

## ~ Fun Facts:

- ~ True "Champagne" must come from the namesake area in France.
- ~ The grapes used in Champagne are: Chardonnay, Pinot Noir & Pinot Meunier



## ~ Buying / Ordering Tips:

a. There are 2 categories given to champagne: Vintage & Non-vintage

~ **Vintage** – simply put, all the grapes used to make that bottle all came from the listed year.

~ **Non-vintage** – means that grapes from different years were made to make that particular bottle. Usually made by blending the wines of the most recent harvest with 'reserve wines' from previous vintages. On the bottle you might see the abbreviations "NV" for short.

b. On the label you might find:

~ **Extra Brut** or **Brut Naturel** – Bone dry - the driest of the dry

~ **Brut** – Dry. This is the typical style of Champagne, with no sweetness

~ **Sec** – Still very dry but with a hint of sweetness.

~ **Demi-sec** – While the definition is half dry, think of it as half sweet. This wine will be fairly sweet.

~ **Doux** – also known as rich, this wine is the sweetest you can get in Champagne –over 5% sugar. It's a dessert in itself and very rare.

c. **Frizzante** - Frizzante wines have small bubbles that offer a refreshing tingle while helping to mask the wine's sweetness. Frizzante wines get their bubbles from a partial second fermentation.

d. **Blanc de Blanc** – means "white of white" and is made only of Chardonnay; lighter in style, perfect with shellfish and seafood.

e. **Blanc de Noir** – means "white of black" and is a white champagne made from either Pinot Noir or both Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier (both red grapes); usually fuller-bodied than blanc de blanc, this style can match with a variety of foods.

f. **Rosé** – could be only one grape or all three grapes used in champagne, but must contain some percentage of a red grape. Can be robust in style and hold its own with a dinner.

## ~ Pouring / Glassware Tips:

a. The tiny bubbles in Champagne play a big role in enlivening its taste. The best way to pour a glass is at an angle down the side of the glass and cooler temperatures cause less bubble loss.

b. The elongated silhouette of a champagne glass permits the wine's froth to expand and the tapered cavity keeps the froth from frittering away too swiftly.

c. A flute is supposed to be held gently by its stem, never the body as it will compromise the taste of champagne.

## ~Tonight's Wines:

- 1. Toso Brut (Argentina)** ~ Gentle, soft, fresh taste and oh so easy to drink. 100% Chardonnay grapes.
- 2. Bodega Norton Brut (Argentina)** ~ Delicate and fruity aromas. Great finesse. Balanced acidity and a good finish. 80% Chardonnay, 20% Pinot Noir.
- 3. Bodega Norton Brut Rose (Argentina)** ~ Intense aromas of red fruit, strawberries, blueberries. Young, fresh, pleasant long finish. Chardonnay 50%, Chenin 40%, Pinot Noir 10%
- 4. Bodega Norton Demi-Sec (Argentina)** ~ Young fresh fruity sparkling wine. Uses: Chardonnay & Chenin Blanc
- 5. Coastal Vines Brut (USA)** ~ 2010 Rising Star Award. 56% French Colombard, 36% Chardonnay, 8% mixed whites. A light colored sparkler with aromas of apple and citrus. On the palate there are flavors of melon and pear. Crisp clean finish. Try with Brie, grilled garlic shrimp pasta or light white cake.
- 6. Duval Leroy Champagne (France)** ~ Full-flavored, round and spicy ready-to-go bottle of bubbly. Features toast, lemon and nut aromas and flavors. Balanced, with an assertive finish. 75% Pinot Noir, 25% Chardonnay
- 7. Centello Cava (Spain)** ~ Crisp and refreshing with the fine and elegant bubbles that gracefully frame the citrus, green apple and biscotti aromas and flavors.
- 8. Piper Sonoma Brut (USA)** ~ Piper Sonoma was founded by the Piper-Heidsieck Champagne house in France and the winemaker spent more than a few years honing his craft there before taking over their California property. The wine is 60% Chardonnay, 40% Pinot. The balance is obvious from the first sip to the last. This makes a lovely aperitif or a lively partner for seafood dishes.
- 9. Piper Heidsieck Reims Champagne Extra Dry (France)** ~ From an historic major Champagne house, with all the classic flavors of apple, pear, peach and a yeasty toast on the finish. This is "Extra Dry" a tough more residual sugar retained in a full bodied texture. A treat to start any special dinner. Try with chilled shrimp or salmon.
- 10. Marques de Gelida, Cava Brut Exclusive Reserva 2006 (Spain)** ~ An intensely bubbled cave with a nose of creamy pear and rich fruit. Those same flavors are on the palate as all of those lovely bubbles rush that flavor right to a nice finish.
- 11. Nicholas Feuillatte Brut (France)** ~ This Brut is a fun sparkler and good value for true French Champagne. Delicate wine with crisp notes of apple and pear with a good balance of dryness and acidity. Try with brie!
- 12. Nino Franco Veneto Prosecco "Rustico" Brut (Italy)** ~ The Prosecco grape of Valdobianedene has great appeal for its classic notes of white peaches, floral aromas and soft spicy finish. This one is dry and refreshingly crisp. Robert Parker calls this "...just about as good as Prosecco gets at the non vintage level." Try with soft creamy cheeses.
- 13. McGuigan Sparkling Shiraz (Australia)** ~ Sparkling reds are all the rage in Australia and 21 million screaming Aussies can't be wrong can they? Delightful dark berry fruit flavors of black currant and plum. The fruity overtones go well with meat while light bubbles help cut through salt and fat. Perfect for heavy winter meals like Thanksgiving turkey dinner. Or with desserts like creme caramel and decadent chocolate cake.

*Cheers!*

*~ Toni, Pam, Tracie, Rachel, Tom, Lana, Jonathan and Mark ~*

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