

Peter Liem; 1 Aprile 2011

Recently I tasted two notable '79s, both of which reflected the vintage in their own ways. The first was at [Vilmart & Cie.](#), on a visit with a group of friends. After tasting through a remarkable and copious lineup of wines, Laurent Champs generously opened a bottle of 1979 Grand Cellier, made by his father, René Champs.



While this wine was golden in color and mature in aroma, it nevertheless retained a striking vitality and energy, feeling not only very much alive but downright demanding in its intensity. It continued to evolve for a long time as it sat in the glass, showing a creamy, full-bodied depth and a vividly complex array of flavors ranging from macadamia nut and marzipan to honeycomb, toffee and white chocolate. Its grandiose scope and pure, almost aggressive chalkiness were both highly typical of the vintage, and it finished with amazing detail and length, lingering on the palate until well after we had all left the estate. Making the experience even more special was the fact that one of my companions was born in 1979 (which Laurent didn't know about until afterwards).