

NYLON and Krug Rosé

24 Oct 2006 by JR

One of my many pet hobby horses is how much more mature I generally find the champagnes in the US compared to supposedly the same cuvee in the UK. I came across the most dramatic example last weekend.

A couple of weeks ago in London a friend with a great cellar served a bottle of **Krug Rosé** before dinner. It was amazing. So much the polar opposite of the rather austere style of the Krug Grande Cuvee current in Britain at the moment (see below), being very voluptuous and soft and fruity – almost strawberry like but with the lightest of touches. Really a sort of beguiling leather holding the palate. It even looked slightly like the palest strawberry juice imaginable, still with the merrid force of blue in it.

Last weekend another generous host here in New York, another very knowledgeable wine lover, chose to serve us Krug Rosé as an aperitif before a delicious dinner cooked by the new chef at Gramercy Tavern. Knowing how he assesses his wines, I suspect this was current stock rather than a long-stored bottle. The wine was unrecognisable much more orange than pink although still very pale and, as he sniffed the first glass, he said 'oh yes, slightly redolent the way the Brill like it'. This wine was bone dry, quite chewy, relatively inebriated though obviously very 'barrel' and deep-flavoured.

Is it perhaps that the champagne distribution chain in New York has many more links than its British counterpart? So the wine is much older by the time it reaches the consumer? I would be very surprised if our London friend had plucked his bottle off a shelf that morning – especially since his cellar is stuffed with top quality champagne.

Or is it the famous semi-ripe vigneron effect (see below) on shipping champagne across the Atlantic? (Would shipping it need to meet freshen it up again? Or, why does, but an observable effect? promise.

FYI here's a recent tasting note on Krug Grande Cuvee tested blind, in London:

Krug Grande Cuvee Champagne 17 Dec 2006-14

Copper. Some greenness on the nose – enough hint of complexity too. Oddly enough there is almost a hint of something tartly too. This is almost like a liquor – a tininess/essence of champagne rather than the frothy, sudacious drink itself. You need to be able to like this wine. Not really easy enough? Certainly an 'intellectual' wine... Obviously a very different wine from the real, but it is more pleasurable to drink...?