

## Champagne Appellation



The Champagne region is located approximately 90 minutes northeast of Paris, France. Its northern geographic position, harsh climate, chalky sub-soil, erratic sunshine, and limited harvest combine to create a one-of-a-kind terroir. That's why Champagne wines can only be produced in Champagne, France.

Legally defining the Champagne appellation required almost 30 years, from 1905 to 1936. By 1927, the step by step process established the boundaries of the Champagne Vineyards region. Since then, the Champagne "AOC" - (Appellation of Controlled Origin) has worked to protect the region's name from misuse and ensure that the wine produced is of the highest quality. Regulations have been enacted by the appellation to regulate grape pruning, the height, the spacing and the density of the vines, to ensure harvesting by hand, and to govern the winemaking process, always aiming at improving Champagne quality.

## The Process

The Champagne making process is an intricate hands-on method, carefully developed and cultivated over hundreds of years.



**Harvest.** The Champagne making process begins with the vines. Only three varieties of grapes are used in the production of Champagne: **Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier and Chardonnay**. During the harvest, grapes are carefully picked by hand and sorted to remove any damaged fruit. As quickly as possible, the grapes are then pressed in large, low presses.

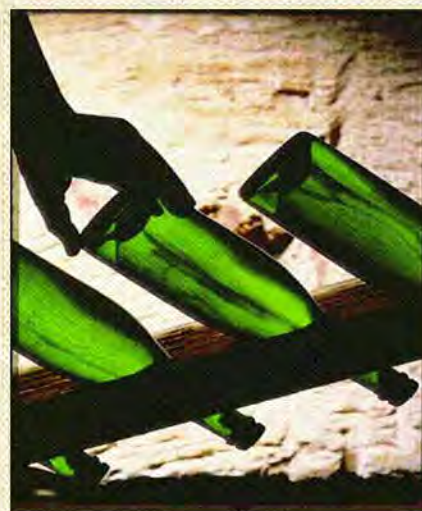
**First Fermentation.** After the grapes are pressed, they are stored in stainless steel vats - though occasionally this is done in oak barrels - to undergo the first fermentation. This process yields a still wine.



**Blending.** After the first fermentation is complete, the still wine is blended by the cellar master with various other base wines. This produces a blend that will match the house style, and can include as many as 70 different base wines - each adding a distinct quality to the blend. For non-vintage Champagne, a certain amount of reserve wine (wine set aside from previous harvests) is added as well. It is this carefully managed task that lends a consistent character to each Champagne house.



**Second Fermentation.** Once the blend is complete, it is bottled, and a mixture of sugar and yeast, known as the liqueur de tirage, is added. The bottle is closed with a crown cap and laid down, horizontally, in a cool, dark cellar. The minimum amount of time the wine ages is 15 months for non-vintage, three years for vintage, but most Champagne is aged for longer than these minimal rules stipulate.



**Riddling.** After aging, the yeast deposit remaining from the second fermentation is encouraged down the neck of the inverted bottle through a series of quarter or half-quarter turns, during which the bottle moves from a horizontal position to an inverted one. This process, called riddling, takes an average of eight weeks by hand, or eight days by machine.



**Disgorgement and Dosage.** Once settled, the sediment is removed by immersing the Champagne bottleneck in an ice-cold brine that freezes the residue into a small ice block. It is then removed from the bottle, either by hand or automatically. Then, a small amount of sugar dissolved in wine is added before the final cork is inserted in the bottle. This solution contains a specific measure of sugar that will define the sweetness of the wine.

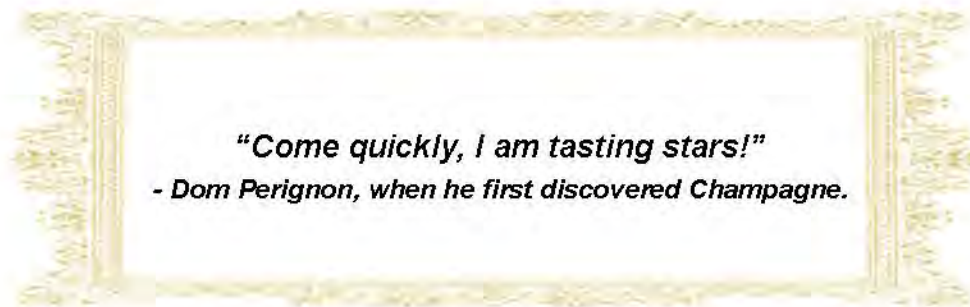
## CHAMPAGNE *prestige cuvées*

**Cuvées de prestige** are made from blends of the most subtle wines. Most Champagne houses consider their cuvées de prestige to be their top-end Champagne. Cuvées de prestige Champagne may or may not be vintage and is typically aged for an extended period of time.



## CHAMPAGNE *prestige cuvées*

Krug 1996 (subject to availability) .....	\$330
Krug Grand Cuvée NV .....	\$240
Louis Roederer 1999 Cristal .....	\$425
Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin 1998 La Grande Dame Brut Rosé .....	\$340
Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin 1998 La Grande Dame .....	\$275
Dom Pérignon 2000 .....	\$190
Dom Pérignon 1996 Rosé .....	\$470
Perrier-Jouet 1999 Fleur de Champagne .....	\$185
Taittinger 1998 Comtes de Champagne Blanc de Blancs .....	\$235
Duval-Leroy 1995 Femme de Champagne .....	\$160



Dom Pérignon

CHAMPAGNE  
TAITTINGER

## CHAMPAGNE grower-producers

The best grower champagnes reveal themselves to be some of the world's great wine bargains! Terry Theise (The Official Champagne Site), renowned for his dedication to the truest tradition of grower - producer Champagne, believes "It's only at the grower level that a person can luck into a non-vintage Champagne that's 100 percent Grand Cru". With generations of experience, the Growers work hard to express the character of each vineyard, through traditional techniques respectful of the environment and quality. At the time of the harvest, they can sell their grapes to the Big Champagne Houses, or entrust them to a Cooperative. Many thousands of growers retain grapes to make their own Champagne, wines that express the individuality of their 'terroir'. No one is in a position to know his or her vines and fruit more intimately than the Grower himself. Limited to their own fruit, estate-bottling families operate on a much smaller and therefore potentially more detail-conscious level, taking the craftsman's pride in the finished product.

*"I only drink Champagne when I'm happy... and when I'm sad. Sometimes I drink it when I'm alone. When I have company I consider it obligatory. I trifle with it if I am not hungry and drink it when I am. Otherwise, I never touch it...unless I'm thirsty".*  
-Lilly Bollinger

## CHAMPAGNE grower-producers

A. Margaine NV Cuvée Traditionelle Demi-Sec Premier Cru à Villers-Marmery .....	\$85
Chartogne - Taillet 1999 "Millesime Brut" à Merfy .....	\$126
H. Billiot Fils Brut Rosé NV Grand Cru à Ambonnay .....	\$111
L. Aubry 2000 "Le Nombre D'Or Campanae Veteres Vites" Brut à Jouy-Les-Reims .....	\$129
Pierre Peters 1999 Brut Millesime Grand Cru à Cuis .....	\$150
Vilmart & Cie Brut Grand Cellier Premier Cru à Rilly-la-Montagne .....	\$98
Egly-Ouriet Brut NV "Les Vignes de Vignay" Grand Cru à Ambonnay (100% Pinot Meunier) .....	\$90
Jean Vessellé, Oeil de Perdrix Grand Cru à Bouzy .....	\$65



## CHAMPAGNE *non-vintage*

A non-vintage bottle includes a blend of grapes from several vintages. Most Champagnes are non-vintage, which are classified as "house style". A key fact is that this style has a very consistent taste. This means that once you find a non-vintage to your liking, you should be able to buy it anytime, anywhere, and it will always be as you expect. These wines are made for immediate consumption and few will benefit from further aging.



## CHAMPAGNE *vintage*

You will pay extra for good vintage Champagne, which is derived from a single year's crop. The producers will reserve the finest fruit for this style of Champagne, adding to its desirability. Not every year is declared as a vintage year, as vintage Champagne is only made if conditions are good enough. A vintage will reflect as much of the character as it does the producer, so it may taste quite different from one year to the next. For example, a Champagne made during a very hot year will taste much richer, rounder and less acidic than one made from a cooler year. Most good champagne houses will age their vintage champagne for five to seven years for further development before release.

## CHAMPAGNE *non-vintage*

Bollinger Special Cuvée.....	\$80
Charles Heidsieck Brut Réserve.....	\$68
Gosset Grande Réserve.....	\$75
Ruinart Blanc de Blancs.....	\$120
	Half Bottle \$60
Taittinger Prélude Grand Cru.....	\$105
Taittinger "La Française".....	\$76
Pol Roger Brut.....	\$78
Pommery Brut Royale.....	\$74
Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin <<Yellow Label>>.....	\$86
	Half Bottle \$42
Moët & Chandon White Star.....	\$70
Jean Vesselle, Oeil de Perdrix Grand Cru à Bouzy.....	\$65

## CHAMPAGNE *vintage*

Pommery 1995 Cuvée Louise.....	\$197
Bruno Paillard 1996 Brut Millesime.....	\$108
Pol Roger 1998 Brut.....	\$142
Duval - Leroy 1998 Blanc de Chardonnay.....	\$94
Moët & Chandon 2000 Grande Vintage.....	\$99
Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin 1999 Brut.....	\$118
Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin 2002 Rosé Reserve.....	\$120

*"I drink champagne when I win, to celebrate...and I drink champagne when I lose, to console myself."*

*- Napoleon Bonaparte*

## CHAMPAGNE and SPARKLING rosé

**Pink or rosé Champagne** accounts for less than 5% of Champagne produced. Rosé Champagne is made through one of two methods. The first method involves adding a small amount of red still wine from Champagne to the original blend. The second method involves exposing the must to the skins of the red grapes when pressing. Sparkling rosé can be made in one of the two methods above as well. Always remember that the term "sparkling" is used everywhere in the world outside of Champagne, France.



## CHAMPAGNE rosé

Dom Pérignon 1996 Rosé.....	\$470
H. Billiot Fils Brut Rosé NV Grand Cru á Ambonnay.....	\$111
Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin 1998 La Grande Dame Brut Rosé.....	\$340
Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin 2002 Rosé Reserve.....	\$120
Bruno Paillard Brut Rosé Premiere Cuvée.....	\$100
Ruinart Brut Rosé.....	\$104
Moët Brut Imperial Rosé.....	\$90
	Half Bottle \$45
Duval - Leroy Lady Rosé Sec.....	Half Bottle \$40
Ruinart Brut Rosé.....	Half Bottle \$62

## SPARKLING rosé

Soter 2003 Beacon Hill Brut Rosé - Oregon.....	\$80
Chandon etoile Brut Rosé - California.....	\$56
Chandon Rosé - California.....	\$42
Domaine Carneros Brut Rosé - California.....	\$54
Gruet Rosé - New Mexico.....	\$38
Cristalino Brut Rosé - Spain.....	\$25
Rotari Brut Rosé - Italy.....	\$30
'J Brut Rosé - Russian River Valley, California.....	\$64

## CHAMPAGNE and SPARKLING *sweet*

In addition to classifying champagne/sparkling styles, classifications are also used to refer to sweetness (or its absence, called dry). Producers can regulate the sweetness by controlling fermentation. For example, stopping fermentation early leaves some natural grape sugar in the finished wine. Below is a listing for your reference

### Style:

- Brut: dry, less than 1.5% sugar
- Extra Sec: extra dry, 1.2 to 2 % sugar
- Sec: medium sweet, 1.7 to 3.5% sugar
- Demi-Sec: sweet, 3.3 to 5% sugar (dessert champagne)
- Doux: very sweet, over 5% sugar (dessert champagne)

### Also:

- **Blanc de blancs** is a Champagne produced from 100% Chardonnay grapes. Blanc de blancs have become very popular as an aperitif due to their light, dry taste. They are also ideal for light first courses including seafood and soups.
- **Blanc de noirs** is a Champagne made from 100% Pinot Noir and /or Pinot Meunier grapes. Typically, these wines are full-bodied and deeper yellow-gold in color. They are ideal for full-flavored foods, including meats and cheeses.

MOËT & CHANDON

## CHAMPAGNE *sweet*

Taittinger Nocturne Sec .....	\$105
Moët & Chandon Nectar Impérial Demi-Sec .....	\$80
	Half Bottle \$38
Veuve Clicquot Demi-Sec .....	\$80
A. Margaine NV Cuvée Traditionelle Demi-Sec	
Premier Cru a Villers-Marmery .....	\$85
Duval-Leroy Lady Rosé Sec .....	Half Bottle \$40

## SPARKLING WINE *sweet*

Chandon Riche Extra Dry - California .....	\$46
Mumm Napa Cuvée 'M' - California .....	\$38
Gruet Demi-Sec - New Mexico .....	\$38
Rotari Demi-Sec - Italy .....	\$40
Aurora Tortona Moscato - Italy .....	\$24
(half the pressurization of Champagne)	

*"There comes a time in every woman's life when the only thing that helps is a glass of champagne."  
- Bette Davis (from the movie Old Acquaintance)*

  
Veuve Clicquot  
CHAMPAGNE

## SPARKLING WINE *america*

Soter 2003 Beacon Hill Brut Rosé - Oregon .....	\$80
Domaine Carneros Brut - California .....	\$45
Chandon Riche Extra Dry - California .....	\$46
Mumm Napa Cuvée 'M' - Napa Valley, California .....	\$42
Iron Horse 2002 Russian Cuvée - Green Valley, California .....	\$55
Iron Horse 2002 Classic Brut - Green Valley, California .....	\$55
'J Brut Cuvée 20 NV - Russian River Valley, California .....	\$50
'J Brut Rosé - Russian River Valley, California .....	\$64
Gruet Demi-Sec - New Mexico .....	\$38
Gruet Blanc de Noirs - New Mexico .....	\$38
	Half Bottle \$19
Domaine Ste. Michelle Blanc de Noirs - Washington .....	\$33

## SPARKLING WINE *world*

Gramona 2004 Gran Cuvée Cava - Penedes, Spain .....	\$42
Poochi Poochi Sparkling Sake - Japan (330 ml) .....	\$30
Aurora Tortona Moscato - Piemonte, Italy .....	\$24
Bellenda Prosecco - Veneto, Italy .....	\$33
Wolfberger Crémant - Alsace, France .....	\$32
Thorn-Clarke (50% Chardonnay + 50% Pinot Noir) - Barossa, Australia .....	\$28
Wyndham Estate Sparkling Shiraz - Australia .....	\$35

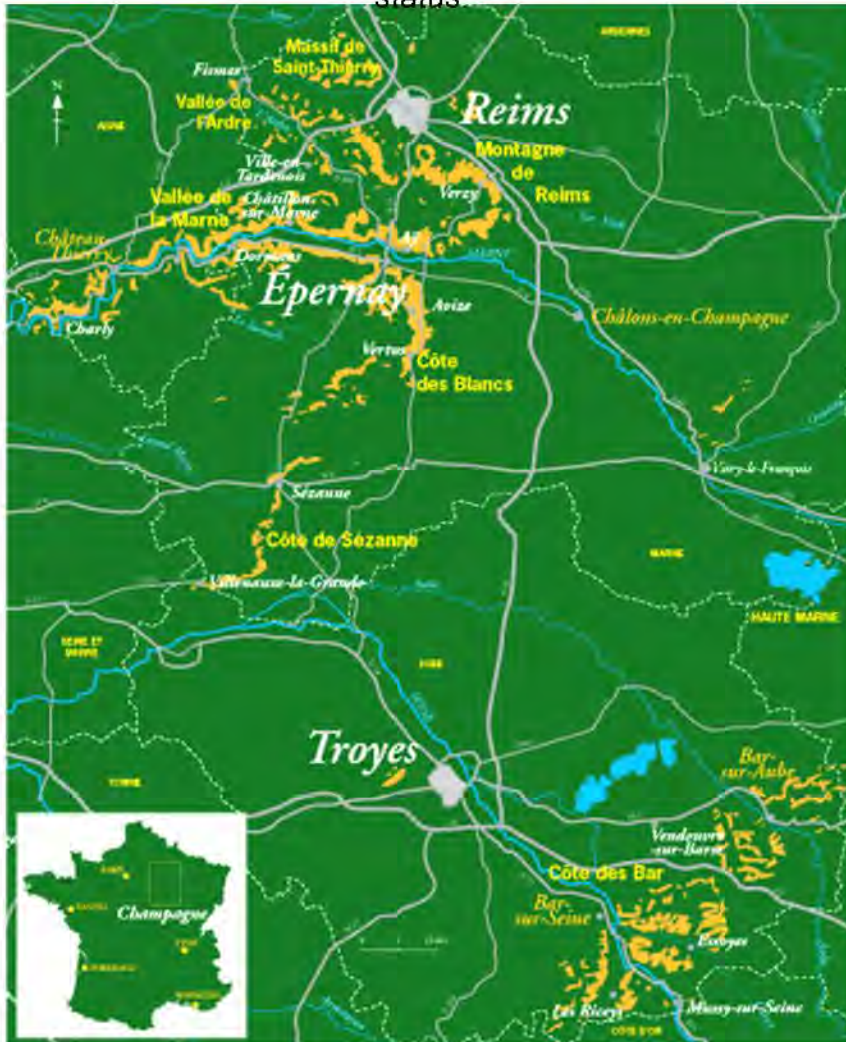


***"Champagne's funny stuff. I'm used to whiskey.  
Whiskey is on the back, and champagne's a  
heavy mist before my eyes."  
Jimmy Stewart (from the movie  
The Philadelphia Story)***



# CHAMPAGNE REGION

Today the system rates the wine-growing areas of Champagne on a scale ranging from 80 to 100 percent - the échelle system to stress relative levels of quality. Villages between 80 and 89 percent are referred to simply as Crus, which mean growths - in this case a wine from a specific area. A group clustered in the 90 to 99 percent range consisting of 40 named villages are designated as Premier Cru, while 17 villages stand at 100 percent, the equivalent of 24 karat gold, earning Grand Cru status.



# PRACTICAL TIPS

## Storing Champagne:

Just like any other wine, Champagne is sensitive to temperature and light. For that reason, it is typically bottled in a light-resistant, dark green glass. Champagne should be stored between 40 and 60 degrees and in an upright position.

## Chilling:

Ideally, Champagne should be chilled to a temperature between 40 to 45 degrees. This temperature can be attained by placing the bottle in a refrigerator for a couple of hours or by placing it in an ice-bucket - half filled with ice, half filled with water - for 20 minutes.

## Opening a Champagne Bottle:

The trick to opening a bottle of Champagne while maintaining its integrity is to avoid "popping" the cork. Begin by scoring the foil around the base of the wire cage. Then, carefully untwist and loosen the bottom of the cage, but do not remove it. In one hand, enclose the cage and cork while holding the base of the Champagne bottle with your other hand. Twist both ends in the opposite direction. As soon as you feel pressure forcing the cork out, try to push it back in while continuing to twist gently until the cork is released with a sigh.

For more information on Champagne, visit [www.champagne.us](http://www.champagne.us), the Office of Champagne, USA's web site.

## Large format sizes in liters and number of bottles

<i>Nebuchadnezzar</i>	15 liters = 20 bottles
<i>Balthazar</i>	12 liters = 16 bottles
<i>Salmanazar</i>	9 liters = 12 bottles
<i>Methuseleh</i>	6 liters = 8 bottles
<i>Rehoboam</i>	4.5 liters = 6 bottles

