

WINE RATINGS POL ROGER

Sarah Wong
foodandwine@scmp.com

No doubt much champagne was consumed to celebrate Queen Elizabeth's 60 years on Britain's throne. Champagne house Pol Roger has a long-standing association with the aristocracy and statesmen. Its most famous ambassador was Sir Winston Churchill, renowned for his love of champagne. Patrice Noyelle, president of Pol Roger, quotes the late prime minister: "A magnum is the perfect size for two gentlemen if one of them is not drinking."

In 1944, Churchill met Odette Pol-Roger in Paris. They developed a friendship that lasted until his death. It was reputed that Churchill was sent a case of the vintage 1928 every year on his birthday until it eventually ran out. In tribute to him, a new champagne called Cuvée Sir Winston Churchill was created.

According to Noyelle, the blend was based on Churchill's preference for rich, powerful wine styles and is made predominantly from pinot noir and a small percentage of chardonnay. The first Winston Churchill champagne was released in 1975 after receiving the consent of Mary Soames, Churchill's daughter. Noyelle says the volume, blend and origin has been a closely guarded secret. He does say that the grapes come from Grand Cru vineyards. Since the first release, more than 12 vintages have been

made – most recently in 1999. Today Pol Roger is one of nine champagne houses bearing the royal warrant declaring it a supplier of champagne to the royal family. To qualify, companies must have supplied goods and services to the royal household for at least five years. Other warrant holders include Lanson, Laurent-Perrier, Moët & Chandon, Veuve Clicquot, Bollinger and Krug.

Last year, Pol Roger was chosen to be served at Prince William and Kate Middleton's wedding reception. According to Noyelle, the original order was in standard 750ml bottles, but was changed to magnum size (1.5 litres). The final order was for 300 magnums of Pol Roger Brut Reserve.

Pol Roger Brut Reserve NV

The house style is made from a blend of 30 still wines. The grapes used are 33 per cent pinot noir, 34 per cent chardonnay and 33 per cent pinot meunier. Apart from the royal wedding, it is served at

Sandhurst, the military academy where Prince William and Prince Harry received their training.

Restrained citrus, mineral, notes on the nose. On the palate it is rich, very well balanced with crisp acidity and a creamy aftertaste. HK\$360



Pol Roger Blanc de Blanc 2000

Made from 100 per cent chardonnay grapes originating from Grand Cru vineyards in the Cote des Blancs.

Delicate toasty, buttery notes. Medium body, with a taut structure, with good acidity and a very long finish. Very youthful, but it shows some maturity.

HK\$660

Pol Roger Pure Brut, NV

This is the newest wine in the range. Noyelle says

this wine shows Pol Roger's modern side in following the trend to create champagne with no dosage (sugar). It sells extremely well in Japan as it complements Japanese cuisine, especially sushi.

It's made from a basically equal blend of pinot noir, chardonnay and pinot meunier from reserve wines that are at least three years old.

Brioche, nutty aromatics. Rounder body with softer acidity, good intensity and a razor-sharp finish.

Perfect for drinking as an aperitif or as a complement with food.

HK\$450



Stockists

Altaya Wines
altayawines.com
Pol Roger Brut Reserve NV, also available from
pontiwinecellars.com.hk,
HK\$380

