

CHABLIS SPECIAL FEATURE TOURING THE WHITE PRIDE OF FRANCE IN 33 WORLD-CLASS TASTINGS

Bimonthly Year 3 No. 11 - HKD 65 / RMB 65 / SGD 9 / MYR 22 / THB 200 / IDR 20,000

# SPIRITO di VINO

Culture and Quality for a Luxury Wine-Style

*Asia*

## CHAMPAGNE

*Dom Pérignon Vintage  
and the Geoffroy philosophy*

## BAROLO

*A preview of the 2010  
vintage for the king of reds*

## PINOT NOIR

*Between Burgundy,  
Australia and New Zealand*

## SOMMELIERS

*Talent and passion  
of the best five in Hong Kong*

## The colours of *Rosé*

FRESH AND PERFECT  
WITH ASIAN DISHES, HERE  
ARE QUALITY  
INTERNATIONAL ROSÉS  
FROM FRANCE  
TO ITALY AND PORTUGAL  
TO SOUTH AMERICA







This page, sommelier readying wine for the exclusive tasting. In the front is an opened bottle of Château Cos d'Estournel 2003, the second youngest claret of the evening which was served before dinner as amuse bouche. Right, a close-up of the star of the night - vintage 1870 - which was carefully re-corked with sophisticated techniques at the château in 1988 to preserve its integrity.



FRENCH WINES IN HK (A RETROSPECTIVE)

A sublime evening with the company of  
15 vintages of the great Saint-Estèphe spanning  
three centuries provoke immense curiosity

*by Jean Charles Viens photos by Wai-lok Cheung*

Travel through  
time into  
the past of Cos

SPIRITO DIVINO

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**COS D'ESTOURNEL 1961**

Bright garnet. Seductive bouquet showing cedar and sandalwood notes beautifully integrated with figs, prunes, floral and earthy scents. Silky, savoury and unctuous texture. Freshness and firmness suggesting more potential for ageing. Long peacock tail finish.



**COS D'ESTOURNEL 1953**

Medium garnet with orange rim. Beautiful bouquet with delightful integration of finesse and elegance showing notes of leather, cedar, dried tobacco and balsamic. Sensual pure silk texture in perfect harmony. Lovely intensity throughout its peacock tail of a finish.



**COS D'ESTOURNEL 1928**

Bright tawny. Revealing an intriguing and complex bouquet of soy sauce, tobacco and slight eucalypt notes in the nose. This old Cos d'Estournel 1928 is a wine with pungent and spicy personality. Savoury and leathery texture. Finish is suave and elegant.



**COS D'ESTOURNEL 1982**

Medium garnet with a thin rim. Cedar, dry tobacco, eucalypt, and notes of prunes and ginger on the nose composing its manly, suave and complex bouquet. The wine has a firm texture, on the other hand it is silky and caressing. Long seductive finish.

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To put our tasting in historical perspective, let's think that in 1870, Hong Kong had a population of 130,000 residents and it was six years before the telephone was invented. 1928 was the year when the first airplane landed in Hong Kong, two years after the first movie with sound track was ever produced. 1953 saw the first man reach the Mount Everest Summit and it was 1 year before the first color TV was introduced. In 1961, Hong Kong's population had reached 3.13 million and it was one year before its Kai Tak Airport opened. In 2003, Hong Kong's population reached 6.9 million and China sent its first human spaceflight in orbit. That all of the wines included in this tasting survived those eras in such a beautifully drinkable way was extraordinary. Visiting Château Cos d'Estournel is an exotic experience for the Château itself is a fascinating collection of architectural styles reminiscent of the Orient in so many aspects. With its pagodas and

bells resembling a Chinese temple, with its elephants guarding the entrance and its meticulously carved wooden panels from Zanzibar, it is not surprising that Louis-Gaspard d'Estournel, its founder, was once called "the maharajah of Saint-Estèphe". Nevertheless, what set the tone of our extraordinary tasting was most likely its motto carved into its façade: "Semper Fidelis". "Always Faithful". This loyalty to perfection has been the guiding principle that has inspired his successors until now to give us wines that are powerful, pure, and renowned for their long ageing ability. Certainly, our tasting clearly demonstrated that the wines of Château Cos d'Estournel can age not only over decades but also for more than a century. Organized by The Fine Wine Experience, a wine merchant and exceptional wine event curator, the tasting took one year to prepare. The wines were carefully sourced from three origins. The Château





### Cos D'Estournel 1995

Medium ruby with a thin rim. Timid nose with subtle notes of prunes, stewed black fruits, cedar and wood dust. Fresh with a dense mid-palate. Silky and caressing texture. Long satisfying finish perfuming with sandalwood and earthy notes. Potential to keep.



### Cos D'Estournel 1985

Deep Garnet. Deep and tight nose with faint notes of cedar and sandalwood. Slight note of eucalyptus and mint. Condensed black fruits and prunes. Silky but firm texture with definite concentration. A "steel fist in a velvet glove". Potential to develop further.



### Cos D'Estournel 2000

Medium deep ruby. Beautifully interwoven aromas displaying cedar, figs and spices. Pure, complex and pleasant. Fresh with medium tannins and very silky. Seductive and caressing. Long perfumed finish with intensity. Ready but can certainly keep another 10 years.



### Cos D'Estournel 1870

Clear tawny. Extremely complex bouquet. Integrated and sound with intense gamey character and delicate rancio with spices, coffee and balsamic notes. Real interest on the palate with a silky, savoury and unctuous texture. Still alive and expressive after 45 minutes in glass.

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provided several of the bottles directly from their cellars as well as from a reputable collector based in France. The star of the evening, the 1870, was acquired at an auction held by Sotheby's in late 2013. At the time, Serena Sutcliffe MW, its head of wine had declared it as being "from impeccable provenance". In fact, as Michael Wu, director of the company stated at the beginning of dinner, "provenance is the number one concern throughout the planning of such events to insure the outmost integrity of each tasting". Linden Wilkie founded the outfit in London in 2003 after reading Michael Broadbent's book "Vintage Wine" which includes his tasting notes of more than 50 years in the trade. Wilkie thought "I want to drink this book!" and he set out to organize exceptional tastings for connoisseurs to experience these wines and to share among each other. Château Cos d'Estournel, represented during the event by

its CEO, Aymeric de Gironde, is located at the southern fringe of the commune of Saint-Estèphe in the Médoc. Ranked Second Growth in the 1855 classification it is separated only by a stream from the illustrious First Growth Château Lafite. In fact, Cos, as it is called affectionately by many, is considered "a super second" so high the quality of its wines is and so long is their ageing potential. Unlike many of its neighbors, Cos has a high proportion of heavy clay in its soil and therefore has a high percentage of merlot planted on its estate – 40% in total. Fuller bodied than Cabernet sauvignon, Merlot provides its signature "fleshiness". Nevertheless, "Cos" means "hill of pebbles" in the dialect of Gascon and the estate has some of the deepest gravelly soils around allowing the cabernet sauvignon in which it is most suitably planted to develop high concentration and firm tannic structure but also



## The 1961, voted best of the night by the majority, impress with its long aging ability

elegance and refinement all at once. As de Gironde stated, “it is the art of blending that brings the complexity to the wines”. The key for Cos, he continued, is “to achieve power with elegance”. Dinner proceeded in various flights each organized to a theme based on expectations from previous tastings and critics descriptions. We soon found out that the wines defied not only time, but preconceptions as well. We started with 2005 and 2003 before dinner, as “amuse bouche”. It was the 2003 that provided the first surprise of the evening. We have all heard how hot the summer had been then. And so, we expected the 2003 to be heavy. In fact, it was fresh, with a beautiful complexity, and nicely integrated tannins. Lovely now but certainly a wine to “forget” in the cellar for another 10 to 15 years. On this flight, we had the 2000, 1996 as well. But it was the 1985 which stood out with its firm backbone and silky texture. Clearly an “iron fist in a silk glove”. Our second flight included the 1961, 1949, and the 1870. As it was poured into our glass, a respectful silence descended upon the room and it was not without some trepidation that most of us reached for it. The second surprise of the evening was that it was in excellent condition. The bouquet was fascinating with a very delicate complexity interwoven as the most intricate of tapestry. It was not maderized or

oxidized. Yet, it had an aroma that was unusual and never before scented. Slightly gamey or medicinal perhaps? Certainly the nose was pleasant and bewitching like a seductress from the Far East. The palate was extraordinary with a sensuously caressing unctuousness. It stood still for some time. Impressively, after 45 minutes in the glass, it remained faithful to itself as it had been on the first nose. A fascinating experience. The 61 was voted the best of the evening by the majority. Not surprisingly, it was issued from an exceptional vintage and impressively the wine showed that it still had much life into it. A classic and an absolute beauty!

The flight before last included the 1995, 1986, 1955, and 1928 which came second together with the 1953 served in the last flight. Also from an exceptional vintage the 28 was graceful and wonderfully suave and elegant. The last flight included the 1990, 1982, and the 1953, de Gironde and this writer’s favourite of the evening. An extremely charming wine with a bouquet delightfully and delicately scented showing leather, spices, cedar and tobacco. Its structural balance was archetypical of what cellaring wine is all about: feeling as a perfect sphere on the palate. Caressing yet titillating. Silky yet tense. A perfume to lose one’s mind and a finish in a peacock tail that lasted forever. 🍷

Top of page, Aymeric de Gironde, CEO of Château Cos d’Estournel ([www.estournel.com](http://www.estournel.com)) who flew in from Bordeaux to join the astounding vertical tasting, posed with Linden Wilkie, founder of the Fine Wine Experience which brought a line-up of impressive vintages to the table beside them. Adjoining page, guests putting down notes seriously memorizing the once-in-a-lifetime experience.



