

MAISONS MARQUES & DOMAINES



MAISON FONDÉE EN 1776

LOUIS ROEDERER

CHAMPAGNE

Champagne Louis Roederer

Cristal Vinotheque

Champagne, France

Vintage: 1997

JS	99	WA	95
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Overview

In 1876, Tsar Alexander II—already a great lover of Louis Roederer wines—asked Louis Roederer to ‘take the exercise still further’ and create a cuvée for his personal use which was unique, in terms of both its style and the bottle. Louis Roederer offered him an exceptional crystal bottle, holding the fruit of vines selected from the seven great crus on his estate. The Chardonnay and Pinot Noir grapes provide the subtle, precise balance that has now become synonymous with the leading prestige cuvée of Champagne, composed of Grand Crus from the Montagne de Reims, the Marne Valley and the Côte des Blancs.

Cristal Vinothèque radiates the notes of the original Cristal, as well as notes of iodine, salinity and a surprising youthfulness. Not quite the same, but not really different either. More “Cristal” than ever. At the end of a long meditation lasting two decades, combined with late disgorgement and fine-tuning to the point of perfect equilibrium, it emerges as a fresh perspective of champagne, an even more perfect and exciting vision.

Winemaking

Cristal Vinothèque 1997 celebrates the remarkable adventure of just a small number of bottles, laid down for more than 20 years in the Louis Roederer cellars, in the quest for perfect balance. This cuvée was aged for 15 years “sur lattes” followed by 5 years “sur pointes” and benefitted from a further 4 years rest after disgorgement. 6% of the wines are vinified in oak. 16% malolactic fermentation. The dosage is 8g/L.

Tasting Notes

Pure, precise, intense and complex bouquet, with a blend of white flowers, almond, honey and scents of nougat. After aeration, one can also detect the red fruit and smoke of the Pinot Noir, which is predominant in the blend. After a few minutes in the glass, warm and caramelised notes, reminiscent of macaroons, baked apples and tarte tatin, start to come through. The wine is deliciously luscious on the palate, which has a rich, velvety texture and a delicacy created by the freshness and the fine effervescence. The intensity of the Corsican lemon aromas is surprising, and combines well with concentrated candied citrus fruit, without too much acidity, drawn out by the great powdery and saline chalky freshness. The wine is serene, poised and dense, and lengthened by the delicate bubbles.

The 15 years spent resting “sur lattes” have given this wine an almost baroque radiance, born from the contrast between the magnificent body, the concentrated texture, the imposing saline freshness that accompanies the bouquet and the umami presence. This freshness reminds us of the radiance of youth and purity, as if time had been suspended.

Harvest Notes

The mild spring of 1997 brought on an early bud burst and was followed by bitterly cold temperatures in mid-April coupled with severe frosts which damaged the Verzenay and Verzy vineyards. Flowering took place early, on June 10th for the Côte des Blancs and Aÿ and on June 13th for Verzenay, and was immediately followed by a very cold and rainy spell which lasted through until early August and left us fearing the worst for our vines, due to the high threat of mildew and peduncular rot in particular. The return of better weather conditions in August and the warm and sunny weather in September saved a year that did not begin well! The harvests began on September 15th in the Vallée de la Marne, September 18th in the Montagne de Reims and September 22nd in the Côte des Blancs, and took place in bright sunshine!



TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Varietals: 62% Pinot Noir, 38% Chardonnay