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J A C Q U A R T

April 7, 2014

The Handbook joined Champagne Jacquart on their trip across the channel to Reims to visit their house for a little bit of wine tasting and a whole lot of Champagne to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Champagne Jacquart this year.

But first to food, arriving in Paris we headed straight to Mary Goodnight, a Thai restaurant in the 16th district of the city. Having been built in a former train station, the restaurant was surprisingly intimate, I ate sticky pork with rice and mille feuille –separately of course, together would be a little interesting...

In the morning we set off for Reims; Champagne Jacquart's house is one of the most impressive in the area, with black, wrought-iron gates opening onto a sweeping drive. The house has seen days as a private home and a girls' dormitory, but now it is Champagne Jacquart's headquarters - it's where some of their best Champagne is housed and where all the sampling is carried out.

We started the morning by hearing about how the Champagne is made and sampling clear wines (which is before the wine has been blended) they are more acidic than the wines that actually ends up being sold - being an avid fan of Champagne (who isn't?) it was fascinating to hear about the different blends and really notice the different flavours, aromas and how the wines stick to different parts of your mouth (no, I hadn't realised they do this either).

We sampled three Champagnes: Brut Mosaïque, which had aromas of pear and hawthorn, and had been created with global palettes in mind; the Rose Brut - which goes beautifully with cheese and puddings without being overly sweet and apparently it has become more popular in recent years as men have come to realise it is perfectly acceptable to drink Rose Champagne - oh dear! The last Champagne we tried was the Extra Brut, a non -vintage, which was created to be paired with food and had wonderful aromas reminiscent of a bakery. If you get a chance to try it, then the Extra Brut should not be missed.

Lunch was a beautiful five course menu with matching Champagnes. We started with oysters in

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cucumber jelly with Aquitaine Caviar which was matched with Champagne Jacquart Blanc de Blancs 2006, we followed this with butterflied roasted langoustines with a citrus and coriander infused olive oil - and a glass of the Rosé Mosaïque, which was light, elegant and paired beautifully. The braised sea bass came with a shellfish sauce and was so succulent with a crisp skin - we all agreed that it was some of the best sea bass that we had had in a long time, this was matched with Champagne Jacquart Cuvée Alpha 2005. Then, as we were in France we had the cheese course, creamy, finely sliced Comté with rocket and Cuvée Champagne Jacquart Nominée 2002. To finish off was an apple, pear and lemon éclair - in the Jacquart colours of white and bright green and unlike the usually sugary, sticky éclairs this was much lighter and refreshing and with this we had a Cuvée Champagne Jacquart Demi – Sec.

Our last glass of Champagne we got to pick and so we opted for a 1990 vintage - which had a dark, strong aroma and, as we were informed, was one of their best vintages.

But don't fret if you can't drop everything and jump on a train to Reims, Champagne Jacquart can be bought in Harrods or can be found in London hotels such as the Montcalm, Flemings, The Rosewood and St James Hotel and Club...phew.

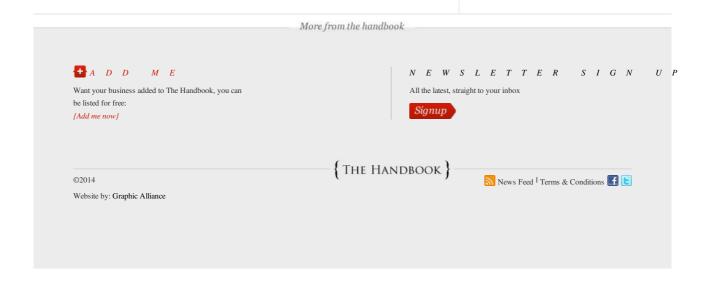
www.champagne-jacquart.com

Posted by Emily Gray at 09:30 am | Comments »









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