Tasting 1870 Cos - again

25 Nov 2009 by Simon Berry

26 Nov NEWS EXTRA *- That possible additonal donation mentioned below has just arrived on Simon Berry's desk. And is another £10,000!!!!!*

Some of you may remember that Berry Bros held an exceptional Ch Latour dinner in aid of Wine Relief, the wine-related fund-raising initiative for Comic Relief on Red Nose Day last March. This helped the company to raise nearly £150,000.

I thought you might be interested to read the following email from Simon Berry of Berrys (pictured) received yesterday:

We had the dinner auctioned for Wine Relief [at the Ch Latour dinner last March] last night. As you might remember, there was a very generous bid of £10,000 from one of our top customers, on the understanding that we would replicate the Jean-Guillaume Prats dinner [centrepiece of the BBC4 tv programme about Berrys at which the company's penultimate bottle of 1870 Cos was served to a table of customers who failed to get within 80 years of its vintage] and serve our final bottle of 1870 Cos. I said yes on the understanding that I would be there as well, having failed to get the nod for the previous dinner!

Anyway....

We started with the 1989 Jacquesson 'Signature' and 2001 Chevalier-Montrachet from Leflaive, then moved onto a double magnum of 1970 Cos just as a sighter. A hundred years on, we were worried about the 1870, which had a very low shoulder level - clearly Staples had picked the better of the two last year! And when it was opened it was fairly stinky so we activated plan B and decanted a bottle of 1870 Ch Margaux. At which point the Cos magically lost its bottle stink, so we were left with having to drink both....

And they were fabulous. Cos a little more maderised on the nose, but both with astonishing sweetness and wonderful, wonderful length. The Margaux seemed a little frailer to start with (despite an extrordinary bright, dark colour) but developed over a good half hour in the glass, ending with coffee/ toffee flavours that still filled the glass with only a drop left in the bottom. And I can now understand why everyone was fooled by the age of the last Cos - tasted side by side with its great-great (how does one count these things?) grandson, it was plainly from the same property, still with the same structure and fruit. And everlasting depth, and layers and layers of flavour. Amazing.

And then we went a little bit further back in time with a 1868 Tokay Essencia....

Oh, and then went very contemporary with the 1955 [Quinta do Noval] Nacional.

The point of this is not just to show off (although I was almost tempted to twitter for the first time!) but to prove that we mean what we say when we offer 'the bigger the bid, the better the wine'. Plus our favourite customer then announced that he hadn't paid enough, and would be upping his donation to Wine Relief: I'll let you know by how much, but last night he was in the mood to be generous, I think.

Just thought you'd like to know!

Wonderful news about that additional donation. And I'm sure we're all very relieved to know that Berrys' cellars are so well furnished and, obviously, keep their contents in such good condition.