

We Could Be Royals

MAISON LOUIS LATOUR OFFERS A BREADTH OF BURGUNDY AT THE BEVERLY WILSHIRE HOTEL

by Kyle Billings

Maison Louis Latour in Burgundy.

IN CENTURIES PAST, a rivalry ensued as French royalty continuously debated the respective merits of Champagne and Burgundy. But across the pond in Beverly Hills, California, a modern entente of sorts was recently established at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel, where American Wine & Spirits and Maison Louis Latour showcased some of Burgundy's finest in the ornate and aptly named Champagne Room.

Maison Louis Latour's demonstrated tradition of Burgundian renown dates back to the producer's inception more than 200 years ago. Half of its current holdings are Grand Cru, the largest such collection in the region. The current proprietor is the seventh Louis Latour, and he furthers the legacy of the 11 generations that preceded him as he oversees the house.

Upon entry, members of the trade were handed a Riedel Overture Double Magnum; described as the "true all-purpose glass," it served as the tasting vessel for more than 50 expressions of some of the most vaunted villages, vineyards, and vintages of modern Burgundy.

The first selection of bottles comprised Chardonnays from Simonnet-Febvre, including recent expressions—among them two Grand Crus—of Chablis. The courtly procession then continued southward with the exhibition of Louis Latour's Chardonnays from the Côte de Beaune. Still in their vibrant infancy, 2016 and 2017 wines from vineyards in Meursault, Puligny-Montrachet, Corton, and Montrachet were a study in freshness and potential.

Often the prize of nouveau som-

meliers, Cru Beaujolais was center stage thanks to a selection from Brouilly producer Henry Fessy. The company picks its harvests manually and prides itself on its sustainable practices and high quality, sourcing from nine different crus. From vines no younger than 40 years old, Fessy's three offerings featured fruit from Morgon, Fleurie, and Régnié.

Attendees were finally treated to the archives, with Louis Latour unveiling a fall library of older vintages from 1999 to 2012 and Puligny-Montrachet to Romanée-Saint-Vivant. It was a murderers' row of Cote d'Or big shots: Demonstrating a plenitude of diversity in style, quality, soil, and vintage, it spoiled wine buyers with an embarrassment of riches fit for royalty of any era. **SJ**

PHOTO COURTESY OF MAISON LOUIS LATOUR