

A woman with long, wavy brown hair and red lipstick is shown from the chest up, wearing a white, strapless dress. She is looking slightly to the left. The background is a soft, ethereal scene with flowing, light-colored fabric or smoke, creating a dreamlike atmosphere. The lighting is soft and directional, highlighting the woman's features and the texture of the fabric.

CHAMPAGNE **DE SOUSA** CUVÉE DES CAUDALIES

Organic & Long Lingering

At present, Champagne de Sousa owns 12 hectares of vineyards; it was Eric de Sousa's great grandfather who started producing Champagne and Mr. de Sousa's parents who really developed the business. Today, Eric de Sousa, his wife and three children are mainly focusing on the development of the export and have been very successful in so doing, as they actually export 50% of their 100,000 bottle production. For the past fifteen years the market share of the Asian market has been constantly growing for Champagne de Sousa Champagnes. It all started with Japan in 1997; today the Champagnes of Champagne de Sousa are present all throughout Asia; in Singapore, Hong-Kong, Korea and Taiwan. All in all, the Champagnes of de Sousa are present in 25 countries, including most of Europe, but also Brazil, Australia, the US, and Canada.

Maybe one of the reasons why the de Sousa Champagnes are so successful on the Asian market is that they are often Chardonnay dominated, which makes them particularly suitable for fish dishes, which are very popular all over Asia. One of the de Sousa's best sellers on the Asian market is their Blanc de Blancs Cuvée Caudalies. This special Champagne Cuvée is made of 100% Chardonnay from Grand Crus vineyards. It is great as an aperitif and also suits starters and main dishes, particularly those based on fish and crustaceans. Thanks to the organic and biodynamic vineyard and cellar work practiced by Mr. de Sousa and his family, the Champagnes are extremely mineral and crisp. They are true tributes to the great terroir of the Champagne region. This aspect is even more easier to recognize in the Champagnes of Cuvée des Caudalies, as all of the grapes used in this specific cuvee come exclusively from old vines and this adds a very special touch of finesse and elegance. The wines for Cuvée des Caudalies are all elaborated in oak vats.

The name Cuvée des Caudalies has been chosen by the de Sousa family because the wines are very long and linger on the palate for a while. The unit of measure used to describe the length of a wine is "Caudalies", one "Caudalie" lasting approximately one second. It is actually the roundness and opulence of their Chardonnays from old vines which inspired the name.

Cuvée Caudalies is exclusively blended from 100% Chardonnay from Grand Cru Avize.

The vines producing the grapes are older than 50 years, and the vineyards are entirely organic and biodynamic.

It is interesting to note that de Sousa started to convert to organic viticulture in 1999, and since 2008 all their vineyards are organic. In order to remain coherent and transparent, they produce a special Non Organic Cuvée from the grapes harvested in the rows neighbouring non organic vineyards from other growers.

To Eric de Sousa the advantages of organic farming are evident; he has observed that a few

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years after they had started practicing organic farming, things started to change for the better in their vineyards. The vines became more resistant to diseases, the soil regained vitality, attained a darker colour and when the soil is turned it is full of a myriad of useful insects, while live worms are abundant and contribute to the positive action of a much more diverse micro fauna and flora. Yet first and foremost he has observed that the organic farming practices really had a very positive effect on the wines, which since the changeover have become more mineral and therefore terroir-driven every year.

The first year they initiated the switch to organic only on two hectares and since then they have progressively turned the whole property organic. Mr. de Sousa also feels that the fact of being organic had the encouraging side effect that he can now exclusively make use of the indigenous yeast present on the grapes; this is another important factor which

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plays a role in the extraordinary terroir taste of his wines.

Today, the de Sousa family produces 7 cuvees under the de Sousa label: Champagne de Sousa Brut Tradition, a blend of all three Champagne varieties; Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Pinot Meunier; Champagne de Sousa Brut Réserve Grand Cru Blanc de Blancs, which is vinified in stainless steel; 3A Grand Cru (Avize, Aÿ, Ambonnay) which is called after the initial “A” in the name of each of the three Grands Crus areas used in the cuvee. The blend of this cuvee is 50% Chardonnay and 50% Pinot Noir. Then there is Champagne de Sousa Rosé, which is made in vats; Cuvée des Caudalies, which is currently a blend of 12 vintages ranging from 1995 to 2006. This cuvee is sold with a very low dosage as Extra Brut. There is also the Cuvée Caudalies Millésimé and in spring the 2005 vintage will be launched. Mr. Eric de Sousa explained that, “2005 is particularly interesting as we used wines from Mesnil sur Oger, which are renowned for their rigidity and straightforwardness, but in a vintage as round and opulent as 2005, the result was simply amazing and extremely well balanced. 2005 is a 100% Chardonnay coming only from Grand Crus Villages. The wines have been vinified in oak vats and the Champagnes aged for 7 years at 10°C in our dark cellars”.

Up to 90% of the Cuvée des Caudalies Rosé is also vinified to 90% in oak - it is a classic blend of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. Eric de Sousa pointed out that this Champagne is one of Andreas Larsson’s favourites.

Since 2004 de Sousa have also opened a small merchant house, which sells a brand called Zoémie de Sousa, the Champagnes belonging to it come from vineyards which the de Sousa’s have already donated to their children.

CHAMPAGNE DE SOUSA BRUT RÉSERVE GRAND CRU BLANC DE BLANCS

THE COMMENTS

AL - Light golden. Clean nose, some mineral notes and hints of young fruit, apple, pear and lemon zest. The palate is on the lighter and elegant side with zesty flavours, vibrant acidity, good creaminess and length, stylish and discreet. **89**

MdM - Bright yellow with green hue. Multi layered aroma with ripe fruit of peaches and apricots as well as a touch of citrus fruit. Brioche and white chocolate in the background. On the palate clean and well balanced with good length. **94**

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