

Let's *Wine*
About it



SAUVIGNON BLANC

Pronunciation:
"Saw-vin-yawn Blonk"

Taste: Aggressively-citrus-driven (grapefruit pith), with some exotic fruits (honeydew melon, passion fruit, kiwi) and always an herba-ceous quality (grass, mint, green pepper)

Style: Light- to Medium-Bodied White Wine

Description: Sauvignon Blanc is a dry white grape first widely planted in France. Wines are tart, typically with herbal, "green" fruit flavors.

Food Pairing: fish, chicken, pork, veal, Mexican, Vietnamese, French, herb-crusted goat cheese, nutty cheeses such as Gruyère

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

In order to better serve our members, we need to receive any new info and changes regarding your status (i.e., change of address, new credit card number, etc.) by the 20th of each month.

PLEASE NOTIFY US BY CALLING (888) 646-5446, Ext. 13.

Any information received after the 20th of each month will not take effect until the following month. Change of address updates, for the upcoming shipment, called in after the 20th, may be subject to a special handling fee.

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Exposition NVV sparkling Wine		\$29.00	\$21.75	\$23.20
Fog & Light 2020 Cabernet Sauvignon		\$26.00	\$19.50	\$20.80
Equoia 2021 Sauvignon Blanc		\$15.00	\$11.25	\$12.00
JANUARY SELECTIONS	PRICES EXPIRE 03/31/2023			
Rocas Del Rio 2021 Carbonic Red		\$25.00	\$18.75	\$20.00
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Noble Vines 2020 667 Pinot Noir		\$18.00	\$13.50	\$14.40
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Mission Trail Vineyards 2020 Friars' Reserve Meritage		\$45.00	\$33.75	\$36.00
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Exposition NVV Sparkling		\$29.00	\$21.75	\$23.20

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*PRICES LISTED REFLECT PRICE PER BOTTLE. NO OTHER DISCOUNTS APPLY.

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ALL ABOUT THE Bubbles

There just seems to be something special about wine with bubbles in it. Be it at a wedding or on New Year's Eve - opening a bottle of sparkling wine marks a special occasion. Those effervescent bubbles seem to have a way of bringing out smiles, and its reputation of making one "giddy" far quicker than expected is well known (and memories of following day head-aches solidify the tender remembrances).

Perhaps we should begin by defining a few things. First off, a bottle of sparkling wine can technically only be called "champagne" if it is grown and produced in the Champagne region of France, similar to brandy from Cognac or port from Portugal. Therefore, when discussing "the bubbly", we should stick with referring to it as sparkling wine on a generalized basis (this is also a public safety announcement as French regulatory agents take this matter *extremely* seriously). Secondly, a sparkling wine is defined as a wine with significant levels of carbon dioxide within it, which provides the bubbles.

It does make one wonder though how anyone ever perceived that bubbles in wine would be a good thing...I mean can you imagine having your glass of Cabernet Sauvignon fizzing with bubbles? No, no you cannot, which is exactly what people thought centuries ago when they noticed that occasionally their wine bottles had carbonation in them.

You likely recognize the name Dom Perignon and associate him with champagne/sparkling wine. In fact, the Dom Perignon champagne label may arguably be more recognized than any other wine bottle on the planet. And although it is appropriate for Monsieur Perignon to receive credit for promoting quality sparkling wine, he by no means invented the process; his discovery of the positive attributes of carbonation in wine was actually accidental. Perignon was tasked originally with figuring out how to rid the situation from certain bottles occasionally having bubbles in them!



Now, let's get into the vineyards. It may not be surprising that the most common varietal for white sparkling wine production is Chardonnay, but it may be that the second is most likely Pinot Noir. Grapes used for sparkling wine production tend to be best when sourced from cooler growing climates, which explains why the Champagne region, far in the northeast of France, is the ancestral home of sparkling wines (and this is also why our own Monterey County produces some fantastic sparklers as well!).

Sparkling wine grapes are harvested early in order to capture high acidity levels and to avoid high sugar levels; avoiding tannins is another goal. To deter this as much as possible, extra care is taken during the harvest to avoid splitting of the berries, and grapes destined for sparkling wine production are pressed as soon as possible.

Moving on, let's venture into the winemaking process. White wine grapes are the most popular for use in making sparkling wines, and it is even possible for winemakers to make varietal sparklers, such as *blanc de blancs* (white of whites), which is 100% Chardonnay. However, the vast majority of sparkling wines produced are blends of several varietals, vineyards, and vintages - this is why it is not uncommon at all to see non-vintage sparkling wines.



February Referrals



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Continued Inside

Monthly Wine Selections

ARISTOTLE - 2020 *Petite Sirah*



The Monterey County region is defined by morning fog, strong winds, broad temperature swings and intense sunshine. The warmer inland temperatures are moderated by the powerful influence of the nearby Pacific Ocean, which averages 50° throughout the year. Each and every day, the temperatures of Monterey County rise and fall precipitously, conveyed by fog, strong winds and bright sunlight. This triad of elements promotes the cultivation of Petite Sirah to superb and distinctive results. The long, warm days allow full-bodied, dark fruit flavors to develop while the dramatic nighttime cooling preserves the balance and structure of this supple wine.

Deep, intriguing, and intense, our Petite Sirah is sophisticated, yet approachable, and especially delicious. Aromas of blackberry, elderberry, plum and hints of ripe fig lead into notes of chocolate and vanilla. This full-bodied and well-balanced wine rich with black fruit flavors leaves you wanting another sip with its lingering sweet oak finish.

100% Petite Sirah 13.5% Alcohol Cellar Through 2028
Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

EXPOSITION - N/V *Sparkling Wine*



Exposition is produced in the traditional *méthode champenoise*. Primary fermentation was done slowly and at a cold temperature to enhance the varietal aromatics and preserve the natural delicate character. Next, the *cuvée* was bottled with sugar and yeast, and a secondary fermentation proceeded in the bottle. While fermenting en tirage, carbon dioxide that would normally be released is trapped, producing the sparkle and bubbles. After aging on the lees for 40 months, the wine was riddled—slowly shaken and turned with the angle gradually increased, causing the lees to dislodge and settle in the neck of the bottle. The settled lees were then frozen to form a “plug” and disgorged. The sparkling wine was quickly corked to maintain the effervescence and *voilà*, Exposition was born!

Exposition is a traditional method sparkling wine crafted from Pinot Noir and Chardonnay grapes. This dry, elegant and complex *cuvée* exhibits bright fruit, crisp acidity and toasty creaminess.

53% Pinot Noir, 47% Chardonnay 12.5% Alcohol Cellar Through 2025
Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

FOG & LIGHT - 2020 *Cabernet Sauvignon* (Club Red)



Fog & Light vineyards are situated along the coastal mountain ranges of Monterey, California. It is in this exceptional place that the cool maritime fog funnels into the valley each night. The deep, frigid waters of the Pacific Ocean are pulled to the surface of the Monterey Bay which cools the marine air that hovers over the Monterey coast and sends the wind howling down the Salinas Valley.

The Fog & Light Cabernet is as tantalizing and enigmatic as its name. Aromas of blackberries, elderberries and plums with notes of oak and vanilla with hints of tobacco and cedar. Full bodied, structured yet integrated tannins, rich black fruit with a lingering spicy oak finish. This wine can be enjoyed today - or cellared for a special occasion to be determined.

100% Cabernet Sauvignon 13.5% Alcohol Cellar Through 2027
Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

ÉQUOIA - 2021 *Sauvignon Blanc* (Club Blanc)



Équoia wines are crafted from a sustainably farmed estate vineyards located in Monterey, California. This magical place is hailed as one of the best places on earth to grow wine grapes. It is just the right distance from the Pacific Ocean to balance warm, sun-drenched days for ripeness and complexity, with the cooling effects of wind, fog and cold nights for bright, fresh acidity. Complex geology, soils and climates create the most interesting wines. Monterey possesses the most diverse wine growing climate in all of California, with four of the five heat summation regions.

Medium-bodied with balanced acidity, Équoia Sauvignon Blanc is fresh and crisp with aromas of citrus, quince pear and melon. Notes of bright tropical fruit lead into a refreshing and lingering finish. Pairs well with grilled seafood, spring salads and moderately spicy dishes.

100% Sauvignon Blanc 13.5% Alcohol Cellar Through 2025
Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

Cover Article Continued

Red wine grapes can be used for white sparkling production (as the juice is initially clear without prolonged exposure to grape skins), and these sparklers are known as *blanc de noirs* (white of blacks). *Rosé* sparkling wines are quite popular, especially in Spain and Portugal. Although rare, there are also red sparklers.

For all sparkling wines, primary fermentation occurs in the winemaking process, just as it does with still wine production. The alteration in the process that distinguishes sparkling production occurs with the introduction of a secondary fermentation (which can occur naturally on its own, explaining why Perignon began experimenting). This secondary fermentation is conducted in various methods explained below, but a by-product is the creation of carbon dioxide captured in the wine. Estimates of the amount of bubbles one bottle of sparkling can produce ranges from 50 to 250 million...that's a lot of bubbles!

As for the different methods to encourage the secondary fermentation, the most well known is the *méthode champenoise*, sometimes referred to as the “traditional” method. In this method, a base blend wine (*cuvée*) is bottled with sugar and yeast, with the sugar providing a food source for the yeast, eventually releasing carbon dioxide into the wine. The dead yeast cells (called “lees”) are removed from the wine and *voilà*!

Another method used to produce sparkling wines is the *method champant*. This method uses stainless steel tanks that are pressurized, which stimulates the process of the yeast and sugar interaction, and then the wine is bottled (i.e. basically it's a faster process than the previously described method). The last method used is carbon injection, which doesn't involve a secondary fermentation process, and instead consists of injecting carbon dioxide gas directly into the wine... soda pop comes to mind. As you can imagine, the carbon injection method is used to produce the cheapest bottles of sparklers.

Brut or *Doux*: how sweet do you like your sparkling wines? The amount of sugar introduced for the secondary fermentation process will ultimately determine the level of sweetness in a sparkling wine. *Brut Natural* is the driest, although fairly limited in production. *Extra Brut* is the more common driest style of sparkling wine you will encounter, followed by *Brut*, which is arguably the most popular of all styles. *Extra Dry* (also called *Extra Sec*) is slightly less dry than *Brut*, followed by *Sec*. The two sweetest styles of sparkling wine are *Demi-Sec* and then *Doux*.

Sweet or dry in style, sparkling wines are produced around the world. California and France are major producers; the Aussies have a Shiraz sparkler; the Spanish produce *Cava*; the Portuguese have *Espumante*; the Germans have *Sekt*; the South Africans produce *Cap Classique*; and the Italians have various versions, with their generic term for sparkling wine being *Spumante*.

So, there you have a brief overview of this intriguing style of wine, and we hope that you will savor your glasses of *bubbly* this holiday season. One last point is that although it may be fun to open a bottle of sparkling wine by “popping” the cork out and projecting a burst of fizz...keep in mind that by doing this you are doing your bottle a great disservice. Not only are you wasting wine (nothing less than a crime on its own), but you'll be releasing so much carbon dioxide that you will not be able to fully appreciate the bubbling in your glass!

Bryce Ternet - is a contributing editor and is the author of: “*The Stevenson Plan, A Novel of the Monterey Peninsula*”



Entertain with Wine



Lies You've Been Told About Wine

Part 1

Wine is, by definition, an approachable libation. For centuries, it has been enjoyed worldwide by hardworking people of all walks of life. Yet, many people think that the wine world is not for them. Why? Most likely because they've been fed lies year after year about wine and feel as if it's not approachable at all. This is a shame, as it has led to countless individuals shying away from wine altogether. Once you can gain a thorough understanding of some of the lies you've been told about wine over the years, you'll see that it's not only approachable, but extremely welcoming. Here are seven lies you've most likely encountered once or twice.

Wine Isn't Good Unless it Costs a Fortune

This is the biggest lie of all and the one that must be brought up right off the bat. Sure, there are plenty of \$100+ bottles of wine that are so incredible as to literally cause you to pause and forget about everything else in life. The fact is, though, that there are plenty of bottles in the \$20-30 range that are capable of doing the same thing.

Red Wine Should Never Be Chilled

If you're like most wine drinkers, you're probably familiar with the popular adage that red wine is designed to be drunk at room temperature, while white wines should be chilled. Contrary to popular belief, this isn't always the case. Many people chill their whites to the point of being too cold and end up serving their reds too warm simply out of thinking that they need to stick to these rules. There are many examples of red wine that will drink better if chilled slightly. If it's light in body, chances are it could benefit from a bit of chill before opening.

Continued Next Month...