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wines worth sharing

Charles Heidsieck 'Blanc des Millénaires' 2004

Grape Varietal:	100% Chardonnay
Growing Region:	Reims, France
Chef de Cave:	Cyril Brun

Alternating years I return to Charles Heidsieck to catch-up with longtime friends and to sit-down with Cyril and team to work through a *'vin-clair'* tasting. Plus, this year the first to taste a new wine in their range. Then it was time to taste the 2004 Blanc des Millénaires. A vintage Cyril felt had the qualities and signature of the Blanc des Millénaires - so this unique wine could be released to add a new chapter to this legendary Champagne story.

Made only in exceptional years for Chardonnay, the 2004 release is made from grapes grown across 4 Grand Crus in the Côte des Blancs area: Oger for its unctuous nature and structure, Le Mesnil-sur-Oger for balance, Avize for its minerality, Cramant for its complexity; and the Premier Cru Vertus for its freshness and floral notes - with each contributing around 20% to the final cuvée. As one can imagine - there is a lot of pressure on this wine, with immense shoes to fill following the 1995 - which was incredible how the wine was so fresh for so long, it seemed not to age.

The 2004 *'Blanc des Millénaires'* was laid down in 2005, spending 11 years on lees before it was disgorged in November 2016. Aged in their chalk cellars built in Gallo-Roman times, that are located in the historic heart of Reims - and have an ideal humidity and a constant 10°C. An extraordinary ageing period in these age-old-cellars, gives this 100% Chardonnay cuvée an unparalleled complexity and texture. The 2004 Blanc des Millénaires has developed a unique signature and hence holds the promise of unforgettable moments.

Poured into a generously curved flute you will be greeted by a shimmering golden colour with deeper hints and accented by a delicate beading. The bouquet is vibrantly fresh with a full chorus of citrus and pastry aromas along with coco-butter, baked apples and vanilla spice notes. All of these and more carry through onto the silky palate showcasing candied apricots, quince, dried-fruits, roasted almonds, coffee beans and hazelnuts.

The mouthfeel is vibrant and perfectly structured with a core of concentrated flavours and incredible depth, all seamlessly revealed due to its effervescence and core intensity. With each new sip you can discover cantaloupe, red apples, white peaches, dried figs even nougat and a defined mineral seam and citrus zest giving a lift to all this complexity and exceptionally textured cuvée. The mouthfeel is dynamic as well as being a little taut, though perfectly structured and with a long and well-balanced finish. *Treat yourself - this wine is definitely worth sharing.*

This 2004 Charles Heidsieck *'Blanc des Millénaires'* has 12% Alc./vol. and 9 g/L of residual sugar. Serve in a generous flute or aromatic wine glass at 9-11°C.

Cellaring Potential:

Accessible this coming season; plus, will age well for another 10-12 years.

Food Pairing Suggestions:

Perfect wine pairing with classic oysters & shellfish, grilled whole fish dishes, Moroccan chicken couscous, also baked apple tart with vanilla cream - *enjoy.*

A worthy successor to a legendary Champagne story...

