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BORDEAUX

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THE HK WINE & SPIRITS FAIR

by Doug Rumsam, MD of our Hong Kong office



Armed to the teeth with brochures, price lists, corkscrews and flash drives, the 9 man team charged into battle on day one and took their positions at our sizeable booth. New and improved from last year, the help of Lauren and Vani was invaluable, so take a bow ladies.

The first morning was frantic. Guy quickly was tested on his mandarin and became a firm fixture in the investment booth, extolling the virtues of fine wine as a commodity with great success. Yvonne was mobbed by crowds of mainlanders eager

to learn more about everything BI and the rest of us desperately tried to save her from being trampled.

The afternoon came and went with continued activity and we found ourselves 70 brochures short, 100 price lists lighter and generally in a state of shock. The first observation was that the buyers this year were far more informed. They know how to transport wines, they understand payment terms and they are looking at a broader range of wines. Mainland distributors and retailers have learned quickly and are smart cookies.

On the evening of the first day a few of us attended the HK wine awards. Knocking back sparkling Shiraz and some youthful Aussie wine that felt like a sledge hammer rattling around the tonsils, it served as a reminder that we are a little spoiled with the wines we enjoy on a daily basis...and why most of us stick to the old world!

Day two was a little more sedate and Yvonne was able to breath. Our new recruit Nikki did a good job of assisting us all with extra Mandarin translation and we all took turns resting our battered feet.

Day 3 was like racing the bulls in Pamplona: the public open day. Cue rather red-nosed patrons stumbling down the walkways clutching glasses of wine and standing at your booth look eagerly for a refill, much like the young child from Oliver Twist: "please sir, can I have some more?". However, there were a few diamonds amongst the rough and we came away

happy with a day's work. The fair ended with some good clients enjoying a bottle of 1997 Grand Puy Lacoste with us. Soft and classic GPL, this has no rough edges and is charming, surprising our VIP guest with its quality. Finished off with a few beverages at the local pub and a plate of deep fried whitebait and pigs ears, the snack of choice after 3 long days.

WHAT WE'VE BEEN DRINKING RECENTLY

Chave Hermitage 89

A star with lovely sweet red and black fruit, sweet tannins and lovely length. Time to drink a few more I think. (96 points)
Gary Boom, MD of BI

La Grange aux Belles Côteaux L'Aubance '07

100% Chenin Blanc, clean, fresh and bursting with ripe pears and a touch of sweetness. Extremely pleasurable. (90 points)
Kristie Adams, Private and On-Trade Sales

Barolo Bric del Fiasc 89

An immense wine from Paolo Scavino, this was pure elegance with a satin texture and lovely depth of fruit. (97 points)
Sam Gleave, Sales Director

WHAT'S HOT IN THE UK & HK

"In the UK, we have seen unprecedented demand for the newly released Dom Pérignon 2002, a wine for both drinkers and investors alike. 2002 is arguably the greatest DP produced since the majestic 1990 and at a release price of £820 per case of 12 bottles, it shows plenty

of upside potential, trading and at a noticeable discount to its recent qualitative peers such as the 1990 vintage (trading at £2,000 per case of 12 bottles) and the 1996 vintage (trading at £1,750 per case of 12 bottles)"

- Gareth Birchley, Private Sales

"What's Hot in HK: Anything with a Chinese symbol on it; Lafite '08, Mouton '08, even my Mandarin copy of Rambo First Blood, recently sold on eBay for 50 quid..it's all in hot demand out here and commanding crazy prices"

- Guy Ruston, Private Sales

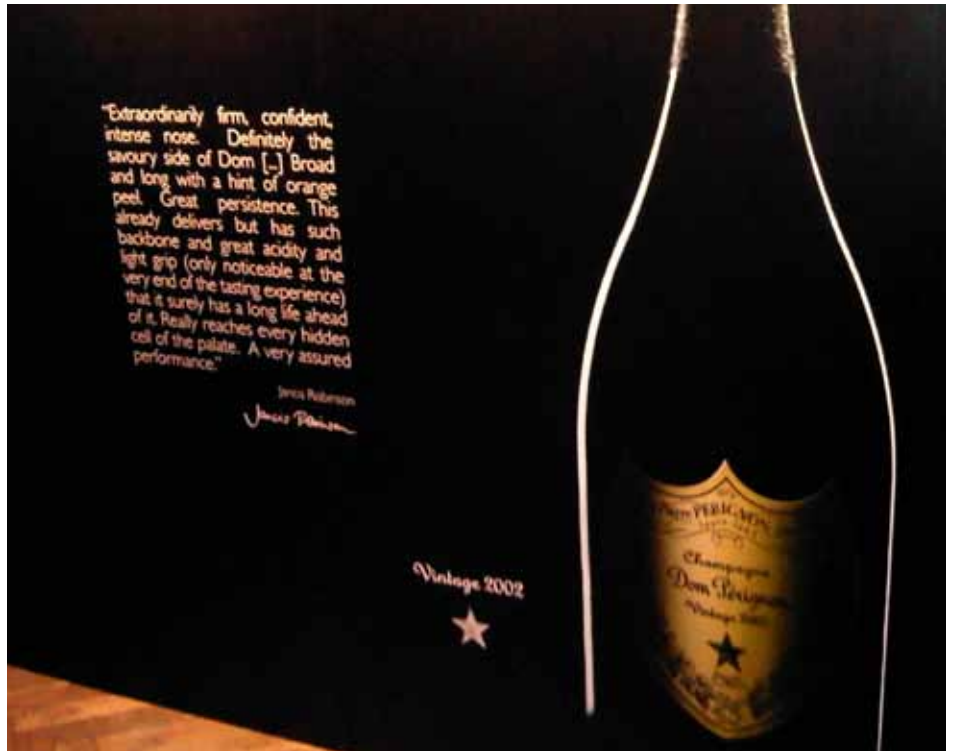
A PRIVATE UNVEILING OF DOM PERIGNON CHAMPAGNE

"This is becoming a habit"
by Guy Ruston, Private Sales

Week three in Hong Kong and my CrackBerry wakes me up with a reminder that we were hosting a Dom Pérignon tasting tonight. Nice!

Whether or not this is what I need after 3 days of 'pimping' BI at the HK Wine Trade Fair and a heavy session on Saturday (watching England's gallant defeat at the hands of the All Blacks), I can't think of many better things to do on a Monday night...especially when the line up of wines is: DP '02, DP Rose '00, DP Oenotheque '96 and a special surprise in DP Oenotheque '75.

No need to waste time telling you about the history and story of Pierre Pérignon or that the '02 is a pretty big deal let's just crack on with the wines.



Dom Pérignon 2002 – Tasted once before and this was another stellar showing from the new kid on the block. The Champagne that is not me. Park the truck, the trolley, the Lambo...whatever, load up with this beauty. It's delicious now but probably needs another couple of years to really hit its stride by which point the price will be bonkers because some nutter at an auction has bought a landfill size chunk of it at \$8,000,000 HKD a case due to his equally crazy mate having bid \$6,000,000. (94 points GR)

Dom Pérignon Rose 2000 – My glass is a bit too chilled so I let this one stand for a bit. Then I remembered the old Mr. Miyagi 'healing hands' technique from the Karate Kid (and no that isn't a Wanchai Sauna reference) and duly applied my hot hands to the glass. After a moment or two I begin to coax some aromatics from this young pup. Lovely sweet, red berry aromas start to roll out of the glass. Still pretty taut and mean on the palate but there is a nice balance and structure here that suggests this pup will grow up to be a well-bred hound. Awful metaphor I know...I think the bubbles are going to my head. (93+ points GR)

*Note that I'm a stingy scorer so this is some serious kit. If you fancy treating yourself this festive season we have a rare magnum of this in stock. Yours for just GBP 2500.

Dom Pérignon Oenotheque 1996 – Still an adolescent from one of the great Champagne vintages this is and will be something special. I've been lucky enough to have tasted a lot of '96s, including the regular vintage Dom, and the Oeno bears all the great characteristics of the vintage; laser-like precision, hugely, yet elegantly framed, layers of pinot and chardonnay all perfectly woven together. Top drawer. It also comes in three packs so why not treat yourself? (95+ points GR)

Dom Pérignon Oenotheque 1975 - Mature Champagne is always a treat and often when tasted side by side with younger and possibly not-yet-ready vintages it can flatter to deceive but not tonight. This is a glorious example of the Oenotheque style and the vintage. I'd say it's at the peak of its powers now but still has plenty of years ahead of it. Beautiful rich, golden colour with a lovely honeyed bouquet. This follows through well on the palate where there remains a hint of red currant framed in lovely nutty, buttery Montrachet-like fruit. This old dame has some serious length too. Bravo! (97* points GR)

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- 3 Masterclasses: 11 am CVNE – 45 Gran Reserva Years, 1.30 pm Rising Spanish Stars, 4pm Priorat & Montsant: New Leading Players

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