

WINE INTO

Celebrating Champagne

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

 **HAMPAGNE** has launched thousands of ships, toasted billions of weddings and special occasions, attended countless parties, and shared untold special moments between two people.

Champagne is the wine of celebration. No other wine is so associated with joy and festivity. Its meaning and appeal are universal. Champagne makes the young sages and the old young again.

Champagne has exported its techniques around the world. Sparkling wines are made the world over, but here we will explore the sparkling wines from the north of France called Champagne.



Contents

[Pronunciation Guide](#)

[The History of Champagne](#)

[The Region](#)

[The Wine](#)



[Champagne Houses](#)

[Serving Champagne](#)

[Champagne Vintage Chart](#)

[Champagne at the Movies](#)

Pronunciation Guide

Aube

[oh'b]

Côte des Blancs

[coat deh blahn]

Aÿ

[ah-yee]

dosage

[doh-SAHJ]

Champagne

[sham-PAYN]

Montagne de Reims

[mohn-tahn-yuh duh rem]

Méthod Champenois

[meh-toh'd shahm-PEH-n'wahz]

Vallée de la Marne

[val-ay duh lah marn]

The History of Champagne

CHAMPAGNE WAS A REGION long before it was a sparkling wine. The region lies at a crossroads of northern Europe – the river valleys leading south to the Mediterranean and north to Paris, the English Channel and Western Germany – and thus has been the setting of many dramatic events in the history of the French nation. As a convenient access point, it has been for hundreds of years, the chosen path of many invaders including Attila the Hun. The Hundred Years' War and the Thirty Years' War brought repeated destruction to the region as armies marched back and forth across its landscape. By the 17th



100 Years' War Battle of Nogent-sur-Seine

century, the city of Reims has seen destruction seven times and Epernay no less than twenty-five times.

But crossroads also bring trade. Champagne gained importance in its own right, during the middle ages as a center of European trade. The medieval counts of Champagne were wise enough to encourage commerce and strong enough to protect the traveling merchants. They created the then famous, Fairs of Champagne. Though these fairs were mainly about cloth, they were of obvious benefit for the wines of Champagne as it gave them easy exposure and access to important wine markets.

Champagne also benefited when the cathedral at Reims was chosen in 987 AD, as the coronation site for the French king Hugh Capet and establishing Reims as the spiritual capital of medieval France. In fact, thirty-seven kings of France were crowned there between 816 and 1825. The monasteries in Champagne with the economic assistance of the crown, were to make wine production a serious venture until the French Revolution in 1789.



Coronation of Charles V

Before the mid-1600's there was no Champagne as we think of it. For centuries the wines were *still* wines and were held in high regard by the nobility of Europe. But the cool climate of the region and its effect on the wine making process was to play an important part in changing all of that.



We owe a lot to Dom Pérignon as any inventor owes those who have come before him. He is not however the *inventor* of champagne as is often thought. Pierre Pérignon was a Benedictine monk who, in 1688, was appointed treasurer at the Abby of Hautvillers. The Abby is located near Epernay. Included in Dom Pérignon's duties was the management of the cellars and wine making. The bubbles in the wine are a natural process arising from Champagne's cold climate and short growing season. Of necessity, the grapes are picked late in the year. This doesn't leave enough time for the yeasts present on the grape skins to convert the sugar in the pressed grape juice into alcohol before the cold winter temperatures put a temporary stop to the fermentation process. With the coming of Spring's warmer temperatures, the fermentation is again underway, but this time in the bottle. The refermentation creates carbon-dioxide which now becomes trapped in the bottle, thereby creating the sparkle.

For Dom Pérignon and his contemporaries, sparkling wine was not the desired end product. It was a sign of poor wine making. He spent a great deal of time trying to prevent the bubbles, the unstableness of this "mad wine," and the creation of a decidedly white wine the court would prefer to red burgundy. He was not able to prevent the bubbles, but he did develop the art of blending. He not only blended different grapes, but the juice from the same grape grown in different vineyards. Not only did he develop a method to press the black grapes to yield a white juice, he improved clarification techniques to produce a brighter wine than any that had been produced before. To help prevent the exploding bottle problem, he began to use the stronger bottles developed by the English and closing them with Spanish cork instead of the wood and oil-soaked hemp stoppers then in use. Dom Pérignon died in 1715, but in his 47 years

as the cellar master at the Abby of Hautvillers, he laid down the basic principles still used in making Champagne today.

Although sparkling Champagne was only about 10% of the region's output in the 18th century, it was enjoyed increasingly as the wine of English and French royalty and the lubricant of preference at aristocratic gatherings. Its popularity continued to grow until, in the 1800's, the sparkling wine industry was well established.

The face of the industry really began to change when Louis XV allowed the transport of wine in bottles in 1728. A year later, Ruinart became the first recorded Champagne house. By 1735, a royal ordinance was instituted to dictate the size, shape, and weight of champagne bottles, the size of the cork they should use and that they be secured with strong pack thread to the collar of the bottle. Claude Moët founded, in 1743, what was to become the largest champagne house today, the House of Moët.



The complexity and capital intensity of making champagne ultimately lead to the replacement of the monastic and aristocratic growers with the champagne merchants. With their capital, the merchant's or *maisons*, had to ability to perfect the otherwise still unpredictable fermentation process, age, distribute, market and export the wine.

Dégorgement was first practiced in 1813. It was perfected in 1818 by the Widow Clicquot's cellar master Antoine Muller. He developed a process of "riddling" the wine in order to get the sediment of dead yeast cells into the neck of the bottle so it could be removed without the time consuming task of decanting each bottle. This process also saved most of the gas.



The 1820's and 30's saw the use of corking machines and wine muzzles. Finally in 1836, a pharmacist in Châlons-sur-Marne, M. François, invented an instrument, called a sucere-oenomètre, to measure the amount of sugar in wine. With this invention, the amount of sugar needed to stimulate the second fermentation could be reliably determined, and the bottle burst-rate dropped to 5%. It was now a little more safe to take a spring walk through a champagne cellar.

In the 1920's four well known houses were established – Bollinger, Irroy, Mumm, and Joseph Perrier. By 1853 total sales of sparkling champagne reached 20 million bottles up from just 300,000 bottles at the turn of the century.

World War I again brought devastation to the region. The early months of the war saw a rapid German advance into northern France and during the fall of 1914, they were camped south of the river Marne. By 1915 they were driven back just north of the city of Reims. The enormous caves – Roman chalk quarries – beneath Reims that were used for the storage and production of champagne, now became shelters from the 1000 days of bombardment the city endured from 1914 to 1918. After the war, the city had to be completely rebuilt.

The years after the Great War were difficult. The Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, Prohibition in the United States, and then the Great Depression saw the champagne market dry up. The champagne houses stopped buying grapes, so the growers formed the first champagne cooperatives at this time. With the ending of Prohibition in 1934, the industry began to turn around. The influential head of Moët & Chandon, Robert-Jean de Vouge, was most instrumental in securing its future. He proposed that the purchase price of champagne grapes be set at a level that ensured a decent living for the growers, and

Remember gentlemen, it's not just France we are fighting for, it's Champagne!

– Winston S Churchill, 1918

in 1941, during the German occupation of France, became the driving force in persuading the Germans to establish the very successful *Comité Interprofessional du Vin de Champagne* – C.I.C.C.

Since World War II champagne sales have climbed upwards, nearly quadrupling between 1945 and 1966. Champagne has trickled down the social scale and is no longer considered just a luxury. Today, more champagne is being drunk, by more people, than at any previous time in history. The new millennium looks good for champagne.



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- [Pronunciation Guide](#) ■ [The History of Champagne](#) ■ [The Region](#) ■ [The Wine](#) ■ [Champagne Houses](#)
 - [How to Serve Champagne](#) ■ [Champagne at the Movies](#)

 - [Wine Toasts](#) ■ [Wine Regions](#) ■ [INTO WINE Main Page](#)
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WINE

INTO

Celebrating Champagne

The Region



THE HEART OF THE Champagne region lies 90 miles (145km) northeast of Paris near the Belgian border. It is generally divided into three parts – the Montagne de Reims, the Vallée de la Marne and the Côte des Blancs. The Aube, 70 miles to the southeast, is important for wines they produce that go into many of the nonvintage blends of the major champagne houses.

Of the regions 75,000 acres of vineyards, most and the greatest vineyards of Champagne, are planted in the département of the Marne. The vineyards are not owned by great landowners but by thousands of growers, often working part-time.

All of the vineyards are situated on deep chalk soils. Champagne is situated on the same great basin that also forms the famous white cliffs of Dover in southern England. The chalk, a natural moisture regulator, provides good drainage (chalk can absorb up to 40% of its volume in water) and reflects

precious sunlight and its heat. The thin layer of arable topsoil constantly needs a top dressing of fertilizer to do its job. Laws dictate which of the three permitted grapes may be planted where. Trial and error over time has shown the wine growers the grape types best suited for each zone of production.

In a region where the annual temperature is just slightly above the minimum temperature required to ripen grapes — 50°F(10°C) — slight variations of slope and aspect are crucial. Most of the best vineyards are planted on slopes at an altitude high enough to be clear of frost (usually above 300ft or 90m), but low enough (below 690ft or 210m) to be sheltered from extreme weather conditions. Lying on a deep bed of crustaceous chalk beneath a thin layer of topsoil, the slopes of the Montagne de Reims and the Côte des Blancs provide the best vineyards. The greatest concentration of villages designated as *Grand* and *Premier Cru* are found in these two areas.



The Montagne de Reims is planted mainly with Pinot Noir. Although it contains the northernmost vineyards – some even north-facing – its peculiar microclimate is well suited for the growing of the Pinot Noir grape. The Montagne is a forested plateau south of Reims. Its wines give the great champagnes their backbone – their weight and richness.

Along both banks of the River Marne, is the Vallée de la Marne. With mostly south-facing, lower-lying vineyards, this zone produces the fullest, ripest wines, predominately from the Pinot Meunier and to a lesser extent the Pinot Noir grapes. Some Chardonnay is beginning to make inroads into the area.

Extending south from Epernay for about 13 miles (21km) is the Côte des Blancs. The ridge is planted on both slopes, but the best vineyards are on the eastern side. The chalk subsoil combined with its relative warmth, produces the fine Chardonnay that



give freshness to the blend and encourages the sparkle.

The Aube is Champagne's most southerly zone. Located about 65 miles (112km) south of Epernay, its climate has more extremes in temperature and the grapes achieve greater ripeness. Though rarely talked about, its wines are an important component of the nonvintage wines of the big houses.

A newcomer to Champagne is Côte de Sézanne. Planted in the 1960's almost exclusively with Chardonnay, its southern location means that its grapes ripen better than most of the other zones.



The classification system in Champagne is based on vineyards and is established by the Comité Interprofessionnel du Vin de Champagne (C.I.V.C.). The land is given a grade based on its suitability for growing white grapes or black grapes. A grade of 100% percent has been given to the 17 Grand Cru villages. The 38 Premier Cru villages have grades from 90 to 99%. The rest have a grade ranging from 80 to 89%. Champagne houses use the average percentage rating of the grapes used in their blends to establish the quality of their raw materials. The price a grower gets for his grapes is also determined by this percentage system. A grower with a 100% vineyard may ask the full price while the others would get a percentage based on the 100% price.

The Wine



THE RESTRAINED RICHNESS of champagne wines owes a lot to the cold climate of northern France. Over time the region's wine makers have created their own techniques to overcome the cold winters and short growing seasons. The fact that the grapes ripen very slowly has its benefit too, as the grapes have time to pick up important favouring components. But when the grapes are harvested, they are rarely ripe enough to make table wine without the addition of inordinate amounts of sugar. The producers have gotten around this by making a wine low in alcohol and then putting it through a second bottle fermentation to raise the alcohol and add the bubbles.

The bubbles in champagne are a natural phenomenon that is today a managed affair. The second fermentation in the bottle causes the bubbles. When the cork is removed, the result is upwardly mobile bubbles of carbon dioxide making their escape.

[Champagne Vintage Chart](#)

Three grape varieties are used in Champagne — Pinot Meunier, Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. Pinot Meunier dominates the vineyards, growing on about 40% of the total acreage. It is easier to grow and is less prone to frost damage. This grape makes up the base wine for all but the very finest champagnes and is grown only in Champagne. Pinot Noir is second with about 35%. It is responsible for the depth of fruit and longevity of the wine. Chardonnay accounts for the remaining 25% and adds lightness, elegance and breeding to the blend. The lack of color in most champagne is the result of a gentle pressing, so as to extract the juice but not the color of the black grape skins.

The chief difference between the various Champagne brands or houses, is in the making of the *cuvée*, or the blend, as introduced by Dom Pérignon. A house builds a reputation based on the particular style of blend of its nonvintage wines. So each year the wine must be consistent. The large houses store millions of gallons of wine from various vineyards and grapes for blending purposes. It is reasonable to assume that once you find a house style you like, it will be available year after year as long as that house exists.



The theory of producing a great champagne is to blend together the best qualities from each of the best grapes grown in the region. The blending of the still wines before the second fermentation called the *assemblage* and the wine and sugar that is added after the second fermentation and aging called the *dosage*, are the two most important steps in the determination of the house style.

In especially good years, some vintage champagne is produced. Some feel that the extra depth in taste is well worth the extra cost of these wines. Eighty percent of the contents of vintage champagne must contain grapes from the declared year. Not all of the grapes from a declared year go into vintage champagne. Twenty percent are held back to be used for blending purposes.

The sugar content of the dosage added after the second fermentation will determine the wine's style and relative sweetness. Thus you will find champagnes labeled by their sugar content. They are as follows:

Extra Brut, Brut Sauvage, Ultra Brut, Brut Intégral or Brut Zéro — These wines are bone dry with less than .6% of residual sugar per liter. In this case the dosage is of the same wine and not the usual solution of cane sugar and still wine. This wine is rarely made.

Champagne is bottled in 10 different sizes:

Quarter bottle

– 18.7cl / 6.3 fluid ozs

Half bottle

– 37.5cl / 12.7 fluid ozs

Bottle

– 75cl / 25.4 fluid ozs

Magnum (*two bottles*)

– 1.5 litres / 50.8 fluid ozs

Jeroboam (*four bottles*)

– 3 litres / 101.6 fluid ozs

Rehoboam (*six bottles*)

– 4.5 litres / 147 fluid ozs

Methuselah (*eight bottles*)

– 6 litres / 196 fluid ozs

Salmanazar (*12 bottles*)

– 9 litres / 304.8 fluid ozs

Balthazar (*16 bottles*)

– 12 litres / 406.4 fluid ozs

Nebuchadnezzar (*20 bottles*)

– 15 litres / 508 fluid ozs

Only the half-bottle, bottle and magnum are always released in the bottle in which they underwent the second fermentation. For this reason and because it is the largest of the three, the **magnum** is the preferred size. The three largest sizes are rarely made today.

Brut — This is the most popular style of champagne. The best blends are always reserved for the brut and is the mainstay of the business. It has less than 1.5% residual sugar and is very dry.

Extra Dry, Extra Sec — Sweetened with 1.2 to 2% residual sugar per liter, it is dry. It goes well with desserts and wedding cakes.

Sec — Although it means "dry" in French, it means "moderately dry" or "slightly sweet" as it pertains to champagne. It has 1.7 to 3.5% residual sugar per liter.

Demi-Sec — This style is distinctly sweet or medium sweet and is rarely seen in the United States. It contains between 3.3 to 5% residual sugar per liter.

Doux — This is the sweetest style of champagne. It is very sweet and is more of a dessert-style wine. It has a minimum of 5% residual sugar per liter.

Occasionally you will find *Blanc de Noirs*. This style is made entirely from black grapes but is white. It offers a wine that is fuller than those with Chardonnay in the blend. More often you will encounter a *Blanc de Blancs*. This wine is made exclusively from the Chardonnay grape and is the most delicate of champagnes. As only 25% of Champagne is planted with Chardonnay, it is generally a more expensive option.



CELEBRATING CHAMPAGNE:

- [Pronunciation Guide](#) ■ [The History of Champagne](#) ■ [The Region](#) ■ [The Wine](#) ■ [Champagne Houses](#)
- [How to Serve Champagne](#) ■ [Champagne at the Movies](#)

- [Wine Toasts](#) ■ [Wine Regions](#) ■ [INTO WINE Main Page](#)

WINE INTO WINE

Celebrating Champagne

Champagne Houses

MOST CHAMPAGNE IS MADE and sold by Champagne *houses* or *négociants-manipulants*. Not named after vineyards as in other winegrowing regions of France, they are known by commercial names. By far the most powerful of these is Moët & Chandon, which accounts for almost twenty-five percent of all export sales. Moët & Chandon is owned by the giant L.V.M.H. (Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy) which also owns Pommery and Veuve Clicquot. Combined, these four houses represent almost 50% of the export market.

The other major conglomerates in Champagne are the Canadian Seagram Group and Rémy-Martin. Seagram is a majority stockholder in Mumm which also owns Perrier-Jouët, Heidsieck Monopole. Rémy-Martin owns a major position in Krug (one of Champagnes consistently fine wines) and bought Charles Heidsieck and Piper Heidsieck in the late 80's.



The biggest and most famous houses are known as Grandes Marques or literally *big brands*. In 1882, three of the major Champagne houses formed the Syndicat des Grandes Marques. Within a year 19 other houses joined it and as a result it represented nearly the whole champagne trade at the time. By 1993 it was renamed the Club des Grandes Marques and was reorganized to include members who adhere to certain minimum quality standards. Currently there are 24 members.

There are many other quality producers of good to great champagne. Some growers bottle their own and many more still belong to cooperatives. Listed below are the Grandes Marques and some of the other principle Champagne houses.

The Grandes Marques *of* Champagne

Ayala • Ay
Billecart-Salmon • Mareuil-sur-Ay
Bollinger • Ay
Canard-Duchêne • Ludes
Deutz & Geldermann • Ay
Heidsieck & Co. Monopole • Reims
Charles Heidsieck • Reims
Henriot • Reims
Krug • Reims
Lanson Père et Fils • Reims
Laurent-Perrier • Tours-sur-Marne
Moët et Chandon • Epernay

G. H. Mumm • Reims
Perrier-Jouët • Epernay
Joseph Perrier • Châlons-sur-Marne
Piper-Heidsieck • Reims
Pol Roger • Epernay
Pommery & Greno • Reims
Ch. & A Prieur •
Loius Roederer • Reims
Ruinart • Reims
A Salon • Le Mesnil-sur-Oger
Taittinger • Reims
Veuve Clicquot-Ponsardin • Reims

Principle Champagne Houses

Michel Arnould • Verzenay
Beaumont des Crayères • Mardeuil
Albert Beerens • Bar-sur-Aube
Besserat de Bellefon • Epernay
Henri Billiot • Ambonnay
A. Charbaut • Epernay
André Clouet • Bouzy
Guy de Chassez • Louvois
Delamotte • Le Mesnil-sur-Oger
Delbeck • Reims
Devaux • Bar-sur-Seine
Drappier • Urville
Daniel Dumont • Rilly-la-Montagne
George Gardet • Chigny-les-Roses
Gatinois • Ay
Gosset • Ay
Alfred Gratien • Epernay

Jacquart • Reims
André Jacquart • Le Mesnil-sur-Oger
Larmandier-Bernier • Vertus
R & L Legras • Chouilly
Abel Lepitre • Mareuil-sur-Ay
Mercier • Epernay
Jean Moutardier • Le Breuil
Napoléon • Vertus
Bruno Paillard • Reims
Palmer & Co • Reims
Philipponnat • Mareuil-sur-Ay
Alain Robert • Le Mesnil-sur-Oger
Jacques Selosse • Avize
Alain Thiénot • Reims
Union Champagne • Avize
Vilmart • Rilly-la-Montagne



CELEBRATING CHAMPAGNE:

■ [Pronunciation Guide](#) ■ [The History of Champagne](#) ■ [The Region](#) ■ [The Wine](#)
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The Saga

From 1811
to the year 2000
A Page of History
The Belle Epoque
The Vineyards
The Blends
The Gallé Bottle
Young Artists

Art of Champagne

Postcards

The Forum

Links

Latest News

THE Maison
Belle Epoque

Your Comments

The Saga

The story of a Great Brand

The date 1811, carved in stone above the main entrance to the House of Perrier-Jouët on the Avenue de Champagne in Epernay, commemorates the foundation of this prestigious brand of Champagne by Pierre Nicolas Marie Perrier and his wife Adèle Jouët.



By 1815 Perrier Jouët shipments were made to the United Kingdom and by 1837 to the United States. Charles Perrier took over from his father in 1854 with the desire to build on these early successes, especially abroad. At the request of his British customers, Charles Perrier produced the first brut cuvées and the first single-year vintages in the Champagne region.



Charles Perrier held several high public positions, including that of Mayor of Epernay. It was he who built imposing Château Perrier across from the firm's offices and cellars.



Between 1840 and 1870, Perrier Jouët added extensively to its vineyards holdings in the best parts of the Champagne region. By 1890 Perrier-Jouët was producing one million bottles a year, and the company was part of the closed circle of the "great names of Champagne".

G.H. Mumm of Reims bought the House of Perrier-Jouët in 1959. In the early 1970's it became one of the top brands in the portfolio of Seagram, the Canadian world leader in wines and spirits.



A turning point in Perrier-Jouët's history took place in 1964. Pierre Ernst, then the firm's Marketing Director, and André Baveret, then Cellar Master, discovered in the Perrier-Jouët cellars an old bottle decorated with an enamelled arabesque of anemones which had been crafted by Emile Gallé in 1902. This bottle became the "Cuvée Belle Epoque", the brand's own distinctive work of art. Michel Budin, Perrier-Jouët's Managing Director at the time, and his successor Pierre Ernst were the driving force behind the success of the great Cuvée Belle Epoque, which they launched in 1969 at the renowned restaurant Maxim's and at Fauchon, the gourmet food emporium.

It was not until 1975 that the Cuvée Belle Epoque, under the name "Fleur de Champagne", was introduced to the United States, where it soon became one of the most sought-after select champagnes.



By the end of the 1980's, annual sales to the United States had reached the three million mark, making Perrier-Jouët the third biggest Champagne exporter on the american market.

1991 saw two outstanding events :

- the Hachette Wine Guide's "Grappe d'Or" Award given to Perrier-Jouët following a rigorous tasting of more than 13,000 wines. A true distinction indeed.
- And, above all, the Maison Belle Epoque was inaugurated.

From the creation of the Cuvée Belle Epoque to the opening, 25 years later, of the guest house Maison Belle Epoque, the whole development of Perrier-Jouët is encapsulated in this marriage with Art Nouveau, an astonishing setting for an exceptional champagne.



In 1995, Perrier-Jouët set aside the "Reserve Belle Epoque" du millénaire, produced especially for the millenium celebration on December 31st, 1999 : the bottle - a jeroboam - reproduces the famous anemones of the glass-maker artist Emile Gallé. To greet the new millennium in style, Perrier-Jouët has blended and bottled the exceptionnal 1995 vintage in a limited edition of 2,000 jeroboams adorned with gilded anemones and numbered from 1 to 2000.





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**Perrier-Jouet 1995
Brut Fleur de
Champagne**
Champagne, France

**WINEMAKER'S
NOTES**

In true romantic fashion, Fleur de Champagne is a marriage of the very best that the vineyards of Champagne can produce: wines from Cramant, Avize, Ay, Mailly and Verzenay, the regions most highly-rated vineyards. One half of the blend is Chardonnay of surpassing finesse and delicacy. The other half is Pinot Noir of noble richness and complexity. The blend of these wines yields a Champagne of ravishing fragrance and style, offered in the famous "Flower Bottle". The combination of wonderful Champagne and a beautiful package make Fleur the perfect partner to your most romantic encounters.



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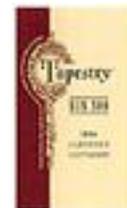
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Veve Clicquot Vintage Réserve

Testimony to the House's great vintages

Profile

A blend of about twenty Premiers and Grands Crus, the Vintage Réserve has the power of Pinot Noir, balanced by the finesse and elegance of Chardonnay. It is the perfect expression of the House style, proving that champagne can be a great wine and, as such, makes a perfect accompaniment for many dishes, developing its qualities as the years go by.



Combinations

It goes well with spiny lobster prawns, scallops and sea fish as well as poultry and white meat.



Le Vintage Réserve 1995

The colour is a pale yellow-gold tint with green reflections. The mousse is steady and lively.

There is a very aromatic pureness and fine complexity on the nose. Notes of flowers and fruits (fresh hazelnuts and almonds) mingle with warmer notes of Viennese pastries, apricots and ripe peaches, enhanced with a just a hint of mint leaves.

In the mouth, the wine is firm and attractive, which is typical of the vintage, but without any hardness. Fruits (pears, white peaches) dominate as well as mineral notes. A certain sweetness (marzipan) is already emerging beneath the freshness and the structure, and this will gradually be revealed as time goes by. The finish is very long and full of promise.

At this stage, the Vintage Reserve 1995 will be perfect as an apéritif or to complement seafood or certain fish, such as pike or perch. A few further years of maturation will enable this wine to accompany fish cooked in sauce or white meats.



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Winery: Veuve Clicquot

Wine: 1995 Brut Rosé Champagne Réserve

Score: 90

Price: \$75.00

Country: France

Region: Champagne

Issue: Dec 15, 2000

Tightly wound and reticent today, this full-bodied rosé exhibits floral and berry flavors on a muscular structure. Rich enough for the dinner table, it needs some time to develop. Lovely lingering finish. Best from 2001 through 2004.

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Winery: Veuve Clicquot

Wine: 1990 Brut Rosé Champagne La Grande Dame

Score: 90

Price: \$235.00

Country: France

Region: Champagne

Issue: Dec 15, 2000

Like a glacier. Incredibly fresh and youthful, exhibiting a rich mouthful of bread dough, cherry, fruit preserve and ginger on a firm, dry framework. Long, intense finish. Drink now through 2004.

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Winery: Veuve Clicquot

Wine: 1995 Brut Champagne Gold Label Vintage Réserve

Score: 88

Price: \$68.00

Country: France

Region: Champagne

Issue: Dec 15, 2000

Begins with richness and concentration, then turns lean, relying on pastry, apple and honey flavors, the last intensifying on the finish. Seems like a high dosage, yet well balanced. Drink now through 2004.

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[Please sign in](#)**Winery:** **Veuve Clicquot****Wine:** **NV Brut Champagne****Score:** **87**

This firm, dense Champagne starts off with apple and citrus flavors, then turns nutty on the finish, which lingers nicely. Very well-defined and minerally, too. Drink now through 2002.

Price: \$50.00**Country:** France**Region:** Champagne**Issue:** Dec 31, 2000[Search for user tasting notes](#)**Winery:** **Veuve Clicquot****Wine:** **1993 Brut Champagne La Grande Dame****Score:** **84**

Straightforward, in a soft style, offering apple and citrus notes. Tails off on the finish. Drink now. Tasted twice, with consistent notes.

Price: \$150.00**Country:** France**Region:** Champagne**Issue:** Dec 15, 2000[Search for user tasting notes](#)

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Sort	Score	Price	Vintage	Winery
Page	(1)			

Winery: Nicolas Feuillatte

Wine: NV Brut Champagne

Score: 89

Intriguing for its nutty, lanolin and cereal flavors, along with pear and honey. Richly textured and moderately firm, it's ready now, yet will develop over the short-term. Drink now through 2002.

Price: \$25.00

Country: France

Region: Champagne

Issue: Nov 30, 2000

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Winery: Nicolas Feuillatte

Wine: NV Brut Rosé Champagne

Score: 88

The aroma hints at cut apple, while the flavors lean toward cherry and bread dough, with a hint of autumn leaves. Fresh and focused. A solid rosé. Drink now through 2002.

Price: \$40.00

Country: France

Region: Champagne

Issue: Dec 15, 2000

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Winery: Nicolas Feuillatte

Wine: 1995 Brut Champagne Cuvée Spéciale

Score: 88

This solid Champagne begins on a honey and citrus note, deepening to include apple and mushroom. Though richly textured, it has a firm backbone of acidity. Drink now through 2002.

Price: \$60.00

Country: France

Region: Champagne

Issue: Dec 15, 2000

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Sort	Score	Price	Vintage	Winery
Page	(1)			

Winery: Roederer Estate

Wine: 1994 Brut Anderson Valley L'Ermitage

Score: 92

Sleek, elegant and sophisticated, with tightly focused pear, spice, hazelnut, citrus and ginger. Finishes long and complex. Drink now through 2006.

Price: \$43.00

Country: California

Region: Mendocino/Lake

Issue: Dec 15, 2000

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Winery: Roederer Estate

Wine: NV Brut Rosé Anderson Valley

Score: 90

Intense and flavorful, with rich black cherry, wild berry and rose petal flavors that run deep and linger. Drink now through 2006. Tasted twice, with consistent notes.

Price: \$24.00

Country: California

Region: Mendocino/Lake

Issue: Dec 15, 2000

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Winery: Roederer Estate

Wine: NV Brut Anderson Valley

Score: 87

A touch earthy and metallic before opening into purer cherry, vanilla and hazelnut flavors. Not as solid as past bottlings. Drink now through 2005. Tasted twice, with consistent notes.

Price: \$20.00

Country: California

Region: Mendocino/Lake

Issue: Dec 15, 2000

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Sort	Score Price Vintage Winery
Page	(1)

Winery: Bodegas Parxet

Wine: 1998 Ribera del Duero Tionio

Score: 84

Sweet plum fruit flavors mingle with mineral and gamy notes in this [i]nouveau[n]-style red. It's fresh, with light tannins. Drink now.

Price: \$17.00
Country: Spain
Region: Spain
Issue: Dec 15, 2000

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Winery: Parxet

Wine: NV Brut Cava

Score: 81

Straightforward, this cava shows clean apple and earth notes, ending on a firm, dry finish. Drink now.

Price: \$14.00
Country: Spain
Region: Spain
Issue: Nov 15, 2000

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Winery: Parxet

Wine: 1999 Alella Marqués de Alella Clasico

Score: 81

A light spritz keeps the simple lime flavor refreshing in this crisp white. Similar to a Vinho Verde. Drink now.

Price: \$10.00
Country: Spain
Region: Spain
Issue: Nov 30, 2000

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