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FINE WINE

What makes a wine truly exceptional? It takes an ensemble of different elements – namely outstanding terroir, winemaking and historical pedigree – bound together in perfection, to forge something far greater than the sum of their parts.

Latour is such a wine. Indeed, no other Bordeaux can match Latour for power, depth of flavour, and grandeur. Moreover, its historical pedigree is unparalleled; many now famous châteaux were no more than farms in the Middle Ages, but the seigneurie of Latour had vineyards as far back as the 14th century. The estate remained in the same family's hands for several generations, until 1670 when François de Chavannes purchased Latour, leaving it to his niece. It then passed by marriage into the de Clauzel family.

By the early 18th century, Latour was fetching the same price as Lafite in northern Europe, and by 1780 the English nobility were purchasing more than 80 per cent of Latour's production. Yet no one bothered to build a fine chateau on the estate until 1864. As generation succeeded generation, the number of shareholders proliferated. By the 1950s, more than 65 investors had a stake in Latour's future. A decade later, two British companies – Pearson and Harvey's of Bristol – purchased controlling shares in Latour, entrusting a local wine broker, Jean-Paul Gardère, to run the estate.

By the late 1980s, Pearson had become part of the larger Allied Lyons company, an outfit which ran into serious financial trouble in the early 1990s. So it was hardly unexpected when Allied Lyons sold Latour to a French industrialist (now chairman of Kering), François-Henri Pinault, in 1993.

Today, any aficionado who has been fortunate enough to sample older vintages will concede that in style, Latour has scarcely changed. It has always been renowned for its power, fullness, concentration and immense complexity. Like Château Lafite, it is an utter waste of time to drink Latour young – its owner's private collection of ancient vintages proves that Latour can age gracefully for up to a century.

One of the original four Grand Crus, Château Latour is eulogised for its power and pedigree. For the first time ever, the château has established a permanent base outside of Bordeaux within The Club at Four Seasons Ten Trinity Square

WORDS: JAMES LAWRENCE



The problem with Latour, however, is managing to find any at a fair price. Rare, older vintages in particular are hard to come by, and usually only available at auction at considerable risk and expense – the old adage caveat emptor readily applies to buying wine at auction: if your Latour is corked, there is no refund.

This brings me nicely onto the Ten Trinity Square Private Club, which opened in autumn this year to great acclaim. Its owners, for the first time in the estate's history, have convinced Latour to lend its name away from the vineyards with the launch of the world's only Château Latour Discovery Room.



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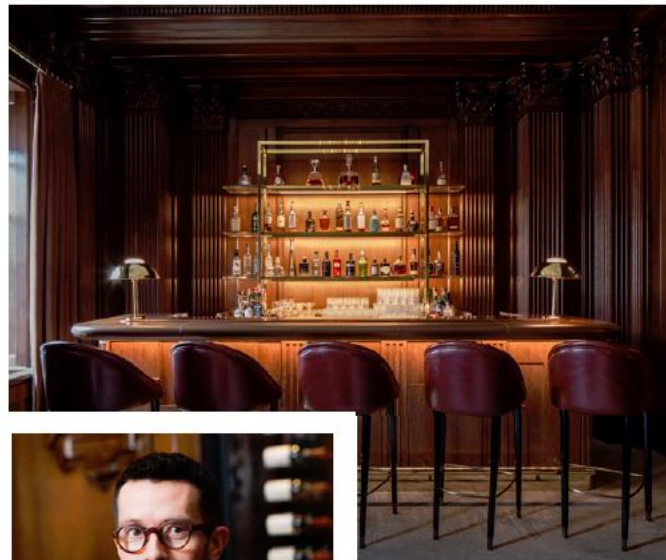


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It's enough to make any oenophile salivate with glee; the club has assembled an impressive back catalogue of Latour vintages, including the legendary 1982, which are all displayed in state-of-the-art glass cases complete with temperature control. All of the vintages on offer have been taken directly from the Latour cellars, so the provenance could not be called into question. In addition, one does not require any prior knowledge to enjoy this foray into luxury Bordeaux – master sommelier Jan Konetzki is on hand to guide you through the tasting, a former protege of Gordon Ramsay's 3-Michelin-starred Royal Hospital Road.

But the real beauty of this new partnership between Latour and Ten Trinity Square, is that it removes all the risk inherent to exploring the world of fine wine. Indeed, few non-baptised wine lovers would risk thousands on a potential disappointment, whereas the Discovery room offers more than 30 different Latour vintages by the



Jan Konetzki

glass, with no further commitment if you're not smitten (which is highly unlikely). Canapés served from the hotel's Michelin-starred restaurant, La Dame de Pic, are the icing on the cake, allowing you explore this fabled wine's charms in luxurious comfort and ease. 🍷

Only members of The Club have access to the Château Latour Discovery Room. To apply, visit club.tentrinitysquare.com