

# Champagne Warrior

## Brad Baker

### • 2004 J. Lassalle Champagne Blanc de Blancs Brut

Bright, light, airy, and reminiscent of citrus blossoms on the nose, this is quite enticing and tastes divine on a late spring/early summer evening. Creamy flavors of lemon and bread dough are greeted by apples and bitter minerality. This is a deftly balanced, easy to enjoy wine that will encourage you to reach for glass after glass and bottle after bottle. A great effort from Lassalle and the best Blanc de Blancs I have seen from this producer in years. This wine has 87-89 potential. (100% Chardonnay; Stainless steel; Malolactic fermentation; Disgorged 2010; 10 g/L dosage; \$60-80 US) **(86-88 pts.)**

### • N.V. J. Lassalle Champagne Brut Reserve Cachet d'Or

2006/7 base; Attractive nose of yeasty, citrusy, slightly sweet biscuits is enticing and invigorating. Big, zesty doses of citrus form the core of this and merge into bites of doughy apple and slightly sweet berry before a rush of bitter citrus biscuit takes over. All in all, a great wine that is a true bargain in the big picture of Champagne.

(20% Chardonnay, 20% Pinot Noir, 60% Pinot Meunier; 2006/2007 base with 2007 being the main part of the blend; Stainless steel; Malolactic fermentation; Disgorged July 2010; \$35-55 US) **(85-88 pts.)**

### • N.V. J. Lassalle Brut Rosé

2006/7 base; Absolutely beautiful on the nose with raspberry lemonade and smoky minerals leaving you mesmerized. The tart red citrus bend carries right on through to the palate where it is bright, fresh, fruity, but also fairly deep. Raspberries and tart cherries also come out and carry through to a long citrus and mineral filled finish. Just a great Rosé that really excels with this release. I sometimes find the white and Rosé releases from Lassalle to be a bit too similar in style, but the latest releases of each stand in their respective corners rather than dallying in the middle and both are better for it - especially the Rosé. Highly recommended.

(10% Chardonnay; 85% Pinot Noir with 3-4% being still red wine; 5% Pinot Meunier; 2006/2007 base with 2007 being the main part of the blend; Stainless steel; Malolactic fermentation; Disgorged November 2010; \$45-65 US) **(87-89 pts.)**

### • 2000 J. Lassalle Champagne Cuvée Angeline

Only now beginning to open and reveal its inner self, this wine remains quite stoic and even a bit grumpy. Ripe citrus and green apple are noticeable on the palate, along with a touch of biscuit dough. I do expect this to bloom a bit more over the next decade and it should be fairly long-lived, but I don't expect it to be as fun-loving or fruity as many other vintages have been. This wine has 84-86 potential.

(40% Chardonnay; 60% Pinot Noir; Stainless steel; Malolactic fermentation; Disgorged October 2009; 10 g/L dosage; \$60-85 US) **(83-85 pts.)**

• **2002 J. Lassalle Champagne Cuvée Angeline**

Bright and full of citrus blossoms, the aromas this wine gives off are akin to bottled sunshine. Dough, lemon, orange, apple, and a touch of cream all come out on the palate and create a very easy, drinkable wine. Though enjoyable, the wine is a touch one dimensional - there isn't a lot of depth or complexity to be found, no matter how slowly you drain your glass. Everyone will enjoy it, but this wine isn't likely to be the one they remember. This wine has 86-88 potential. (40% Chardonnay; 60% Pinot Noir; Stainless steel; Malolactic fermentation; Disgorged 2007; 10 g/L dosage; \$60-85 US) **(85-87 pts.)**

• **2005 J. Lassalle Champagne Cuvée Angeline**

Fragrant citrus aromas are kissed by cream, adding depth to the picture. Tart lemon coats the mouth before creamy, doughy, biscuity flavors take over. Towards the finish, citrus with a gentle hint of nuttiness sends this wine out on a high note. A very nice 2005 that shows best with some warmth - be aware that the typical refrigerator chill will really dumb this down, much more so than for most bottles. Tasty now, this wine still has some growing to do. This wine has 86-88 potential. (40% Chardonnay; 60% Pinot Noir; Stainless steel; Malolactic fermentation; Disgorged October 2010; 10 g/L dosage; \$50-75 US) **(85-87 pts.)**

• **N.V. J. Lassalle Champagne Préférence Brut 1er Cru Chigny-lès-Roses**

2005/6 base; This wine is identical to the Brut Réserve Cachet d'Or except that it sees one additional year of aging on the lees. The 2005 vintage shows through in this wine as some bright citrus fruits mix with a light, creamy, airy and somewhat lean body. It is missing that citrusy, zesty, yeasty, biscuity, slightly red berry tinged core that most releases of this wine have and is a tad empty on the finish, but it is quite fruit driven so some may enjoy that. Personally, I prefer other base vintages over this, but it is a good example of what 2005 can bring to the table. (20% Chardonnay, 20% Pinot Noir, 60% Pinot Meunier; 2005/2006 base with 2005 being the main part of the blend; Stainless steel; Malolactic fermentation; Disgorged May 2010; \$40-60 US) **(82-84 pts.)**

• **2002 J. Lassalle Champagne Special Club**

Bright, fruity, yet very well defined, the structure and definition of this wine are what set it apart from the 2002 Cuvée Angéline. Full of taut mineral and bright citrus aromas, this fills the mouth with subtle hints of cream, robust apple and citrus flavors, and a decent helping of yeasted dough. Still young, this will certainly continue to develop and will be quite long-lived, but you can enjoy this now - especially if you are a fan of zesty, perky wines that are at once youthful and starting to gain a creamy edge. This wine has 88-90 potential. (60% Chardonnay; 40% Pinot Noir; Stainless steel; Malolactic fermentation; Disgorged 2010; 10 g/L dosage; \$65-100 US) **(87-89 pts.)**