CHAMPAGNE AND SPARKLING WINE

**History**

- **La Champagne** = region
- **Le Champagne** = the wine “Le vin de champagne”
- Latin word = “CAMPANIA” meaning plain

- Documentation of viticulture in Champagne in 79AD; fossils show wild vines in this region over a million years ago.
- Romans quarried the hills in search of Chalk blocks.
- 92 AD Emperor Domitian decreed all vineyards in France to be uprooted to eliminate competition.
- For 200 yrs vineyards were cultivated in secret
- The vineyards of Champagne were accumulated by the church for sacraments and for the royal table. The vineyards of Champagne were the ones worthy for God.
- Wines of Champagne and Burgundy were in competition
- Started creating Vin Gris to differentiate from burgundy, became the style for the English monarch
- When wines were shipped to England the warm weather caused a 2nd fermentation which made bubbly wines; The English already had corks for ales so when vats would arrive they’d cork the “Vin Gris”
- Champagne was first produced in the end of the 17th century by monks in Reims and Epernay Dom Pierre Perignon and Frere Jean Oudart; The idea was to capture the bubbles in the bottle
- **Dom Perignon & Frere Jean Oudart are most influential**
  - Idea of harvesting selectively over a period of days so that only the ripest fruit is picked
  - Invented the basket press, a gentle press
  - Using string to hold the corks, retaining a longer sparkle
- Created the method Champenoise, along with many secret recipes
- Champagne was divided during the revolution into sectors: 75% of production Le Champagne is in Marne; Many people upset
- Wars: WWI & Prohibiyion were disasterous, vineyards became battlefields, export markets evaporated, depression hit WWII; again battlefields ruined the vineyards
- 1927 classification of vineyards as grand crus “Eches de Crus”, updated in 1985 and to this day no one can agree on what it means

**CHAMPAGNE VS SPARKLING WINE**

“Champagne” is sparkling wine made in the Champagne region of France according to the traditional champagne method. Out of respect and to avoid confusion most producers in the United States call their bubbly “sparkling wine” even when it is made in the traditional method.

**Vins Mousseux** is the term for French sparkling wines produced outside France’s Champagne region.

**Spumante** is the Italian term for sparkling wine.

**Sekt** is the German designation for sparkling wine.

**Cava** is the Spanish term for sparkling wines made using the traditional champagne method.
**Processes**

- **Gas Injection**: Inject bottle with CO2, inexpensive sparkling (soft drinks)

- **Cuve close**: Charmat method = Italian Method
  - Second fermentation taking place in bulk, in tank rather than in bottle, prior to filtration and bottling under pressure
  - Used in Prosecco and Asti
  - Used for light drink now sparkling

- **Transfer Method**: Follows Method Champenoise 1st steps.
  - After 2nd fermentation wine is transferred to tanks.
  - Wine is then filtered and liquer dosage is added and filled in new bottles allows for more blending options when wine goes into bottle

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**Grapes**

- **Grapes used in making Champagne are**
  - Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, & Pinot Meunier
  - Pinot Blanc can also be used

- **Chardonnay**: Gives life, acid, freshness and aging potential. Blended with Pinot Meunier the agability increases

- **Pinot Noir**: Adds depth, complexity, backbone, fullness.

- **Pinot Meunier**: Suppleness, roundeness and fragrance

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**Types of Champagne**

- "**Blanc de Noir** = Pinot Noir & Pinot Meunier
  - Fuller bodied, more golden in color, more of a food wine
  - Not many houses produce it

- "**Blanc de Blanc** = Chardonnay or other white grapes
  - Lighter and more elegant

- "**Rose** = Blends with skin contact with Pinot Noir; a little red wine is added to the dosage (Champagne is the only place in France where this is allowed)
  - Roses are "Dry" not sweet

- **Non-Vintage** = A house style, blends of different grapes of different vintages. 95% needs to come from that particular year are released by January 1st of that particular vintage

- **Vintage** = Only made in or should be made in exceptional years
  - It is usually left to age so it can round out a food wine

- **De Luxe** = First made in 1935 by Moet & Chandon Dom Perginon the high end brand for a particular house usually a vintage champagne now there seems to be many brands

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**Different Climates for Sparkling Wines**

- **Cool Climate**: Allows fruit stay on vine longer, more complex and higher acidity
  - Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier, Gamay & Pinot Blanc

- **Warm Climate**: Base wine can be too alcoholic & too heavy;
  - More fruit flavors, less complexity and less acidity
  - Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier, Gamay, Chenin Blanc

- **Hot Climate**: Problems with too early of ripening and acid is not balanced
  - Parallada, Xarello, Macabeo, Pinot Noir, Chenin Blanc

**Levels of Sweetness**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of Sweetness</th>
<th>Residual Sugar (g/l)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DOUX</td>
<td>0-6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demi-Sec, Dry</td>
<td>3-15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sec</td>
<td>12-20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extra Dry</td>
<td>7-35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brut</td>
<td>No Perceptible Sweetness 35-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brut Nature Bone Dry</td>
<td>50+</td>
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</table>
Second Fermentation
Wine is put in bottles with added yeasts and some sugar (called **liqueur de triage**) and cellared horizontal.
AOC laws say it needs to rest for 1.5 years; vintage 3 yrs
Carbon dioxide is trapped in the bottle
This period is called **aging on the lees**

Riddling
Bottles placed on racks called pupitres at 45° angles with cork pointed downward. Every few days the bottles are shaken and tilted more downward. The neck of bottle collects the lees. Until it is completely vertical.
It is now done with machines “**gyropalettes**”

Disgorging
Remove the cork with lees not losing too much liquid. Cool neck of bottle to freeze yeasts at neck.
Not done properly can lead to another fermentation.

Dosage
The bottle is topped with sugar and base wine = “**liqueur de expedition**” Sugar is to offset acidity; some times it is to make it sweeter

Cognac and Brandy can be added to increase alcohol

Citric acid is added for freshness of old wines
Ascorbic Acid added as an antioxidant with sulphur dioxide

A cork is added and with a wire cage 6 turns to remove the cage

Bottle aging
A. Adds more flavor, tricery flavors
Gushing can occur do to particles in bottles or from packaging

**CHAMPAGNE METHOD**

**MÉTHODE CHAMPENOISE / MÉTHODE TRADITIONNELLE**

Harvest
Grapes are picked early for lower sugar levels & higher acids
Hand-harvest is done to not allow breakage
Least amount of skin contact, don’t want a varietal-based wine

Pressage
The pressing of the juice limiting skin contact
Pressed three times, extracting different juice from different parts of the grape and stored in separate vessels. This is the base wine.

First Fermentation
Same as wine; convert natural sugars into alcohol.
Produce a base wine (very acidic)
Cuvee is made (a blend of different vineyards or years)

Assemblage
The blending of different wines to make a good wine that will be suitable for Sparkling
FOOD PAIRING WITH CHAMPAGNE
Champagne should be served 40-50 degrees

Cheeses and Champagne

Brie = Light and fruity Champagne
Mild Cheddar = Brighter champagne
Goat Cheese = Stronger/acidic champagne
Giuda = Champagne with nutty yeasty character

Foie Gras = Light and delicate champagne Demi-Sec
Raw Oysters = Blanc de Blanc (avoid vinegar and lemon)
Raw Shrimp = Good with most Champagne (avoid heavy red sauces)
Mushrooms = Good pairing, especially Blanc de noir
Sushi = Perfect match (avoid too spicy sushi)
Lobster = Great with a brut or extra dry
Scallops = Best with olive oil and ginger
Chicken = Champagne works well as long as you stay away from lemon and vinegar
Strawberries = Good only if champagne is sweet
Fruit desserts = Light fresh tart fruit desserts work well
Brulees/Pudding = Make sure Champagne is sweeter than dessert

CAVA

Spanish Sparkling wine
CAVA is a DO without a region
It can be made wherever Cava “the Spanish method for making sparkling wine” vineyards are designated
Most is in Catalunya, Penedes (South of Barcelona)

The Grapes:
Macabeo (Viuva); Xarel lo (Pansa Blanca); Parellada
More and more seeing: chardonnay, Subirat; Garnacha, Monstrell, Trepat & Pinot Noir

Pinot & Trepat may only be used in Roses
Began making sparkling in mid 19th century known as Xampan; until French said no way
Called them “Espumosos” until 1983 officially named Cava

Método tradicional = Traditional Method
**SEKT**

- **SEKT** is German for sparkling.
- Sekt wine is made in the Charmat Method and the premium wines are made in the method traditionelle (cannot be named champenoise Method after the treaty of Versailles).
- Sekt was usually made from imported grapes.
- When it is made in Germany they call it Deutscher Sekt.
- Grapes = Riesling, Pinot Blanc (Weißburgunder) & Pinot Gris (Riander).
- Most Sekt is Vintage. 85% of wine needs to come from that vintage.
- It too is made extra brut, brut, extra dry & demi-sec.

**Other Regions**

- **Loire**
  - Sparkling wine is made in Vouvray & Saumur.
- Cremant de Bourgogne in Burgundy.
- Alsace = Cremant.
- Limoux = Cremant.
- Die (Rhone Valley).

**GOOD VINTAGES FOR CHAMPAGNE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1997</td>
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<td>1976</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
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<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>1971</td>
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*Anything older is past prime.*
1. Quarter or Piccolo 187 ml  
2. Half-Bottle 375 ml  
3. Standard Bottle 750 ml  
4. Magnum 1.5 litres 2 bottles  
5. Jeroboam 3 litres 4 bottles Founder and first king of Israel, 931-910 BC  
6. Rehoboam 4.5 litres 6 bottles Son of Solomon, King of Judah, 922-908 BC  
7. Methuselah 6 litres 8 bottles Biblical patriarch who lived to the age of 969  
8. Salmanazar 9 litres 12 bottles King of Assyria, 859-824 BC  
9. Balthazar 12 litres 16 bottles Regent of Babylon, Son of Nabonide, 539 BC  
10. Nebuchadnezzar (not pictured) 15 litres 20 bottles King of Babylon, 605-562 BC

The Coupe wine glass was the glass used for champagne. It was a mold of Marie Antoinette's breast.

Modern times brought back the flute, more suitable for the bubbles.

Some believe the best glass is a burgundy bulb glass, since it is made with Pinot Noir why not a Pinot Glass.

**SAFETY FIRST**

- Always use a napkin to cover entire btl and cork.
- Put champagne on hip to support.
- Have a cut in foil prior to arriving to table.
- Turn cage 6 times.
- Slowly pull off cork while cage is still on cork. There should not be a pop.
- When pouring hold it by the bottle, you can use the punt if it is deep.
- The punt is really for sturdy bottles while shipping.
- When pouring, pour slowly so that it does not over flow.

**REASONS IT WOULD POP**

- Change in temperature.
- Agitation.
- Foreign particles in bottle.

**OPENING CHAMPAGNE**

- SAFETY FIRST
- ALWAYS USE A NAPKIN TO COVER ENTIRE BTL AND CORK.
- PUT CHAMPAGNE ON HIP TO SUPPORT.
- HAVE A CUT IN FOIL PRIOR TO ARRIVING TO TABLE.
- TURN CAGE 6 TIMES.
- SLOWLY PULL OFF CORK WHILE CAGE IS STILL ON CORK.
- THERE SHOULD NOT BE A POP.
- WHEN POURING HOLD IT BY THE BOTTLE, YOU CAN USE THE PUNT IF IT IS DEEP.
- THE PUNT IS REALLY FOR STURDY BOTTLES WHILE SHIPPING.
- WHEN POURING, POUR SLOWLY SO THAT IT DOES NOT OVER FLOW.

**FOUR BOTTLES VERSUS A MAGNUM**

- Quarter or Piccolo 187 ml
- Half-Bottle 375 ml
- Standard Bottle 750 ml
- Magnum 1.5 litres 2 bottles

**FOUR BOTTLES VERSUS A JEROBOAM**

- Quarter or Piccolo 187 ml
- Half-Bottle 375 ml
- Standard Bottle 750 ml
- Jeroboam 3 litres 4 bottles