

SPARKLING WINES



The bubbles of sparkling wines have conquered an increasing number of admirers. What makes sparkling wines so special is the second fermentation process they go through.

The addition of a sweetened yeast liqueur called extraction liqueur promotes an extra production of carbon dioxide that will be retained and forms the characteristic perlage of the beverage and the perlage causes a real burst of sensation in our taste buds.

The Exclusive Champagne



First of all, it is crucial to know that every champagne is a sparkling wine, but not every sparkling wine is a champagne. Only sparkling wines produced in the French Champagne region 150 kilometers from Paris can be called champagnes. Thus, it is an exclusive fine wine specially made with Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier

varieties through a complex production process called the champenoise or classic or traditional method.

The most classic champagnes are cut 50% Chardonnay, 50% Pinot Noir. Those made with 100% Chardonnay are called Blanc à Blanc and those without Chardonnay grapes are known as Blanc Noir.

In the champagnes you will find the registered brioche note, the yeast, toasted bread and a very discreet presence of yellow fruits.

The non-Champagne French bubbles known as Crémant or Mousseaux are sparkling wines produced in France, but outside the Champagne region. Elaborated both by the Classic method when they are called Cremant, and by the Charmat method when they are called Mosseaux, and with a greater diversity of strains. The best ones usually use Chardonnay in the composition and are elaborated by the Classic method.

Traditional Sparkling Production Methods

The Champenoise method, also known as the Classical Method or Traditional Method and compulsory in the Champagne region of France, but used in many other parts of the world is the one that theoretically generates sparkling wines of greater complexity and elegance by obtaining a fine perlage constant.

The process was invented by the Benedictine monk Don Perignon in the 17th century and consists of obtaining carbon dioxide in a second fermentation that took place inside the bottle itself. The production is handmade in several stages and consequently more expensive.

The first phase is made an assemblage or cut of several quiet wines that will be the basis of sparkling wine.



The second stage is foaming when the base wine is poured into the bottle and added with the draft liquor, yeast and sugar that will cause the second fermentation to last about three months. After aging and in the period the liquid remains under the yeast lees which gives

it creaminess. Aging can last from months to a few years.



The bottle is then by a slow and manual operation of rotating the bottle positioned on the special easels or 25° inverted V-shaped perforated wooden supports on which the bottles are placed and daily for a period of 8 to 10 months rotated 1/8 turn. Equipment has now been developed to perform the remouage

service, but the best producing houses still do it manually for their first-line sparkling wines, and the process makes the second fermentation sludge to concentrate on the bottleneck without clouding the liquid.

Next, the degorgement or sticking is done, which is the stage in which the neck is frozen and the bottle is opened under pressure to remove the lees and during a process that adds the expedition liquor that is a mixture of aged wine, grape and sugar distillate and the definitive cork. Thus, the expedition liqueur is obtained and the sugar content will determine whether the sparkling wine will be Nature - up to 3 g of sugar per liter; Extra Brut - from 3 to 6 g of sugar per liter; Brut - from 6 to 12 g of sugar per liter; Extra-dry - from 12 to 17 g of sugar per liter; Dry - from 17 to 32 g of sugar per liter; Demi-Dry - from 32 to 50 g of sugar per liter; and Sweet - over 50 g of sugar per liter. The International Wine Organization allows a range of up to 3 g in standards.



In the Charmat method and the name honors the French engineer who created the process, the second fermentation that gives the wine foam occurs in large containers up to 10,000 liters called autoclaves and closed. This avoids the remouage and degorgement processes that demand the most time and

make the product more expensive. The wine is filtered out of the bottle tanks and the process is a simplification of the classic method but can produce very good sparkling wines.

The Interesting Asti Method



The Asti method is the one used for the production of sweet sparkling wines in Italy. The name comes from a demarcation of controlled origin (DOC) in Italy where it is produced with Moscato grapes. The method consists of a single fermentation in large containers that is stopped when 7% to

10% alcohol is reached, leaving residual sugars in the order of 80 g per liter or 10 times more than a Brut sparkling wine.

The result is aromatic and low alcohol, which can work in events such as receptions and weddings as an aperitif. However, in a meal is ideal to accompany desserts and not the main dishes.

The sparkling Italian of Southeast Piedmont is a region known for its sweet wines with the iconic Moscato D'Asti, a sweet and low alcoholic wine that is made with the Moscato grape by the method of the same name. The fermentation process is interrupted by cooling as soon as the alcohol and sugar content is reached and then filtered.

The Subtle Bubbles of Fringing Wines

The crimping points are also sparkling, but what differs is the lower amount of carbon dioxide, which is naturally released by a single grape fermentation process and the result is more subtle and non-foaming bubbles. Fringing wines are sweet or dry wines, generally lighter and softer than champagnes and Lambruscos wines produced in Italy are the best known frisant wines in the world.



Lambrusco wine is the name of a dark grape variety used to produce sparkling wines in the Emilia-Romagna region of Italy near the gastronomic city of Bologna. The Lambrusco grape is red and most Lambrusco wines are red, but can sometimes be found as Rosé.

Lambrusco wines exhibit intensely fruity aromas of dark and red fruits such as

strawberry or blackberry and sometimes accompanied by a touch of herbs or grasses. Because they are essentially sparkling red wines Lambrusco wines contain tannins, but are generally soft and hidden from the taste buds and are produced by the Charmat method.

The various styles include many levels of sweetness such as dry to sweet, with intermediate styles such as semi-dry and lovely.

The Innovative Proseccos

Prosecco is a natural sparkling wine from northern and northeastern Italy using the Charmat method. The sparkling wine is made with the Glera grape in the Prosecco region of Veneto,



The difference is mainly in the color that is similar to a more intense yellow. Filtering and bottling under pressure create larger and not so delicate bubbles, being a peculiar feature of this type of sparkling wine. The aromas resemble green apple, passion fruit and flowers.

Prosecco is a varietal product made from just one grape and to avoid confusion between the grape variety and the sparkling wine Italians call the fruit Glera. The variety has great acidity and is ideal for sparkling wines giving Proseccos aromas of pear and apple with floral touches a great feature of the product. The drink may also feature citrus aromas, vegetable notes and bread.

Proseccos have only three sugar concentration categories: Brut - up to 12 g per liter; Extra Dry - between 12 g and 16 g per liter and is the most classic version; and Dry - between 17 g and 32 g per liter.

The Impressive Franciacorta

The Italian Spumanti or Bollicine especially those originating in the Franciacorta region of Lombardy are the great challengers of Champagne supremacy and recognized as great and some exceptional sparkling wines. Although also an appellation of Italian origin the grapes used are French Chardonnay, Pinot Blanc and Pinot Noir and are produced by the Champenoise method.



Franciacorta wines comes in three variations: Traditional Franciacorta - uses the Chardonnay and Pinot Noir varieties and goes through 18 months of aging; Franciacorta Satèn - made only with white grapes; and Franciacorta Rosé - made with at least 25% Pinot Noir.

The sparkling wine has characteristic aromas that increase yeast, as well as citrus fruits, melon, apple and spices and is fresh, balanced and with a touch of mineral flavor from terroir.

The New Germans



Sekt is a sparkling wine that originated in Germany and is made by the Classic method, mainly with the Riesling, Weissburgunder or Pinot Blanc and Rüländer or Pinot Grigio varieties. The Sekt wines are very aromatic and have high acidity and a certain piquancy a striking feature of German

wines. Dry type Sekt is also called Trocken.

The Sekt are the German sparkling wines that, although they produce great white wines, their sparkling wines are generally not great products, as they use lower quality imported wines to make the assemblage.

Sparkling Wines

Sparkling Wine is the generic name given to sparkling wines by English-speaking countries. Sparkling Wines production is significant in the USA, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa and more recently due to climate change in England.

With the steady rise in popularity and consumption of sparkling wine worldwide, production has reached every corner of the globe and the main wine producing countries now produce quality sparkling wines.

The challenge in many New World countries is to find areas fresh enough to successfully grow Chardonnay and Pinot Noir grapes, and preserve their subtle aromatic

character and acidity found in the bubbling Old Continent and has been frequent in cool, climate-influenced regions. from the ocean.

In California the most suitable and successful areas for the production of fine sparkling wines are the Carneros part of Napa Valley, Russian River Valley in Sonoma County and the Anderson Valley of Mendocino and under the influence of several French Champagne houses and winemakers. California has achieved international recognition in the production of world class sparkling wines.

South Africa has been producing sparkling wines for a long time, but quality has only increased recently. The country is one of the few that has sought to create a name for its Traditional Method.

Australian production is mainly located in the state of Victoria in particular the Yarra Valley.



Finally, a newcomer to New Zealand and its cool climate now offers a variety of quality sparkling wines and often fruit from the Marlborough region with Chardonnay, Pinot Noir are the most common ones and produced by the Champenoise and Charmat methods.

The Traditional Spanish Cavas

Cavas are produced in Spain and mainly in the coastal region of Catalonia, where the Mediterranean climate is very mild and influenced by the northern subcontinental climate.

Thus, for this reason the cultivated vines bring their own flavor, where sparkling wines



are made by the Classic method and privileges different grapes like Macabeo, Parellada, Xarel lo, but a small exception for the Chardonnay grape. The most delicate aromas of yeast and brioche reveal the method used for their production and how most of Catalonia's wines stand out from the fruits and especially the yellow ones.

The word Cava of Catalan origin means winery and symbolizes the sparkling of Spain. However, as a designation of origin it is linked to authorized geographical zones.

For the product to receive the name Cava must be from Catalonia, Aragon, Navarre, Extremadura, Rioja or Valencia, with Catalonia responsible for 90% of labels.

In addition to the region, a Cava must be made with Spanish grapes and the allowed ones are the Parrelada, Xare-lo and Macabeo varieties, all white. To make the rosé version the varieties Garnacha and Monastrell are accepted. Like the Champagnes, the Cavas are vinified by the Champenoise method.

The drink remains for at least nine months in contact with the yeast in the bottle. To be considered reserve requires 15 months of aging before marketing and the large reserve needs 30 months of maturation.

Cavas are also classified according to sugar content and the categories are: Brut Nature - up to 3 g per liter; Extra Brut - up to 6 g per liter; Brut - up to 12 g per liter; Extra Dry - between 12 g and 17 g per liter); Dry - between 17 g and 32 g per liter; Semi Dry - between 32 g and 50 g per liter; and Sweet - over 50 g per liter.

In the mouth Cavas have more fruity taste due to the solar incidence in the cultivated regions. The aromas range from herbaceous to sweet cakes with hints of ripe white fruit and the more mature the scents of honey, butter and dried fruits.

Vintage, Service and Conservation

Most sparkling wines have no vintage or NV - non-vintage and traditionally the result of a mix of various vintages that aim to always maintain the same profile or style of wine as the winemaker and should be consumed younger.

Vintage or Millésime or Milesimato sparkling wines are sourced from better crops and are more complex and safer to store and are also more expensive, but only large sparkling wines can be stored for more than ten years anyway.

To avoid spilling the sparkling wine while serving a tip is to first serve a bottom of approximately one to two centimeters to cool the bowl and after a few seconds complete the dose by filling two thirds of the volume.

A good bowl in the traditional flute shape will make a huge difference in perlage the bubbles that rise like pearls to the top of the bowl that will give you the sensation of needles in the mouth. Good sparkling wine has abundant perlage, preferably composed of small, persistent pimples that transfer sensations of needles into the mouth.

Proper temperature as in all wines is essential to enjoy a sparkling wine. The lighter and sweeter should be served around 5 to 6° C and the most evolved Brut sparkling wines at a slightly higher temperature between 8 to 10° C.

Unless they are sparkling from high quality vintages it is best to enjoy up to three years of life, but the younger the better.

The Perlage or set of fine, abundant and constant bubbles, a good mousse or foam that should be on top of the cup as a necklace.

To enjoy a good sparkling wine, loosen the wire and support the neck in the palm of the hand, hold the neck with the fingers and the stopper with the thumb. Then rotate the bottle with your other hand and gently press downwards until the cork gently releases with a sigh.