APPRENTI DU VIN

WSET Level 4 Diploma — D4: Sparkling Wines

Paper 02 — Answer Key & Explanations

Essay Paper

1. Compare the approaches to producing quality sparkling wine in Champagne, Franciacorta, and England. Discuss the factors that contribute to each region's identity, including climate, grape varieties, regulations, and winemaking philosophy.

(20 marks)

Marking Points:

- Climate comparison: Champagne's cool continental climate (average growing season temperature ~16.5C); Franciacorta's moderating influence from Lake Iseo creating a milder mesoclimate in Lombardy; England's marginal maritime climate (Kent, Sussex, Hampshire) with growing season temperatures comparable to Champagne in the 1980s-90s
- Grape varieties: Champagne relies on Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, and Meunier; Franciacorta permits Chardonnay, Pinot Noir (Pinot Nero), and Erbamat (recently authorised as a climate adaptation variety); England predominantly uses the same Champagne trio, with particular success from Chardonnay
- Regulatory frameworks: Champagne's strict AOC rules (maximum yields, minimum ageing 15 months NV / 36 months vintage); Franciacorta DOCG requires 18 months minimum for non-vintage, 30 months for vintage (Millesimato), 60 months for Riserva; English sparkling has PDO status but less prescriptive regulation
- Winemaking philosophy: Champagne's house style built on blending across villages and vintages with large reserve wine libraries; Franciacorta's estate-driven model closer to Burgundy, with single-estate production; England's artisanal approach with smaller-scale production and often single-vintage focus
- Soil and terroir: Champagne's chalk (Cote des Blancs, Montagne de Reims) and Kimmeridgian clay; Franciacorta's glacial moraines with mineral-rich gravels; England's chalk downs (particularly the South Downs) geologically continuous with Champagne's Cretaceous chalk belt
- Market positioning and scale: Champagne ships ~300 million bottles annually; Franciacorta approximately 20 million; English sparkling approximately 10 million; each occupies a different commercial niche
- Key producers: Champagne (Krug, Bollinger, Louis Roederer, Egly-Ouriet); Franciacorta (Ca' del Bosco, Bellavista, Ferghettina, Mosnel); England (Nyetimber, Ridgeview, Wiston, Gusbourne, Hambledon)
- Climate change implications: warming temperatures challenge Champagne's acidity profile while potentially benefiting England; Franciacorta's Erbamat addition acknowledges the need for acid-retaining varieties

Model Answer:

The traditional method sparkling wines of Champagne, Franciacorta, and England represent three distinct expressions of a shared ambition: to produce world-class fizz through secondary fermentation in bottle. Each region brings a different combination of climate, terroir, regulation, and philosophy to this goal, and the comparison reveals much about how place shapes sparkling wine identity.

Champagne remains the reference point. Its cool continental climate, with an average growing season temperature of approximately 16.5 degrees Celsius, produces base wines of high acidity and moderate alcohol — the ideal foundation for sparkling wine. The region's celebrated chalk subsoils, particularly in the Cote des Blancs and parts of the Montagne de Reims, provide excellent drainage and contribute a mineral tension to the wines. The appellation's regulatory framework is among the world's most exacting: maximum yields of 10,200 kg/ha (adjusted annually), minimum ageing of fifteen months for non-vintage and thirty-six for vintage, and strict blending rules. The grande marque model — exemplified by houses like Krug, Bollinger, and Louis Roederer — is built on the art of assemblage: blending across dozens of villages, multiple vintages, and all three permitted varieties (Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Meunier) to create a consistent house style. Reserve wines, stored in perpetuity by the major houses, are the secret weapon of this system.

Franciacorta, in Lombardy, offers a markedly different model. Nestled south of Lake Iseo, the region benefits from the lake's moderating influence, creating a mesoclimate milder than its position in northern Italy would suggest. The DOCG regulations are notably stricter than Champagne in some respects: non-vintage Franciacorta must age for a minimum of eighteen months, Millesimato (vintage) for thirty months, and Riserva for sixty months. The production model is estate-

driven rather than negociant-driven; houses like Ca' del Bosco and Bellavista control their own vineyards and produce wines that express individual estate character. The permitted varieties mirror Champagne (Chardonnay and Pinot Nero), with the recent addition of Erbamat, an indigenous white grape authorised specifically for its acid-retaining properties as a hedge against climate change. Stylistically, the best Franciacorta tends toward a rounder, slightly more fruit-forward profile than Champagne, with less overt autolytic character and a creamier mousse.

England's emergence as a serious sparkling wine region is one of the most remarkable developments in 21st-century wine. The chalk soils of the South Downs in Sussex, Hampshire, and Kent are geologically continuous with those of Champagne — part of the same Cretaceous chalk belt that stretches beneath the English Channel. The maritime climate is cool and marginal, with growing season temperatures today comparable to those Champagne experienced in the 1980s and 1990s. Producers like Nyetimber, Ridgeview, Wiston, and Gusbourne work primarily with Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, and Meunier, producing wines of piercing acidity, delicate fruit, and an elegance that has drawn favourable comparisons to vintage Champagne. The scale remains modest — approximately ten million bottles annually compared to Champagne's three hundred million — and the regulatory framework, while covered by PDO status, is less prescriptive than either Champagne's AOC or Franciacorta's DOCG.

Climate change is reshaping the competitive dynamics among these three regions. Champagne faces the challenge of maintaining its signature tension and acidity as temperatures rise; the 2003 and 2022 vintages demonstrated the risks of excessive ripeness. Franciacorta's proactive adoption of Erbamat signals an acknowledgement that acid management will become increasingly important. England, conversely, stands to benefit from warming: longer growing seasons, more reliable ripeness, and the potential to produce still wines alongside sparkling. The coming decades may see the hierarchy among these regions shift in ways that would have seemed inconceivable a generation ago.

2. Critically assess the grower Champagne movement and its challenge to the grande marque model. What are the strengths and limitations of each approach, and how have consumer and critical perceptions shifted?

(20 marks)

Marking Points:

- Define the distinction: recoltant-manipulant (RM) growers grow their own grapes and make their own wine; negociant-manipulant (NM) houses buy grapes from contracted growers (historically up to 80-95% of fruit) and blend for consistency of house style
- Historical context: the grande marque model dominated the 20th century; grower Champagne was largely sold locally or in bulk until pioneers like Anselme Selosse (Jacques Selosse) and Pierre Larmandier began estate-bottling for quality in the 1980s-90s
- The grower argument: terroir expression, single-village or single-vineyard identity, lower yields, organic/biodynamic viticulture, vintage variation as a virtue; wines reflect place rather than brand
- The grande marque argument: blending across villages and vintages creates complexity unachievable from single sites; massive reserve wine libraries (Krug holds reserves back 10-15 years) provide depth and consistency; quality control through scale and investment in technology
- Critical and market shift: importers like Terry Theise (USA) and grower-focused merchants championed RM producers from the 2000s; critics like Peter Liem and Antonio Galloni gave visibility; grower Champagne now commands premium prices and cult following
- Limitations of the grower model: vintage variation can mean inconsistency; small production limits availability; many RM producers lack the resources for extended ageing; not all growers produce at the quality level of the movement's stars
- Specific producers: Growers — Selosse, Egly-Ouriet, Cedric Bouchard (Roses de Jeanne), Laherte Freres, Jerome Prevost (La Closerie), Vouette et Sorbee; Houses — Krug, Bollinger, Louis Roederer, Pol Roger, Charles Heidsieck
- The blurring middle ground: houses like Louis Roederer have adopted organic viticulture and single-parcel wines; growers like Egly-Ouriet age wines as long as grande marques; the binary distinction is increasingly inadequate

Model Answer:

The rise of grower Champagne over the past three decades represents the most significant challenge to the established order in the region since the post-phylloxera reconstruction of the early twentieth century. What began as a handful of vignerons bottling their own production has evolved into a movement that has fundamentally altered critical discourse, consumer expectations, and the definition of quality in Champagne.

The structural distinction is straightforward. Negociant-manipulant (NM) houses — the grandes marques — purchase grapes from contracted growers across the region, often sourcing eighty to ninety-five percent of their fruit from hundreds of suppliers. Their model is built on assemblage: the art of blending Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, and Meunier from multiple

villages and vintages to produce a consistent house style that transcends individual vintage or site character. Recoltant-manipulant (RM) growers, by contrast, farm their own vineyards and vinify their own fruit, typically producing wines from a single village or small cluster of parcels.

The grande marque model has formidable strengths. The reserve wine libraries maintained by the great houses are irreplaceable assets. Krug's Grande Cuvee blends wines from ten or more vintages spanning up to fifteen years; Charles Heidsieck's Brut Reserve routinely incorporates forty percent reserve wines aged in chalk cellars. This depth of blending material creates complexity and consistency that no single-grower, single-vintage wine can replicate. The houses also have the financial resources for extended lees ageing, rigorous quality control, and global distribution.

The grower argument, however, is compelling in a different register. Anselme Selosse, who studied in Burgundy under Jean-Francois Coche before returning to his family's vineyards in Avize, became the intellectual father of the movement in the 1980s. His radical proposition was that Champagne should be understood as a wine of terroir first and a product of assemblage second. Selosse's wines — oxidative, unsulphured, profoundly site-specific — shocked the establishment but inspired a generation. Producers like Cedric Bouchard (Roses de Jeanne), who makes single-vineyard, single-variety, single-vintage Champagnes from tiny yields in the Cote des Bar, have pushed the terroir thesis to its logical extreme. Jerome Prevost's La Closerie, from a single parcel of Meunier in Gueux, demonstrated that the region's most overlooked grape could produce wines of extraordinary depth. Egly-Ouriet in Ambonnay combines grower philosophy with grande marque-length ageing, resting non-vintage wines on lees for four years and vintage wines for eight or more.

The critical and commercial shift has been dramatic. In the early 2000s, American importer Terry Theise began championing grower producers, introducing the US market to names like Larmandier-Bernier, Pierre Gimonnet, and Vilmart. Specialist critics like Peter Liem (whose Champagne Guide became a reference work) and Antonio Galloni at Vinous gave grower wines serious analytical attention for the first time. Today, a bottle of Selosse Substance or Egly-Ouriet Brut Grand Cru can cost as much as Dom Perignon or Krug, a commercial reversal unthinkable in 1990.

Yet the grower model has genuine limitations. Vintage variation, celebrated by enthusiasts as authenticity, can mean inconsistency. Small production volumes create scarcity but also limit market impact; the entire grower movement produces a fraction of what Moet et Chandon alone ships annually. Many RM producers lack the cellar capacity for extended ageing, meaning their wines may be released before reaching full potential. And for every Selosse or Bouchard, there are hundreds of grower-bottled Champagnes of merely competent quality.

Perhaps the most interesting development is the erosion of the binary distinction itself. Louis Roederer, under chef de cave Jean-Baptiste Lecaillon, has converted its estate vineyards to organic and biodynamic viticulture and launched single-parcel wines that would not seem out of place in a grower portfolio. Bollinger has long maintained estate vineyards and practiced a quasi-grower philosophy. Conversely, the most ambitious growers have adopted the ageing regimes and quality investments traditionally associated with the grandes marques. The future of Champagne may lie not in the triumph of one model over the other but in a synthesis that honours both the art of assemblage and the truth of terroir.

3. Analyse the role of dosage in determining sparkling wine style. Discuss the technical, sensory, and commercial considerations, with reference to the current trend toward lower dosage levels.

(20 marks)

Marking Points:

- Definition and process: dosage (liqueur d'expedition) is a mixture of wine and sugar added after disgorgement to adjust sweetness; measured in grams per litre of residual sugar; the final step before corking
- Sweetness categories: Brut Nature/Zero (0-3 g/l, no added sugar), Extra Brut (0-6 g/l), Brut (0-12 g/l), Extra Dry/ Extra Sec (12-17 g/l), Sec (17-32 g/l), Demi-Sec (32-50 g/l), Doux (50+ g/l); Brut dominates the market at approximately 90% of production
- Sensory role of dosage: sugar balances acidity and bitterness; at low levels it rounds the palate without perceptible sweetness; at higher levels it creates an overtly off-dry or sweet style; dosage also affects aromatic perception by suppressing green or sharp notes
- Dosage as a blending tool: winemakers use dosage to fine-tune house style after extended lees ageing; the same base wine with 6 g/l versus 10 g/l dosage will present markedly different balance and texture
- The zero-dosage trend: driven by climate change (riper base wines need less correction), consumer demand for drier styles, and the grower movement's emphasis on unmasked terroir; producers like Drappier, Agrapart, and Laherte Freres have championed brut nature bottlings

- Arguments against very low dosage: without sufficient base wine quality and ageing, zero-dosage wines can taste austere, angular, or unbalanced; dosage masks defects in lesser wines and provides necessary harmony; some winemakers (notably Didier Gimonnet) argue a well-judged 8-9 g/l dosage enhances rather than obscures
- Dosage liqueur composition: most houses use cane sugar dissolved in still wine; some use MCR (mout concentre rectifie); experimental approaches include aged reserve wine or no-sugar dosage (topping up with wine only)
- Commercial considerations: Brut Nature commands a premium in specialist markets but represents a small niche; Brut remains the commercial standard; Demi-Sec has seen a revival for food pairing (dessert courses, Asian cuisine)

Model Answer:

Dosage is the final act of composition in sparkling winemaking, and arguably the most misunderstood. The addition of the liqueur d'expedition — a carefully calibrated mixture of wine and sugar — after disgorgement determines the finished sweetness level of the wine. But its influence extends far beyond simple sweetness. Dosage is a tool for balancing acidity, shaping texture, fine-tuning aromatic expression, and defining commercial style. The current movement toward lower dosage levels raises important questions about what constitutes quality and balance in sparkling wine.

The mechanics are straightforward. After disgorgement removes the lees sediment from the bottle neck, a small volume of wine is lost. This is replaced by the dosage liqueur, whose sugar concentration determines the wine's final classification. The EU categories range from Brut Nature (0-3 g/l, with no sugar added) through Brut (0-12 g/l, the dominant commercial category at approximately ninety percent of Champagne production) to Doux (above 50 g/l, exceedingly rare today but historically the norm in the nineteenth century, when dosage levels of 100-150 g/l were common).

The sensory role of dosage is nuanced. At moderate levels (8-12 g/l in a Brut), sugar is not perceived as sweetness per se but as textural roundness. It counterbalances the high acidity characteristic of Champagne's cool-climate base wines, softens any phenolic bitterness from skin contact during pressing, and modulates the perception of fruit. A well-dosed Brut from a house like Pol Roger or Billecart-Salmon achieves a seamless integration where the sugar is invisible but essential — remove it, and the wine would taste angular and incomplete. The dosage liqueur's composition matters too: most major houses dissolve cane sugar in reserve still wine, but some use MCR (mout concentre rectifie, a grape-derived sugar concentrate), and an increasing number of producers experiment with aged reserve wines as the dosage base, adding complexity rather than mere sweetness.

For the winemaker, dosage is the ultimate fine-tuning tool. After years of lees ageing, the chef de cave tastes the disgorged wine and calibrates the dosage to achieve the desired balance. This is not a formulaic calculation but an act of sensory judgement. The same base wine dosed at six grams per litre will present a leaner, more incisive profile than the same wine at ten grams per litre — both legitimate, but expressing different aesthetic choices. Krug, for instance, typically doses its Grande Cuvee at approximately 8-9 g/l, a level that provides generosity without compromising the wine's intellectual precision. Roederer's Cristal has moved toward 7-8 g/l in recent vintages, reflecting both riper fruit and a philosophical shift toward restraint.

The trend toward zero or very low dosage has gathered significant momentum since the early 2000s. Several forces converge: climate change has produced riper base wines with higher natural sugar and lower acidity, reducing the technical need for dosage correction. The grower Champagne movement, with its emphasis on terroir transparency, views dosage as a potential mask. Producers like Pascal Agrapart, Laherte Freres, and Drappier have made brut nature bottlings central to their ranges. In Franciacorta, the Dosaggio Zero category has become a prestige designation, with Ca' del Bosco and Bellavista producing acclaimed examples.

However, the zero-dosage philosophy has its critics. Didier Gimonnet of Pierre Gimonnet et Fils has argued persuasively that a thoughtfully judged dosage of eight to nine grams per litre enhances a wine's expression rather than concealing it, much as seasoning enhances food without masking its ingredients. Without sufficient base wine quality, phenolic ripeness, and extended lees ageing, brut nature wines risk tasting lean, hard, and incomplete. The fashion for zero dosage can become its own form of dogma, rewarding austerity over pleasure.

Commercially, Brut remains overwhelmingly dominant, providing the balance that most consumers expect. Brut Nature occupies a growing but still niche position in specialist retail and on-trade. Interestingly, Demi-Sec Champagne has experienced a modest revival, driven by sommelier interest in pairing sparkling wines with desserts, spiced cuisine, and Asian dishes where residual sugar provides a bridge to the food. The full spectrum of dosage, from zero to fifty grams per litre, remains one of sparkling wine's most versatile stylistic tools.

4. Discuss the chemistry of autolysis and its influence on the quality and style of Champagne. How do producers manipulate autolytic character, and what are the sensory consequences?

(20 marks)

Marking Points:

- Autolysis defined: the enzymatic breakdown of dead yeast cells (lees) after secondary fermentation in bottle; begins after approximately 9-12 months and intensifies over years of ageing
- Key biochemical processes: release of mannoproteins (enhance mouthfeel and foam stability), amino acids, nucleotides, and lipids through the action of beta-glucanases and proteases on yeast cell walls
- Sensory impact: contributes biscuit, brioche, toast, and bread-dough aromas; increases textural richness and perceived creaminess; improves mousse quality by stabilising smaller, more persistent bubbles
- Time on lees as a quality lever: non-vintage Champagne minimum 15 months (12 on lees); vintage minimum 36 months; prestige cuvees often aged 5-10+ years; Krug Grande Cuvee averages 7 years, Salon typically 10+
- Yeast strain selection: producers choose strains for autolytic potential; some strains autolyse more readily and release more mannoproteins, affecting the speed and intensity of character development
- Riddling and disgorgement timing: extended ageing on lees delays disgorgement; once disgorged, autolytic development ceases; recently disgorged (RD) bottlings exploit this by maximising lees contact before late release
- Counterarguments and balance: excessive autolytic character can mask fruit and terroir expression; some grower producers (Selosse, Larmandier-Bernier) favour shorter lees ageing to preserve vineyard identity
- Scientific studies: research by Tini, Veron, and others at CIVC demonstrates measurable increases in amino acid concentration and foam quality correlated with extended lees ageing

Model Answer:

Autolysis is the biochemical process at the heart of what distinguishes traditional method sparkling wines from those produced by tank method or transfer. It is the gradual self-destruction of dead yeast cells following secondary fermentation in bottle, and its management is one of the most consequential decisions a Champagne producer makes.

The process begins when yeast cells, having consumed the sugar added at tirage, die and settle as lees in the sealed bottle. After approximately nine to twelve months, enzymes within the yeast cells — principally beta-glucanases and proteases — begin to break down the cell walls. This releases a complex mixture of compounds: mannoproteins, amino acids, peptides, nucleotides, and lipids. Mannoproteins are particularly significant. Research conducted at the CIVC (Comite Interprofessionnel du Vin de Champagne) has demonstrated that these glycoproteins enhance mousse quality by stabilising the colloidal structure of the wine, producing smaller, more persistent bubbles. They also increase the perception of body and creaminess on the palate.

The sensory consequences of autolysis are profound. Wines aged for extended periods on lees develop characteristic aromas of brioche, toasted bread, biscuit, and sometimes hazelnut or marzipan. These compounds arise from Maillard-type reactions between amino acids and residual sugars, as well as from the direct contribution of nucleotides and fatty acids released during cell wall degradation. The textural impact is equally important: autolysed wines feel richer and more vinous, with a mousse that integrates more seamlessly into the palate.

Champagne's appellation rules set minimum lees ageing requirements that directly encode autolytic expectations. Non-vintage Champagne must spend a minimum of fifteen months in bottle, of which twelve must be on lees. Vintage Champagne requires thirty-six months minimum. However, the most quality-focused houses far exceed these minima. Krug's Grande Cuvee, a multi-vintage blend, typically rests on lees for approximately seven years. Salon, which produces only vintage wine from a single village (Le Mesnil-sur-Oger) and a single variety (Chardonnay), routinely ages for ten years or more before disgorgement. Bollinger's R.D. (Recently Disgorged) programme explicitly exploits the relationship between extended lees ageing and quality: these are vintage wines held on lees well beyond the standard disgorgement date, then released with minimal post-disgorgement ageing to preserve freshness.

Producers also manipulate autolytic character through yeast strain selection. Certain strains of Saccharomyces cerevisiae autolyse more rapidly and release higher concentrations of mannoproteins. The choice of strain therefore influences how quickly a wine develops complexity and mousse quality. Some houses maintain proprietary yeast cultures developed over decades for this purpose.

However, autolysis is not universally celebrated as a quality marker. A growing number of grower-producers argue that excessive lees character can mask terroir expression. Anselme Selosse, perhaps the most influential vigneron in modern Champagne, favours relatively shorter lees ageing for many of his wines, prioritising the expression of his Avize and Cramant vineyards over autolytic complexity. Pierre Larmandier of Larmandier-Bernier takes a similar approach, viewing

excessive brioche character as a form of standardisation that obscures the differences between sites.

This tension — between autolytic richness and terroir transparency — is one of the defining debates in contemporary Champagne. The chemistry of autolysis is well understood; its aesthetic value remains a matter of philosophical choice.

Tasting

5. You are presented with a Vintage Champagne Blanc de Blancs that has spent 8 years on its lees. Using the WSET Diploma Systematic Approach to Tasting (SAT), write a complete tasting note covering appearance, nose, palate, and an assessment of quality and readiness for drinking. Justify your conclusions with specific sensory evidence.

(25 marks)

Marking Points:

- Appearance: medium lemon-gold colour with fine, persistent mousse consistent with extended lees ageing
- Nose: complexity from autolytic characters — brioche, toasted almonds, honey — layered over evolved citrus (lemon curd) and subtle minerality
- Palate: full body for a sparkling wine, creamy mousse texture, high acidity providing backbone, flavours of baked apple, hazelnut, and chalky minerality with a long, complex finish
- Quality assessment: outstanding quality supported by complexity, concentration, balance, and exceptional length
- Readiness: drinking now but with potential to develop further over 5-10 years owing to the structural acidity and concentration

Model Answer:

Appearance: The wine shows a medium lemon-gold colour with green-gold tinges, clear and bright. The mousse is fine and persistent, forming delicate streams of tiny bubbles — hallmarks of extended lees ageing and quality base wine.

Nose: The nose is pronounced in intensity and highly complex. Primary Chardonnay fruit has evolved into lemon curd and baked apple, while eight years of autolysis have contributed pronounced brioche, toasted almond, and honeyed notes. Underneath, there is a subtle chalky minerality and hints of dried flowers. The aromatic profile is developing but still retains freshness.

Palate: The wine is dry with high acidity that remains vibrant and integrated. The mousse is exceptionally creamy and fine-textured, giving a rich mid-palate sensation. Body is medium-plus, unusual for sparkling wine and indicative of ripe Chardonnay fruit and extended ageing. Flavours mirror the nose — baked apple, hazelnut, brioche — with additional notes of white peach and a saline, mineral quality on the mid-palate. The finish is long, complex, and layered, with toasty, nutty persistence.

Conclusion: This is an outstanding wine. The complexity, concentration, balance between acidity and richness, and exceptional length all point to a top-tier Blanc de Blancs from a quality vintage. It is drinking beautifully now, with the autolytic complexity fully integrated, yet the high acidity and concentration suggest it could continue to develop positively for another five to ten years, gaining further tertiary complexity.

6. You are presented with a Non-Vintage rosé Champagne that has been recently disgorged. Using the WSET Diploma Systematic Approach to Tasting (SAT), write a complete tasting note covering appearance, nose, palate, and an assessment of quality and readiness for drinking. Justify your conclusions with specific sensory evidence.

(25 marks)

Marking Points:

- Appearance: salmon-pink to light copper colour with fine mousse; clarity and vibrancy appropriate for recent disgorgement
- Nose: fresh red-fruit-driven aromatics — wild strawberry, redcurrant, cherry — with restrained autolytic notes owing to recent disgorgement
- Palate: dry, high acidity, red berry fruit flavours with crisp mousse, medium body, and a clean, fresh finish
- Quality assessment: very good to outstanding quality based on precision, balance, and purity of fruit
- Readiness: drinking now in its primary freshness; could develop further complexity with short-term ageing post-disgorgement

Model Answer:

Appearance: The wine displays a salmon-pink colour with delicate copper highlights, bright and clear. The mousse is fine and lively with a persistent bead, reflecting careful winemaking and recent disgorgement that preserves vibrancy.

Nose: The nose is medium-plus to pronounced in intensity. It is dominated by fresh red fruit characters — wild strawberry, redcurrant, and hints of ripe cherry. Because the wine has been recently disgorged, autolytic notes are more restrained: a subtle biscuity quality sits behind the fruit rather than dominating. There are also floral hints of rose petal and a touch of citrus zest contributing freshness.

Palate: The wine is dry with high acidity that is bright and invigorating. The mousse is fine and creamy but carries a youthful liveliness. Body is medium. Red fruit flavours — strawberry, raspberry, and a touch of blood orange — are pure and well-defined. There is a gentle creaminess on the mid-palate, but the overall impression is of freshness and precision rather than richness. The finish is medium-plus in length, clean, and driven by red fruit and mineral notes.

Conclusion: This is a very good to outstanding rosé Champagne. The quality is evidenced by the purity and definition of the fruit, the balanced acidity, and the elegant mousse. Recent disgorgement means the wine is at its most vibrant and fruit-forward. It is ideal for drinking now to enjoy its freshness and primary character, though it could gain additional complexity with six to twelve months of post-disgorgement ageing as autolytic notes integrate further.