The 2010 has a note of earth, charcoal, tobacco, hint of spice and black cherry, this is truly a top value St Estephe.

The big debate is between the 2009 and 2010 vintages, since they have both achieved very high ratings from Parker (100pts and 99pts respectively). Both vintages offer the classic note of tobacco, ripe blackberries and cedar, so how to choose between them and what is the difference? The 2009 vintage is seductive and can be

enjoyed young or age for 40+ years; the 2010 vintage is more traditional Bordeaux in style, more dense and powerful, but also more restrained and needs to be laid down for many years before it can be truly appreciated.

Drinking the 1998 is an eyes opener, 16 years down the road, this wine is opening up very well, licorice, refined tannins, with hints of secondary aromas like herbs and grass. This wine is ready to drink now with balanced fruit and structure.



We then hosted a dinner prepared by Culinart, and the cuisine is paired with the best vintages of Ch. Montrose, including 2003, 2000, 1990 and 1976. The 1990 vintage is regarded by many as the best ever vintage of Ch. Montrose, but it doesn't come cheap; the 2003 vintage is a stunner with incredible power and long finish, but the big surprise of the night came from 1976, which only received a mediocre score from Parker. As a bottle coming ex-chateau, it tasted incredibly young and elegant, and it should still be drinking beautifully for another decade.



*Dinner prepared by Culinart.*

Ch. Montrose is truly a wine for drinkers. Over the years the price of Ch. Montrose hasn't fluctuated too much compared to the first growths, meaning people buy this wine to drink and therefore the demand is stable. Don't get me wrong, the prices have increased significantly over time, but many believe the gains are not attractive enough for reselling, when you weigh the monetary gains against the immediate pleasure with enjoying it!