

CHAMPAGNE

THE RITZ-CARLTON

SARASOTA

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Champagne

Introduction:

I. Region “Appellation d’Origine Contrôlée” (AOC)

A. Location: 90 miles NE from Paris, France

1. Northern most wine region in France, cool climate and short fermentation
2. In the Departments of: Cote de Blancs, Montagne de Reims, Vallée de la Marne, Cote de Sézanne, Aube and Aisne.
3. Soil is high in chalk content which creates very interesting taste characteristics and permits heat retention, brings out acidity, water drainage on the surface and subterranean water storage.

B. Grape Varietals: Consistency in the taste and blending

1. **Chardonnay:** Smallest production contributes delicacy and elegance. Apple and spice aromas, in young cuvées. Then, adding complexity with ageing.
2. **Pinot Noir:** The second largest produced and used adding weight or power to the Cuve and adds raspberry and strawberry scents.
3. **Pinot Meunier:** Is the largest produced. And its use is prohibited in Premier and Grand Cru Cuvées. Adds red fruit aromas and flavors and most importantly gives structure.

C. Production:

1. Mechanical harvesting or irrigation forbidden
2. 250 to 300 million bottles sold a year
3. Fermented dry in bottle
4. Assemblage: blending of still wines before second fermentation
5. Dosage: wine and sugar added after the second fermentation and aging.
6. Bubbles are produced by fermentation and are Carbon Dioxide

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II. History

A. Recorded of its use as early as the 16th Century:

1. 16th Century: King Henri IV served it as still wine, some bubbles and not a very clear / transparent wine.
2. 17th Century: Sparkling wine produced as such.
3. End of 17th Century exported to England for royal consumption. British glass makers produce a heavier bottle to contain the bubbles. Due to the cold climate fermentation could not be completed, wine waited in bottle till the spring when warmer climate would start the second fermentation and the bubbles were captured in the bottle.
4. DOM PERIGNON: (1668-1715) a Monk at the Abbaye d'Hautvillers did not invent Champagne but made it better by blending different grapes and vineyards to produce a clearer lighter colored wine, and very importantly, started the use of cork, as a stopper, for consistency, waste control and safeness in the caves.
5. 1735 King Louis V made it law to use cork.

B. 19th Century to the present:

1. 1825 Antoine Muller and employee of the famous house owned by Madame Veuve-Clicquot-Posardain developed a system to remove the deposits formed in the bottle after fermentation.

Remuage: (riddling) twisting and raising the bottle to move the deposit towards the neck, where it could be frozen and removed.

Dégorgement:(disgorging) removing sediment from the bottle and add wine and liquid sugar Final Dosage or Liqueur d' Expédition

2. 1836 Gluco-oenometre: André François perfected the method to know the exact amount of sugar to add to produce bubbles and have less exploding bottles.

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3. 1865 The house of Bollinger sent the first semi-dry Champagne to England

4. 1874 The Pommery Marque made a true Brut
5. 1908-1927 Due to demand the producing vineyards where expanded in the region.
6. During World War II a control board was created to set prices based on quality of production: Comite Interprofessionnel des Vins de Champagne (CIVC). They rated 312 communes (vineyards)
7. 1985 the CIVC ratings or échelle de cru rating system was updated as follows:
 - a. Deuxième CRU 80%-89% of the 312 communes
 - b. Premier CRU 90%-99% or 38 communes of the total
 - c. Grand CRU the rest or 17 communes of the total
8. 1993 The Grand Marques (Moet et Canon) elevated the quality by using only “La Cuve” first press of the grapes: less tanic and less color) And sell “La Premier taille and Deuxième taille”, (second and third presses), to other producers.
9. Today the most powerful Grand Marque in the region is: **Louis Vuitton, Moet, Hennessy** which owns Moet et Chandon, Veuve Clicquot, Ruinart, Mercier and Lanson. And represent 40% of the regions exports.

III. Labels

- A. By sugar content Non Vintage (aged at least one year)
 1. Extra Brut, Brut Sauvage, Ultra Brut or Brut Nature: bone dry under 0.6% of residual sugar per liter
 2. Brut: under 1.5% of residual sugar
 3. Extra Dry: semi-dry to semi-sweet it 1.2% to 2% of residual sugar
 4. Sec: with 1.7% to 3.5% residual sugar

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5. Demi-sec: with 3.3% to 5% residual sugar

6. Doux: minimum of 5% residual sugar (sweet)
 7. Crémant: semi sparkling champagne which tastes more like wine.
- B. Other Brut style Champagnes: Non Vintage
1. Coteaux Champenois: still wines of the region less than 1% of total production
 2. Rose: red wine with white wine blending full bodied and elegant
 3. Blanc de Blancs: made exclusively from Chardonnay Grapes. It is the most delicate of Champagnes.
 4. Blanc de Noirs: (white of blacks) made from only red grapes, mostly pinot noir. Fuller body with red berry scents.
- C. Other Brut style Champagnes: Vintage may be cellared for a decade or more
- Vintage: at least 3 years or longer with 80% of the years grapes and 11% alcohol.
1. Millésime: aged at least 3 years. Full body with red fruit flavors and scents
 2. Recently Disgorged: aged at least 8 years.
 3. Cuve de Prestige or Tête de Cuve: the top of the line mostly from single vineyard.
- D. Other Sparkling wines from around the world:
1. Spain: CAVA from the Penedes region SW of Barcelona
 2. Italy: Pro secco from the Trentino and Veneto regions NW of Venice
 3. US and Australia Sparkling wine from various areas.
- E. Grand Marques:
- Louis Vuitton Moet Hennessy (LVMH), Veuve-Clicquot-Ponsardin, Krug, Pommery & Greno, Ruinart, Moet et Chandon, Canard-Duchene, Mumm, Perrier-Jouet, Heidsieck Monopole, Pol Roger, Taittinger, Laurent Perrier, Roederer, Deutz.

- F. Producer Designations: Labels
1. CM (cooperative-manipulant) cooperative made
 2. NM (negociant-manipulant) made by grape buyer
 3. MA (marque-auxiliaire) secondary brand made
 4. RM (recoltants-manipulant) make their wine with their own grapes and can only use 5 % of others grapes.
 5. Sur Lattes: resting and waiting to have deposits removed and dosage added.

IV. Presenting and Serving

1. Temperature should be between 42-45 Degrees Fahrenheit
2. Present Bottle to taster with label facing them so they can read it.
3. Remove foil, loosen metal mesh, put napkin over cork and loosen
4. Hold cork and twist bottle, catch cork in napkin and try not to pop.
5. Hold bottle over glass without touching, pour taste (one ounce) if approved
6. Pour each glass with one ounce and let bubbles subside and then fill glasses
7. Enjoy!

V. Some Pairing suggestions: always remember that taste is personal.

1. Apéritives: lively, fresh and dry-non vintage Bruts and young Blanc de Blancs
2. Oysters and Shellfish: Blanc de Blancs
3. Caviar and Lobster: Strong Bruts
4. Strong sauces vit fish: Vintage and Roses
5. Cheeses: Cuvées de Prestige
6. Desserts: Sec and Demi-secs

Conclusion: Taste is in your own pallet, scents are in your own mind and happiness is in your heart.

MÉTHODE CHAMPENOISE

Process takes at least 18 months and may take up to 40 months

Always in the same bottle

- 1. Initial Fermentation**
- 2. Blending of different wines**
- 3. Bottling**
- 4. Liqueur de Tirage (liquid yeast and sugar) injected into each bottle.**
Corked and agrafe (metal clasp) stored on its side in a cool constant temperature cave.
- 5. Second Fermentation in the bottle, trapped 3-4 weeks. Sugar turning to alcohol and then to dry wine (alcohol content 12-12.5%)**
- 6. Aging: 12 months to 3 years for Bruts**
 - a. Sediment of yeast-longer time more flavor**
 - b. Formation of carbon-dioxide (bubbles)**
 - c. Remuage (riddling) twisting and turning bottles on a pupitre or now on gyro-palettes.**
 - d. Dégorgement (disgorging) removing sediment by chilling and, freezing bottle neck. Now called Charmât (bulk) méthode.**
- 7. Final Dosage or Liqueur d'Expédition.**
- 8. Corking and agrafe (metal clasp)**
- 9. Rest**