

# Tom Stevenson's *Champagne & Sparkling Wine Guide* 2003

'An authority acknowledged even  
by the Champenois...'  
*The Sunday Times*

Voted Best Wine Guide by World Food Media Awards

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## Foreword

This is the final edition of my fizz guide and to tell the truth it's a relief to know that I don't have to put myself through this particular treadmill again. A combination of logistical, personal and work problems in the one year when I was supposed to be updating my *Christie's World Encyclopedia of Champagne & Sparkling Wine* delayed both that book and this one. When I eventually finished this fizz guide, it was far too late for me to contemplate selling it. How could I ask money for a buyer's guide that would be 12 months late? I couldn't, but it was no one else's fault, and not only did I feel a debt to those who had submitted their wines in good faith, but I also did not want to let down my readers, who expected another edition. The only honourable course was to strip away the prices, update the notes with wines I had tasted in the meantime, and offer my last edition as a free download. The contents have not gone through the traditional system of copy editing, so there might be even more typos than usual!

Tom Stevenson  
August 2003

### Sparkling Wine - How it is made

The theory behind sparkling wine is simple. Fermentation converts sugar into alcohol and carbonic gas - if the gas is set free the wine is still, if not, it is sparkling. To capture the gas, the wine undergoes a second fermentation in a sealed container. The gas gushes out in the form of tiny bubbles when the container is opened. According to research carried out by Moët & Chandon there are on average 250 million bubbles in a bottle of sparkling wine. The internal pressure in a bottle of sparkling wine is equivalent to the pressure of a double-decker bus tyre.

### The Grapes

Various are used, but Chardonnay and Pinot Noir are best for premium quality sparkling wine - they are relatively neutral, with a good balance of sugar and acidity when ripe.

### Cuve Close Method

Most cheap fizz is produced by *cuve close* (or "Charmat" or "tank" method). Both fermentations take place in large vats, then the wine is bottled under pressure. As *cuve close* is a bulk-production method it attracts low-calibre base wines, but the speed and minimum yeast contact makes it perfect for sweet, aromatic fizz such as Asti.

### Méthode champenoise

The greatest brut-style (dry) sparkling wines are made by *méthode champenoise*. As in *cuve close*, the first fermentation takes place en masse, sometimes in oak *barriques*, but the second takes place in the actual bottle in which the wine is sold.

### Méthode champenoise terms

In the European Union the term *méthode champenoise* is reserved for Champagne. However, the terms below are all synonymous with it.

<b>English-Language Countries</b> Traditional Method	<b>Spain</b> Método tradicional "Cava" appellation	<b>Germany</b> Flaschengärung nach dem Traditionellen Verfahren Klassische Flaschengärung Traditionelle Flaschengärung
<b>France</b> Méthode Traditionnelle Méthode Classique "Crémant" appellations	<b>Italy</b> Metodo Classico Metodo Tradizionale "Talento"	<b>South Africa</b> Cap Classique

### Malolactic Conversion

Most fizz undergoes "malolactic", a natural process of fermentation that converts hard malic acid into soft lactic acid and adds creaminess to the wine. Of the few producers who prevent the malolactic, Bollinger, Alfred Gratien, Krug and Lanson are the most famous. In the New World

the malolactic is often overworked because grapes are picked early, and have higher levels of malic acid.

### **Blending and the Prise de Mousse**

The blending (*assemblage*) of the base wine is undertaken after the first fermentation. The champenois are the masters of this, and may create a non-vintage *cuvée* from as many as 70 base wines. Sugar, selected yeasts, yeast nutrients and a clarifying agent are then added to induce the mousse. The second fermentation is often referred to as the *prise de mousse*, or "capturing the sparkle", and it can take months to complete. In contrast to the first fermentation, which should be relatively fast and warm, the second is slow and cool.

### **Autolysis**

When the second fermentation is complete, the yeast cells undergo an enzymatic breakdown called autolysis, which is epitomized by an acacia-like flowery freshness. Good autolysis adds complexity and ensures finesse.

### **Remuage and Disgorgement**

In *méthode champenoise* only, the yeast deposit created during the second fermentation is encouraged down the neck of the inverted bottle into a small plastic pot held in place by a crown-cap. *Remuage* (or riddling), as this is called, takes eight weeks by hand, or eight days by machine. The sediment is removed (disgorged) by immersing the bottle in freezing brine, and ejecting the semi-frozen pot without losing too much wine or gas.

### **The Dosage**

Before corking, the *liqueur d'expédition* is added. In all cases except *extra brut* (very dry), this will include some sugar. The younger the wine, the greater the dosage of sugar required.

### **Storing and Serving Sparkling Wine**

Most fizz is best drunk within a year or so. Only a few *cuvées* are capable of developing truly complex aromas and flavours after disgorgement.

### **Why Store?**

Typically, Chardonnay turns "toasty" and Pinot Noir "biscuity", although the reverse is possible and even a whiff of clean sulphur can in time contribute to the toastiness of a wine. Some first-class Chardonnays develop specific, complex aromas such as flowery hazelnuts, creamy brazil nuts and mellow walnuts. The greatest Champagnes can age gracefully for decades, to create rich nuances of macarons, coconut, cocoa and coffee.

### **How to Store**

Fizz is more sensitive to temperature and light than other wines, but there should be no problem keeping it for a year or two at any fairly constant temperature between 12 and 18°C (40-60°F). Higher temperatures increase the rate of oxidation; erratic temperatures can seriously damage the wine. If you do not have a cellar, keep it in a cool place inside a box. Very long-term storage should be at 9-11°C (48-52°F) in total darkness. There is no reason why bottles should be stored horizontally apart from to save space: the CO<sub>2</sub> in the bottle neck keeps the cork moist and

swollen even when upright. Some Champagnes have retained their sparkle for a century under ideal conditions.

Some Champagnes, such as Roederer Cristal, are shipped with a yellow, anti-UV wrapping, which you should leave on while storing. Brown-glass bottles offer better protection against ultra-violet than green-glass, and dead-leaf or dark green is better than light or bright green.

### **Chilling**

Temperature determines the rate at which bubbles in a sparkling wine are released. Bubbly should not be opened at room temperature - the wine will quickly froth up and go flat. Chill it, ideally down to 4.5-7°C (40-45°F), the lower temperature for parties and receptions where the room temperature is likely to rise.

It is okay to chill wine in a refrigerator for a couple of hours, but try not to leave it longer than a day because the cork might stick or shrink. Emergency chilling of a sparkling wine by putting it in the coldest part of a deep-freeze for 15 minutes is fine.

A bucket of ice and water (never just ice, the water is essential for transferring temperatures) is still one of the best and quickest ways to chill a bottle of fizz, but faster still are the gel-filled jackets that are kept in the deep freeze and slip over the bottle for about six minutes. A useful tip when using either ice-buckets or gel-filled jackets is to invert the bottle gently two or three times before opening. This prevents the wine in the neck being significantly warmer than the rest of the bottle, which reduces the chance of the wine gushing like a fountain when the bottle, not to mention ensuring that the first will be as chilled as the last.

### **Opening**

Remember that the secret of success is to try and prevent the cork from actually coming out. Remove the foil to begin, or simply score around the base of the wire cage. Then gently untwist the wire and loosen the bottom of the cage, but don't remove it. Hold the bottle with a cloth if you are a novice, and completely enclose the cork and cage in one hand (the right, if you are right-handed). Holding the base of the bottle with your other hand, twist both ends slowly in opposite directions, backwards and forwards. As soon as you feel pressure forcing the cork out, actually try to push it back in whilst continuing the twisting operation ever more gently until the cork is released from the bottle with a sigh, not a bang.

### **Pouring**

A good tip is to pour only a little into each glass so that by the time you return to the first glass its foam will already have settled. The alternative is to wait ages for each one to settle as you are pouring. Top up each glass to between two-thirds and three-quarters of the vessel - no more. Do not tilt the glass and pour gently down the inside, it is not lager!

### **Glasses**

A flute or a tulip-shaped glass is ideal and almost any vessel other than a coupe will suffice. The wide, shallow coupe is the worst possible choice for sparkling wine because the mousse goes flat far too quickly and the wine's aroma cannot be appreciated. Whatever glass shape used, the finer the rim the better.

### **Sparkling wine styles**

Categories of style include basic divisions of sweetness, vintage and non-vintage, grape variety, colour and degree of mousse.

### **Sweetness**

Brut is the classic style of dry sparkling wine, with Extra-Brut and Brut Nature being drier still. These terms are all widely used on an international basis despite their French origin, whereas the progressively sweeter styles of Sec, Extra-Sec, Demi-Sec and Doux are invariably translated, thus Sec becomes Seco in Portugal and Spain, Secco in Italy and Trocken in Germany (*see* Glossary for more details).

### **What's in a Vintage?**

A Champagne vintage implies that the harvest was exceptional, while for most other fizz "vintage" is best regarded as a statement of age, not quality. Vintage Champagne must be 100 per cent from the year, but elsewhere it varies (95 per cent in California; 85 in Australia). Store vintage Champagne for 8-10 years from the date of harvest. The term non-vintage (NV) sounds derogatory to many people, but wines from various years can be skilfully blended to create some of the finest *cuvées* available.

### **Grape varieties**

Champagne's classic trio of Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Meunier are generally accepted as the grapes best-suited for a classic brut style of Sparkling wine. The only real resistance to this concept is in Spain where the traditional varieties are Parellada, Macabéo and Xarel.lo while Moscato or Muscat is widely regarded as the finest variety for intensely sweet sparkling wines such as Asti. Australia has made Shiraz the first choice for sparkling red wines, although Cabernet, Merlot and other varieties are used. Riesling is traditional for classic Sekt and readers of this guide will know that this is not necessarily an oxymoron. The list is endless, although most of it is full of duds, such as Prosecco, an Italian grape that makes Parellada characterful by comparison.

### **Colour**

Pure Chardonnay *blanc de blancs* (white wine made from white grapes) make good brut-style sparkling wines, and the best come from the Côte des Blancs in Champagne. In the New World, *blanc de noirs* (white wine made from black grapes) can be various shades, but in Champagne the skill is to produce as clear a wine as possible from Pinot Noir or Meunier, and the most famous is Bollinger's Vieilles Vignes Françaises. Champagne *rosé* can be made by blending white wine with a little red. Sparkling red wines are also available, such as Australian Sparkling Shiraz mentioned above.

### **Crémant**

The *crémant* style is noted for its soft, creamy mousse. As a term it originated in Champagne, but since the introduction of Crémant AOCs (Alsace, Bordeaux, Bourgogne, Die, Gaillac, Jura, Limoux, Loire and Luxembourg) it has been banned in all other EU appellations, including its region of origin! Few producers outside France have a reputation for a true *crémant* style. Normal fizz has a pressure of 5-6 atmospheres, while *crémant* has 3.6, but to be a true *crémant*, the mousse must unfold slowly, leaving a creamy cordon in the glass. Mumm de Cramant (sic)

used to be known as Crémant de Cramant and was the best known *crémant* in Champagne. Franciacorta uses the term *satèn* (satin).

### **Prestige or deluxe *cuvées***

These are *cuvées* that producers feel best epitomize their house style. The greatest known examples include Dom Pérignon (made by Moët & Chandon), Cristal (by Louis Roederer) and Belle Epoque (by Perrier-Jouët). The entire range of Krug is sold at prestige or deluxe quality prices, which is why it is unfair to compare Krug Grande Cuvée with the brut non-vintage of most other houses. Such wines are produced in tiny quantities, and it is their rarity value that determines the high price. The strictest selection of base wines is the most significant defining factor in any prestige *cuvée*.

## **This Year's (and a bit!) Tastings**

Performance tables and an alphabetical listing of recommended producers, with notes on over 1,000 individual Champagnes and sparkling wines.

### **How the wines are tasted and judged**

Almost all the wines in this guide are recommended by me; less than half of one per cent of the wines carry a <?> sign, indicating that they are in an unusual developmental stage and cannot be fully judged yet, but there is evidence to suggest they are likely to be good when ready. Most wines were tasted blind (with labels covered) at my own professionally equipped facility, where producers submit samples. Others were tasted at special tastings organised for the purpose of this guide by various trade bodies.

In addition to regular trips to Champagne I travel to different sparkling wine regions each year to carry out in-depth tastings *in situ*. Champagnes have to score 80 or above to qualify for this guide; other sparkling wines have to 70 or above.

### **The tasting process**

All wines are chilled and tasted against others of a similar style and category (e.g., *blanc de blancs*, rosé, same vintage etc). It is more crucial to taste sparkling wines chilled than it is for any other style of wine. This is because temperature affects the release of carbonic gas, which affects the tactile impression of the mousse and the balance of the wine. Most wines are tasted in my own facility because I do not wish to be influenced by other people's comments. This also allows me to devote as much time as I like to each wine, to search out finesse, rather than size (which is all too obvious and thus the bane of blind tastings). I compare and contrast as many different permutations within a category as possible because the positioning of a wine in a line up can dramatically influence its perception. Obviously I open the back-up for any faulty wine, but so many faults are not easily discernible. Subliminal cork or TCA taint, for example, can wipe the fruit out of a wine without giving any clue that there is a fault. Only by comparing it with exactly the same wine without such a fault can the problem be recognised. I have therefore devised a system whereby a second chilled sample can be on the table within four minutes. This encourages me to open a second bottle even if I have the slightest doubt. Last, but by no means least, some wines that do not shine in the cold, analytical setting of a blind tasting can hint at their usefulness at the table, so they are lugged home where supper is swamped in a sea of covered-up bottles and a different insight gleaned.

In addition to all the normal negative attributes, sparkling wines are marked down if they possess amylic aromas (peardrops, banana, bubblegum) or if they are dominated by heavy-handed malolactic (buttery, caramel, butterscotch) or new oak because all these characteristics detract from the finesse and vitality of this particular style.

### **How the wines are described**

It is harder to describe a wine with a few words than it is to use many, and a quick flick through this and all previous edition of the guide will indicate how dismally I have failed in this respect. When describing the actual wine I try to be specific because it is easier for readers to distinguish between two wines if the fruit in one is, say, strawberries, while the other is, maybe, pineapple. If, however, I describe one as having aromas of strawberries, blackberries, cherries, bitter chocolate, coffee and toast, while another is raspberries, redcurrants, damsons, white chocolate, wholemeal biscuit and toast, it is difficult to imagine what either wine tastes like, let alone what makes one different from the other. Should a wine have any of these characteristics, I will list them, but if they're not there, I won't invent them. Many *cuvées* simply smell and taste like a very fine Champagne without having the slightest hint of any specific fruit, flower, nut, herb or spice. In truth few wines reveal more than one or two specific aromas or flavours.

As far as colour and mousse are concerned, an absence of comment can be taken to mean that they are at least satisfactory. There is little point distinguishing between various hues of straw colour and if the mousse is of normal strength with smallish bubbles, what point is there in repeating this? Only extremes are worthy of note.

I tend to focus on balance and finesse because although these two inseparable characteristics are notoriously difficult to define, they nevertheless represent why one wine might be preferred to another. I also hark on about the level of acidity and whether it is ripe because this is essential to quality in a sparkling wine. I divide sparkling wine into basic styles, be they light-bodied or full, fruit-driven or complex, striving for elegance or character. And when it is obvious to me, I explain how a wine will develop.

### **The Guide's 100-point Scoring System**

When tasting for this guide, I try to maintain the same yardstick, whatever the origin or style of the wine, but I taste by category and to be absolutely honest I sometimes worry whether an 85-point rated California fizz is indeed the equivalent of, say, an 85-point rated Champagne tasted two or three weeks apart. Hopefully it is - or at least, more times than not.

However, what confuses the concept of the universal score is that the intrinsic qualities of each style or region must be respected. Some critics believe this dilutes the universal yardstick, but if it does then no one could say that a 90-point Bordeaux is the same quality as a 90-point Burgundy, and that would be sheer poppycock.

### **What the scores tell us**

Thanks to Robert Parker, the American wine critic, the 100-point scale is now globally recognised. Since Parker utilises only half the points (the lowest scoring wine in his system receives 50 points), he has been accused of scoring out of 50 rather than 100, and as far as I can tell from his own words, I think he does not disagree. On the other hand, the lowest score in this guide is 70, which has prompted some critics to suggest that I mark out of 30, which is something I flatly refute! To make it absolutely clear that I do in fact utilise the entire 100-point scale, I should point out that many wines I taste for this guide score between 0 and 69, but

since they fail to achieve recommendation (*see How the wines are tasted and judged* above) they are excluded from this book. Just because there are no wines below 70 points in this guide does not mean that I score out of 30. It is not that I shy away from revealing who makes dross. *My Christie's World Encyclopedia of Champagne & Sparkling Wine* (updated edition published by Absolute Press in July 2003) attempts to provide a comprehensive, more timeless coverage of the subject, including the bad and the ugly, thus scores as low as 35 can be found. This publication, however, is not meant to provide comprehensive coverage. Its aim is to reduce coverage to those wines readers should buy.

**70** The point at which any sparkling wine other than Champagne becomes interesting as far as I'm concerned.

**75** Any sparkling wine other than Champagne that receives this score is not just interesting, but good enough to grace the table of a self-confessed Champagne addict.

**80** Because Champagne has such intrinsic advantages over sparkling wines produced in less favourable *terroirs*, this is the level at which I start to take interest in an inexpensive BOB or secondary brand.

**85** The sort of quality that Champagne has to be to warrant inclusion in my cellar. If a non-Champagne sparkling wine scores this high, it is of exceptional quality indeed.

**90** A top quality Champagne, probably vintage or prestige *cuvée*. Any wine outside of Champagne scoring 90 points or more can be considered as something truly special. A 90-point wine, Champagne or otherwise, deserves a hefty premium over the competition and will probably repay 3-5 years additional cellaring to reveal its true potential.

**95** The greatest Champagnes. Rare even from the top houses. A very special and memorable experience. Most could be left forgotten in a cellar for 10 years without any worry whatsoever.

**100** Perfection - impossible!

**Notes** The scores for the same wine can fluctuate from year to year because different disgorgements produce wines of a different potential. This also applies to the when to drink time-scales. Furthermore, scores can vary because although I take into account both actual and potential quality, the emphasis in any annual guide must be on the former rather than the latter. When unexpected factors come into play, causing a wine to show less well than predicted in an earlier edition, I give the wine a <?> symbol and try to explain what has happened.

## 2003 Comparative Performance Tables

Almost all the wines found in the alphabetical listing are grouped here according to their various categories. This enables readers to zero in on the best quality and value *cuvées* within a particular country, region, style or vintage. Full tasting notes and when to drink information can be found in the alphabetical listing.

The wines are listed in descending order of score and strictly alphabetical (including first names and initials) within each score, except for the listing by French Francs, which is by price.

**Note** Wines not included in the following performance tables include (i) those with a <?> symbol; (ii) where too few wines qualified for a specific category; and (iii) wines that do not fit naturally into any grouping.

**Remember!**

85 Points - 'The sort of quality Champagne has to be to warrant inclusion in my cellar' - *Tom Stevenson*

**Don't restrict your choice to 90 point wines - I don't!**

## Champagne

Champagne produces a greater volume of higher quality sparkling wine than any other wine region, thus it holds pole position in this part of the guide and is followed by other sparkling wine areas of France. The rest of the world's fizz is listed by country in strict alphabetical order.

### Champagne Brut Non-vintage & Multi-vintage

*This section encompass every recommended Champagne that does not carry a single vintage, whether it is absolute entry-level or a deluxe "multi-vintage" cuvée. The latter, of course, should score significantly higher and indeed they do, as Grand Siècle and Krug Grand Cuvée admirably demonstrate, but just look at the outstanding performance of Charles Heidsieck's Mis en Cave. A Brut style must have between 0 and 15 grams per litre of residual sugar (added as the dosage after disgorgement), although most Champagnes at the lower-end of this scale will be sold as an Extra-Brut or a Brut Nature. The sugar should not be noticeable, even at the top end of the range, if properly balanced by ripe acidity. A true Brut should thus taste dry, but this does not mean austere, as young cuvées should possess fruit, while mature ones will have a mellowed richness.*

<96>**Grand Siècle NV La Cuvée par Laurent-Perrier, Brut**

<95>**Krug NV Grande Cuvée Brut**

<91>**Charles Heidsieck NV Brut Réserve, Mis en Cave en 1997**

<91>**Charles Heidsieck NV Brut Réserve, Mis en Cave en 1996**

<91>**Louis Roederer NV Brut Premier (*magnum*)**

<90>**Bollinger NV Special Cuvée, Brut (*magnum*)**

<90>**Jacquart NV Brut de Nominée**

<90>**Jacquesson NV Brut Cuvée No. 728**

<90>**Louis Roederer NV Brut Premier**

<90>**Serge Mathieu NV Cuvée Prestige Brut**

<89>**Deutz NV Brut Classic**

<89>**Gosset NV Grande Réserve Brut**

<89>**Joseph Perrier NV Cuvée Royale Brut**

<89>**Roger Brun NV Brut Réserve**

<88>**Alfred Gratien NV Brut**

<88>**Alfred Gratien NV Cuvée Paradis**

<88>**Bollinger NV Special Cuvée, Brut**

<88>**Drappier NV Carte d'Or Brut**

<88>**Lanson NV Black Label**

<88>**Moutard NV Cuvée aux 6 Cépages**

<88>**Princesse des Thunes NV Ambonnay Grand Cru**

<88>**R de Ruinart NV Brut**

<88>**Raoul Collet NV Carte Rouge Brut Millésime (*magnum*)**

<88>**Serge Mathieu NV Tête de Cuvée Select, Brut**  
<88>**Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin NV Brut**  
<87>**Boizel NV Brut Réserve**  
<87>**Bruno Paillard NV Brut Première Cuvée**  
<87>**Demoiselle NV Tête de Cuvée Brut, Vranken**  
<87>**Duval-Leroy NV Fleur de Champagne, Brut Premier Cru**  
<87>**G.H. Mumm NV Grand Cru Brut**  
<87>**Jacquart NV Brut Mosaique**  
<87>**Moutard NV Brut Grande Cuvée**  
<87>**Pol Roger NV Brut White Foil**  
<87>**Tsarine NV Tête de Cuvée Brut, Chanoine**  
<86>**Billecart-Salmon NV Brut Réserve**  
<86>**Clos du Moulin NV Brut Premier Cru, Cattier**  
<86>**Delamotte NV Brut**  
<86>**Delbeck NV Brut Héritage**  
<86>**Fleury NV Fleur de l'Europe Brut**  
<86>**Georges Gardet NV Brut Spécial**  
<86>**Henri Mandois NV Cuvée de Réserve, Brut**  
<86>**Oudinot NV Clos Saint-Rémy Brut**  
<86>**P. Brugnon NV Cuvée Elégance, Brut Premier Cru**  
<86>**Pannier NV Brut Sélection**  
<86>**René Geoffroy NV Cuvée Prestige, Brut Premier Cru**  
<86>**Tarlant NV Pinot Meunier**  
<86>**Vilmart NV Grande Réserve, Brut Premier Cru**  
<85>**A. Margaine NV Brut Premier Cru**  
<85>**Alexandre Bonnet NV Cuvée Prestige**  
<85>**Charles de Cazanove NV Cuvée Cazanova Brut**  
<85>**Chartogne-Taillet NV Cuvée Sainte-Anne Brut**  
<85>**Château de Boursault NV Brut Tradition**  
<85>**Duval-Leroy NV Fleur de Champagne Brut Non Vintage**  
<85>**E. Barnaut NV Grande Réserve, Brut Grand Cru**  
<85>**Forget-Chemin NV Carte Blanche Brut**  
<85>**Gatinois NV Grand Cru**  
<85>**Guy Cadel NV Grande Réserve Brut**  
<85>**H. Blin NV Brut Tradition**  
<85>**Heidsieck Monopole NV Premiers Crus Brut**  
<85>**Henri Goutorbe NV Cuvée Tradition, Brut**  
<85>**Jacquart NV Brut Tradition**  
<85>**Jean Moutardier NV Sélection Brut**  
<85>**Laurent-Perrier NV Brut L.P.**  
<85>**Mailly Grand Cru NV Brut Réserve, Grand Cru**  
<85>**Mercier NV Brut**  
<85>**Michel Arnould NV Réserve Brut Grand Cru**  
<85>**Moët & Chandon NV Brut Impérial**  
<85>**P. Brugnon NV Brut Premier Cru**  
<85>**Perrier-Jouët NV Grand Brut**

<85>Philipponnat NV Royale Réserve Brut  
 <85>Pierre Gimonnet NV Cuis Premier Cru  
 <85>Piper-Heidsieck NV Brut  
 <85>Piper-Heidsieck NV Cuvée Spéciale Jean-Paul Gaultier, Brut  
 <85>Pommery NV Brut Royal  
 <85>Raoul Collet NV Carte Perle, Brut 1er Cru  
 <85>Raymond Boulard NV Brut Tradition  
 <85>René Geoffroy NV Cuvée de Réserve, Brut Premier Cru  
 <85>Rémy Massin et Fils NV Brut Réserve  
 <85>Robert Fleury 1902-1998 NV Brut  
 <85>Tarlant NV Brut Réserve  
 <85>Tarlant NV Cuvée Louis  
 <85>Veuve A. Devaux NV Cuvée D Brut  
 <84>Adam-Garnotel NV Brut Tradition  
 <84>Arlaux NV Brut  
 <84>Bricout NV Brut Réserve  
 <84>Chanoine NV Grande Réserve Brut  
 <84>Charles Lafitte NV Tête de Cuvée, Brut  
 <84>Château de Bligny NV Brut Réserve  
 <84>Château de Boursault NV Brut Tradition  
 <84>De Venoge NV Brut Sélect, Cordon Bleu  
 <84>Duval-Leroy NV Brut  
 <84>Forget-Brimont NV Brut Premier Cru  
 <84>Gauthier NV Brut  
 <84>Goutorbe NV Cuvée Prestige, Brut Premier Cru  
 <84>Guy Cadel NV Carte Blanche Brut  
 <84>Heidsieck Héritage NV Brut  
 <84>Henri Abelé NV Brut  
 <84>J.M. Gobillard NV Tradition  
 <84>Jean Moutardier NV Carte d'Or  
 <84>Jean Velut NV Brut  
 <84>Le Gallais NV Cuvée du Manoir  
 <84>Oudinot NV Brut  
 <84>Roger Pouillon NV Fleur de Mareuil  
 <84>Vicomte de Castellane NV Croix Rouge Brut Millésime  
 <83>Alain Thienot NV Brut  
 <83>Canard-Duchêne NV Brut  
 <83>Daniel Dumont NV Grande Réserve, Brut Premier Cru  
 <83>G.H. Mumm NV Cordon Rouge Brut Millésimé  
 <83>George Goulet NV Brut Grande Cuvée  
 <83>Heidsieck Monopole NV Blue Top Brut  
 <83>Jacquesson NV Brut Perfection  
 <83>Jeanmaire NV Cuvée Brut  
 <83>R.C. Lemaire NV Sélect Réserve, Brut  
 <82>Alexandre Bonnet NV Grande Réserve, Brut  
 <82>Amazone de Palmer NV Brut

- <82>**Ferdinand Bonnet NV Brut Héritage**
- <82>**Guy Charbaut NV Brut**
- <82>**J. de Telmont NV Grande Réserve Brut**
- <82>**J.M. Gobillard NV Grande Réserve**
- <82>**Palmer NV Brut**
- <82>**Pierrel NV Cuvée Arabesque Gold, Brut**
- <82>**Royer NV Cuvée de Réserve**
- <81>**Taittinger NV Brut Réserve**

### **Champagne Nature & Brut Extra (Non-vintage and Vintaged)**

*As regular readers will know, I am not a great fan of non-dosage Champagnes, this has less to do with the style than its quality. Such wines do not improve with age because sugar is required for a Champagne to age gracefully after disgorgement (see Reaction Maillard in the Glossary). The older a Champagne is before it is disgorged, the less dosage required - because it will have a more mellowed taste - but no matter how old or great the Champagne is, it will turn coarse and oxidative without a certain amount of sugar. Enjoy this style by all means, but recognise that sugar brings finesse and enables further ageing: do not become one of the mindless "anti-sugar" brigade. The cleverest and best-value wine here is Philipponnat's new Cuvée 1522.*

- <91>**Bollinger 1990 R.D. Extra Brut**
- <90>**Duval-Leroy 1995 Fleur de Champagne, Extra Brut**
- <90>**Philipponnat NV Cuvée 1522 Extra Brut**
- <88>**Pierre Gimonet 1995 Cuvée Oenophile Extra-Brut**
- <86>**Delouvin Nowack 1996 Brut Extra Selection**
- <85>**Mailly Grand Cru NV Extra Brut, Grand Cru**
- <85>**Jacquesson 1995 Dizy "Corne Beautray"**
- <83>**A.R. Lenoble NV Réserve Extra Brut**
- <83>**Georges Vesselle 1997 Brut Zero Millésime, Grand Cru**
- <80>**André et Michel Drappier NV Pinot Noir Zero Dosage**
- <77>**E. Barnaut NV Sélection, Extra Brut Grand Cru**

### **Champagne Extra Sec & Sec**

*Sec (or Dry) is rarely seen these days. It can contain anything between 17 and 33 grams per litre of residual sugar, thus ranging between barely sweeter than a Brut and as sweet as a Demi-Sec. Extra-Sec is far more commonly encountered, although only one tasted this year was worthy of recommendation. This style actually overlaps Brut and the dry end of Sec, with between 12 and 20 grams per litre of sugar. These Champagnes can be very useful at the table where savoury dishes contain a certain sweetness or fruitiness.*

- <87>**Louis Roederer NV Rich Sec**
- <85>**E. Barnaut NV Cuvée Douceur, Sec Grand Cru**
- <80>**Moët & Chandon NV White Star, Extra Dry**

### **Champagne Demi-Sec**

*For many years this sweet style, which must have between 33 and 50 grams of residual sugar, has been debased by the vast majority of Champagne producers who have pandered to an unsophisticated sector of French supermarket customers who like to drink sweet. By this I do not mean that sweetness in Champagne or indeed any wine is debasing or that to enjoy sweetness is*

*a sign of poor taste, but there are vast numbers who can only enjoy sweet drinks and cannot taste beyond that sweetness, thus Champagne producers have been able to hide their inferior wines behind a mask of sugar. However, we are gradually seeing a rise in the number of high quality demi-sec produced.*

<88>**Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin 1995 Rich Réserve**

<87>**Piper-Heidsieck NV Demi-Sec**

<87>**Pol Roger NV Rich Special Demi-Sec**

<85>**Beaumont des Crayères NV Demi-Sec Grande Réserve**

<85>**G.H. Mumm NV Demi-Sec**

<82>**Oudinot NV Medium-Dry**

### **Champagne Blanc de Blancs Non-vintage**

*Without doubt blanc de blancs are more expressive from a single vintage, but non-vintage cuvées can offer superb value and, contrary to popular belief, a great many are made.*

<90>**Boizel NV Chardonnay Brut Blanc de Blancs**

<90>**Jacques Selosse NV Brut Tradition, Blanc de Blancs**

<89>**Heidsieck Monopole NV Diamant Blanc, Brut**

<88>**Abel Lepitre NV Cuvée No. 134, Blanc de Blancs Brut**

<87>**Joseph Perrier NV Cuvée Royale, Blanc de Blancs Brut**

<87>**Le Mesnil NV Blanc de Blancs, Grand Cru Brut**

<83>**Henriot NV Blanc de Blancs Brut**

<85>**Agrapart NV Brut Blanc de Blancs Grand Cru**

<85>**Chartogne-Taillet NV Cuvée Sainte-Anne, Blanc de Blancs**

<85>**Jean Milan NV Brut Spécial, Grand Cru Blanc de Blancs**

<85>**Moët & Chandon, Les Vignes de Saran NV Chouilly Grand Cru**

<85>**Vicomte de Castellane NV Chardonnay Brut**

<84>**Larmandier-Bernier NV Blanc de Blancs Premier Cru**

<84>**G.H. Mumm, Mumm de Cramant NV Brut Chardonnay, Grand Cru**

<84>**Paul Goerg NV Blanc de Blancs, Brut Premier Cru**

<83>**Comte Audoin de Dampierre NV Blanc de Blancs Grand Cru**

<83>**Pierrel NV Brut Premier Cru**

<82>**George Goulet NV Blanc de Blancs Grande Cuvée**

### **Champagne Blanc de Noirs Vintage & Non-vintage**

*The idea that a blanc de noirs is an especially big, rich and meaty Champagne came about because Bollinger set the yardstick with its Vieilles Vignes Françaises. That extraordinary wine is, however, made from grapes that are super-ripe and super-concentrated because they are grown on ungrafted vines, which bear less fruit per plant, consequently ripen one week before surrounding vineyards, but they are not allowed to be picked any earlier. The Beast of Bollinger is thus an anomaly and usually blasts all opposition for six, but the 1996 is the most extraordinary Vieilles Vignes Françaises yet. It is also only the second time I have awarded a Champagne 99 points (the as unreleased Krug 1990 being the other). A bit unfair on the rest, perhaps, that it should be the only vintage in this line-up of blanc de noirs, but it would be even more unfair if I denied Bollinger 1996 Vieilles Vignes Françaises its moment of glory just because there were no other vintaged blanc de noirs Champagnes with which to create a performance table. Besides, the non-vintage cuvées below have nothing to apologise for,*

particularly as they qualified for recommendation whereas a number of vintaged blanc de noirs did not.

Some blanc de noirs can have such finesse that it is hard to imagine that they do not contain a substantial amount of Chardonnay. Serge Mathieu Blanc de Noirs from the Aube comes to mind. There is also the notion that these wines must be pure Pinot Noir, but many blanc de noirs are in fact blends of both Pinot Noir and Meunier. The following recommendations are all classic blanc de blancs in that they contain only black grapes and the aim has been to produce as colourless a wine as possible from these black-skinned grapes. They are not New World blanc de noirs, which often contain a small percentage of white grapes and vary in colour from copper-tinged to full rosé.

- <99>**Bollinger 1996 Vieilles Vignes Françaises Brut**
- <90>**Serge Mathieu NV Cuvée Tradition, Blanc de Noirs Brut**
- <90>**Moët & Chandon, Les Sarments d'Aÿ NV Aÿ Grand Cru Brut**
- <87>**Brice NV Bouzy Grand Cru Brut**
- <86>**G. Fluteau NV Brut Carte Blanche**
- <86>**G. Fluteau NV Cuvée Réservee Brut**
- <85>**Charles de Cazanove NV Brut Rosé**
- <85>**Moët & Chandon, Les Champs de Romont NV Sillery Grand Cru**
- <85>**Michel Arnould NV Brut Grand Cru**
- <84>**Mailly Grand Cru NV Blanc de Noirs, Grand Cru**
- <84>**Oudinot NV Cuvée Blanc de Noirs Brut**
- <83>**Paul Déthune NV Blanc de Noirs, Grand Cru Brut**
- <82>**Alexandre Bonnet NV Blanc de Noirs, Brut**
- <80>**André et Michel Drappier NV Pinot Noir Zero Dosage**

#### **Champagne Rosé Brut Non-vintage**

Almost every producer in Champagne has a non-vintage rosé in its range. The quality used to be extremely variable, but more producers are taking this style seriously.

- <88>**Serge Mathieu NV Rosé Brut**
- <88>**Gosset NV Grande Rosé Brut**
- <87>**Billecart-Salmon NV Brut Rosé**
- <87>**Duval-Leroy NV "Paris" Brut**
- <87>**Jacquesson NV Brut Perfection Rosé**
- <87>**Krug Rosé NV Brut**
- <87>**Pierre Jamain NV Brut Rosé**
- <87>**Pommery NV Brut Rosé**
- <87>**Ruinart NV Brut Rosé**
- <86>**Besserat de Bellefon NV Cuvée des Moines Rosé**
- <86>**Bruno Paillard NV Rosé Brut Première Cuvée**
- <86>**Demoiselle NV Rosé, Brut Grande Cuvée**
- <86>**G.H. Mumm NV Brut Rosé**
- <86>**Michel Arnould NV Rosé Brut Grand Cru**
- <86>**Perrier-Jouët NV Blason Rosé**
- <85>**Alexandre Bonnet NV Perle Rosée, Brut**
- <85>**Baron Albert NV Brut Rosé**
- <85>**Beaumont des Crayères NV Grand Rosé Brut**

<85>**Boizel NV Rosé Brut**  
 <85>**P. Brugnion NV Brut Rosé Premier Cru**  
 <85>**Château de Boursault NV Rosé Brut**  
 <85>**Doquet-Jeanmaire NV Rosé, Brut Premier Cru**  
 <85>**Duval-Leroy NV Fleur de Champagne, Rosé de Saignée Brut**  
 <85>**E. Barnaut NV Rosé Authentique, Brut Grand Cru**  
 <85>**Forget-Brimont NV Brut Rosé, Premier Cru**  
 <85>**H. Blin NV Brut Rosé**  
 <85>**Henri Goutorbe NV Brut Rosé**  
 <85>**Henri Mandois NV Brut Rosé, Premier Cru**  
 <85>**Jacquart NV Brut Mosaïque Rosé**  
 <85>**Mignon & Pierrel NV Cuvée Florale Brut Rosé, Premier Cru**  
 <85>**Moët & Chandon NV Brut Impérial Rosé**  
 <85>**Paul Déthune NV Brut Rosé, Grand Cru**  
 <85>**Raymond Boulard NV Cuvée Rosé Brut**  
 <85>**Tsarine NV Rosé Brut, Chanoine**  
 <84>**J. Dumangin Fils NV Rosé Brut, Premier Cru**  
 <84>**Forget-Chemin NV Brut Rosé, Premier Cru**  
 <84>**Michel Lorient NV Rosé Brut**  
 <84>**A.R. Lenoble NV Brut Rosé**  
 <84>**Georges Vesselle NV Brut Rosé, Bouzy Grand Cru**  
 <83>**Abel Lepitre NV Brut Rosé**  
 <83>**Charles Lafitte NV Grande Cuvée Rosé, Brut**  
 <83>**Mercier NV Brut Rosé**  
 <83>**R.C. Lemaire NV Brut Rosé**  
 <83>**Raoul Collet NV Brut Rosé**  
 <82>**Le Gallais NV Cuvée du Manoir**  
 <82>**Paul Clouet NV Brut Rosé**  
 <82>**Vicomte de Castellane NV Brut Rosé**

### **Champagne Vintage Brut 1999**

*The 1999s are only just starting to filter onto the French market. In overall terms, the harvest showed vintage-quality ripeness, but the worst acidity and pH readings for a couple of centuries.*

<82>**J.M. Gobillard 1999 Cuvée Prestige**

<83>**Drappier 1999 Millésime Exception**

### **Champagne Vintage Brut 1998**

*Some 1998s have already arrived on the shelf, particularly in France. In terms of fruit, structure and acidity they seem to mirror 1993s, whereas the 1997s are closer to the 1992s. In theory 1998 is not quite as good as 1997, but in theory 1993 was not quite as good as 1992, yet after a few years it became clear that there were significantly more 1993s to recommend than 1992s. This is often the way with so-called marginal vintages, when the quality in the bottle is more dependent on selection than harvest conditions. We will just have to wait and see.*

<90>**Henri Mandois 1998 Millésime Brut Premier Cru**

<90>**Jacquesson 1998 Le Clos de Jacquesson**

<89>**Egérie de Pannier 1998 Brut**

- <88>**Paul Déthune 1998 Brut Ambonnay Grand Cru**
- <87>**Duval-Leroy 1998 Blanc de Blancs [biody, en futs] Brut**
- <87>**Louise Brison 1998 Millésime Brut**
- <86>**Duval-Leroy 1998 Blanc de Blancs [en Futs] Brut**
- <85>**Pol Roger 1993 Brut Vintage**
- <84>**G. Gruet et Fils 1998 Gilbert Gruet Grand Réserve**

#### **Champagne Vintage Brut 1997**

Should be better than 1998, but they do not have such immediate appeal and require a bit more bottle-age to show their true quality. I would have liked to see the 1998s released before the 1997s and, indeed, the 1997s before the 1996s.

- <88>**Abel Lepitre 1997 Brut Millésimé**
- <87>**Gatinois 1997 Grand Cru**
- <85>**Billecart-Salmon 1997 Cuvée Nicolas François Billecart**
- <85>**Vilmart 1997 Grand Cellier d'Or, Brut 1er Cru**
- <83>**Georges Vesselle 1997 Brut Zero Millésime, Grand Cru**
- <83>**J. Dumangin Fils 1997 Carte d'Or, Brut Premier Cru**

#### **Champagne Vintage Brut 1996**

*Without doubt the best potential quality since 1990, the Champagnes from this vintage have an unprecedented ratio of acidity to sugar, but will this make 1996 the greatest vintage of the 20th century or will it lead to its downfall? The odds are stacked in favour of greatness, but the base wines were so marked that they threatened to have too much character prior to the second fermentation, and that is the sort of problem that we expect in the New World, not Champagne. Furthermore, the*

*huge amount of malic acid in such ripe grapes (see 1990 for an analytical comparison between that year and 1996) was something that no Champagne-maker had ever experienced. With such distinctive base wines, there is a danger that some 1996s will not have the finesse expected of a great vintage, and with the uniquely high volume of malic acid to contend with, we could even see some horrendous malolactic gaffs. However, the best 1996s should be sensational and, if never moved from their cellar of origin, some could still be sparkling in the early 22nd century!*

- <99>**Bollinger 1996 Vieilles Vignes Françaises Brut**
- <98>**Vilmart 1996 Coeur de Cuvée, Brut Premier Cru**
- <97>**Bollinger 1996 Grande Année, Brut**
- <97>**Pol Roger 1996 Brut Vintage**
- <94>**Drappier 1996 Grande Sendrée**
- <94>**Lanson 1996 Gold Label Brut**
- <92>**Gosset 1996 Grand Millésime Brut**
- <91>**Perrier-Jouët 1996 Grand Brut Millésime**
- <91>**Vilmart 1996 Cuvée Création, Brut Premier Cru**
- <90>**Boizel 1996 Grand Vintage, Brut Millésime**
- <90>**Ch. de l'Auche 1996 Nectar de St Rémi, Brut**
- <90>**Fleury 1996 Brut**
- <90>**Guy Cadel 1996 Brut**
- <90>**Henri Mandois 1996 Cuvée Victor Mandois, Brut**
- <90>**Jacquart 1996 Brut Mosaïque Millésimé**

<90>Louis Roederer 1996 Brut Vintage  
 <90>Mailly Grand Cru 1996 La Terre Brut  
 <90>Mailly Grand Cru 1996 Les Echansons Brut  
 <90>Mailly Grand Cru 1996 L'Intemporelle Brut  
 <90>Pannier 1996 Brut  
 <90>Paul Déthune 1996 Brut Ambonnay Grand Cru, Trilogy Cuvée  
 <90>Pierre Gimonnet 1996 Vieilles Vignes de Chardonnay (*magnum*)  
 <90>Taittinger 1996 Brut Millésime  
 <90>Veuve A. Devaux 1996 Cuvée Millésimée, Brut  
 <89>Egérie de Pannier 1996 Brut  
 <89>G.H. Mumm 1996 Cordon Rouge Brut Millésimé  
 <89>Serge Mathieu 1996 Brut  
 <88>Guy Charbaut 1996 Brut  
 <88>H. Blin 1996 Brut  
 <88>Henriot 1996 Brut Millésime  
 <88>Louis Brison 1996 Cuvée Tendresse, Brut  
 <88>Mailly Grand Cru 1996 Brut  
 <88>Veuve A. Devaux 1996 D de Devaux  
 <89>Delamotte 1996 Blanc de Blancs Brut  
 <87>Louis Brison 1996 Cuvée Germain Brulez Brut (*magnum*)  
 <87>Moët & Chandon 1996 Millésime Blanc, Brut  
 <87>Jean Moutardier 1996 Brut Millésime  
 <87>Tribaut 1996 Brut  
 <86>Besserat de Bellefon 1996 Brut  
 <86>Cuvée Charles Gardet 1996 Brut  
 <86>Delouvin Nowack 1996 Brut Extra Selection  
 <86>Ferdinand Bonnet 1996 Brut  
 <86>René Geoffroy 1996 Cuvée Sélectionnée  
 <85>Comte A. de Dampierre 1996 Brut Grand Cru  
 <85>Cuvée Jean de la Fontaine 1996 Brut Millésime  
 <85>Duval-Leroy 1996 Brut Vintage  
 <85>Royer 1996 Brut

### **Champagne Vintage Brut 1995**

*This vintage is blossoming beautifully. As expected the 1995s have more class than either the 1993s or 1992s, but like the 1985s they just keep getting better. In fact, the best 1995s are beginning to remind me of the best 1961s.*

<98>Salon 1995 Blanc de Blancs Brut  
 <97>Bollinger 1995 Grande Année, Brut  
 <95>Gosset Celebris 1995 Brut  
 <95>Cuvée Dom Pérignon 1995 Brut, Moët & Chandon  
 <95>Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin 1995 La Grande Dame, Brut  
 <92>Perrier-Jouët 1995 Cuvée Belle Epoque Brut  
 <92>Drappier 1995 Grande Sendrée, Brut  
 <91>Pol Roger 1995 Brut Vintage  
 <91>Pierre Gimonnet 1995 Millésime de Collection (*magnum*)

<91>Bruno Paillard 1995 Brut Millésime  
 <90>R de Ruinart 1995 Brut  
 <90>Pommery 1995 Cuvée Louise, Brut  
 <90>Louis Roederer 1995 Cristal Brut  
 <90>Lanson Gold Label 1995 Brut  
 <90>G.H. Mumm 1995 Cordon Rouge Brut Millésimé  
 <90>Femme de Champagne 1995 Brut Millésime  
 <90>Duval-Leroy 1995 Fleur de Champagne, Extra Brut  
 <90>Cuvée William Deutz 1995 Brut  
 <90>Charles de Cazanove 1995 Brut Azur, Premier Cru  
 <90>Henriot 1995 Brut Millésime  
 <90>Jacquesson 1995 Grand Vin Signature, Brut  
 <89>Nicolas Feuillatte 1995 Palmes d'Or Brut  
 <89>Taittinger 1995 Brut Millésimé  
 <89>Tsarine 1995 Brut, Chanoine  
 <89>Joseph Perrier 1995 Cuvée Royale Brut  
 <89>Heidsieck Monopole 1995 Diamant Bleu, Brut  
 <89>Nicolas Feuillatte 1995 Brut Premier Cru  
 <89>Deutz 1995 Brut  
 <89>De Saint Gall 1995 Brut  
 <89>Binet 1995 Brut  
 <88>Raoul Collet 1995 Carte d'Or Brut (*magnum*)  
 <88>Pierre Vaudon 1995 Premier Cru Brut  
 <88>Nicolas Feuillatte 1995 Cuvée Spécial  
 <88>Fabrice Payelle 1995 Cuvée du Pomponne, Brut Grand Cru  
 <88>De Venoge 1995 Brut Millésimé  
 <88>Comte Audoin de Dampierre 1995 Grand Cru  
 <87>Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin 1995 Brut Vintage Réserve  
 <87>Tarlant 1995 Brut  
 <87>Nicolas Feuillatte 1995 Brut Millésimé  
 <87>Maurice Vesselle 1995 Brut Millésime, Bouzy Grand Cru  
 <87>Mailly Grand Cru 1995 Cuvée Les Echansons, Brut  
 <86>Piper-Heidsieck 1995 Brut  
 <86>Nicolas Feuillatte 1995 Verzy  
 <86>H. Billiot Fils 1995 Brut Grand Cru  
 <86>Arlaux 1995 Brut  
 <85>Vicomte de Castellane 1995 Croix Rouge Brut Millésime  
 <85>Raoul Collet 1995 Carte d'Or Brut  
 <85>Jacquesson 1995 Dizy "Corne Beautray"  
 <85>Pommery 1995 Brut Grand Cru  
 <85>Mailly Grand Cru 1995 Brut Millésime, Grand Cru  
 <85>Charles Ellner 1995 Millésime Brut  
 <85>A.R. Lenoble 1995 Gentilhomme, Brut Grand Cru  
 <85>Alain Thienot 1995 Grande Cuvée, Brut  
 <85>Alain Thienot 1995 Brut Millésimé  
 <84>Vollereaux 1995 Cuvée Marguerite, Brut

- <84>**J. Dumangin Fils 1995 Brut Millésimé, Premier Cru**
- <84>**Demoiselle 1995 Brut**
- <84>**Charles de Cazanove 1995 Stradivarius Brut**
- <83>**Olivier Walsham 1995 Le Bel Amour, Brut Cuvée Spéciale**
- <83>**Jean Moutardier 1995 Millésime**

#### **Champagne Vintage Brut 1994**

*The worst of the lesser vintages between the great 1990s and the excellent 1995s, all four of which were denied exceptional vintage status through rain at harvest time. Still nothing to challenge Cristal (92 points), although Roederer's Brut Vintage appears to have had a shot of steroids compared to its performance in the two previous editions, when it scored a disappointing 82 points.*

- <90>**Louis Roederer 1994 Brut Vintage**
- <86>**Château de Boursault NV Brut Tradition**
- <85>**La Préférence de Baron Albert 1994 Brut Millésime**

#### **Champagne Vintage Brut 1993**

*On paper the ripeness and acidity levels achieved during this vintage are less impressive than those of 1992. Dom Ruinart is currently neck-to-neck with Cristal, just one point behind Dom Pérignon.*

- <91>**Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin 1993 La Grande Dame, Brut**
- <90>**Pol Roger 1993 Cuvée Sir Winston Churchill Brut**
- <90>**Henri Giraud 1993 Grand Cru Fût de Chêne Brut**
- <87>**Philipponnat 1993 Réserve Millésimée Brut**
- <87>**Jacquesson 1993 Grand Vin Signature, Brut**
- <87>**Gauthier 1993 Brut**
- <85>**Laurent-Perrier 1993 Brut**
- <85>**De Venoge 1993 Grand Vin des Princes Brut**
- <84>**Ayala 1993 Brut Millésimé**
- <83>**Raoul Collet 1993 Carte d'Or Brut**

#### **Champagne Vintage Brut 1992**

*Theoretically the only vintage quality year between, but not including, 1990 and 1995. However, although it has provided some excellent Champagnes, there has generally been a greater turn out of superior 1993s, even if the later releases below have redressed the balance somewhat.*

- <93>**Vilmart 1992 Coeur de Cuvée (magnum)**
- <91>**Perrier-Jouët 1992 Grand Brut**
- <91>**Drappier 1992 Carte d'Or Brut (magnum)**
- <91>**Bollinger 1992 Grande Année, Brut**
- <90>**Duval-Leroy 1992 Fleur de Champagne, Millésimé Brut**
- <89>**Palmer 1992 Brut Millésime**
- <89>**Le Brun de Neuville 1992 Millésime Brut**
- <88>**Jacquart 1992 Brut Mosaïque**
- <88>**De Venoge 1992 Grand Vin des Princes Brut**
- <87>**Pommery 1992 Brut Grand Cru**
- <87>**Jean-Pierre Marniquet 1992 Brut Millésime**

<87>**Jeanmaire 1992 Champagne Elysée, Brut Millésime**

<87>**Bricout 1992 Brut Réserve**

<86>**Alfred Gratien 1992 Brut**

<79>**Nicolas Feuillatte 1992 Brut Premier Cru**

### **Champagne Vintage Brut 1991**

*Although less houses declared this vintage and the ripeness-acidity levels were the less impressive than either 1992 or 1993, some producers evidently got it right.*

<90>**Clos des Goisses 1991 Brut, Philipponnat**

<88>**Boizel 1991 Joyau de France, Brut**

### **Champagne Vintage Brut 1990**

*This is not only a true vintage, it is one of the 18 greatest Champagne vintages of the 20th century. It is hard to believe for those who remember the 1976 Champagnes, but the grapes were riper in 1990 than they were in that drought year. What makes 1990 special, however, is that its grapes also possessed surprisingly high the acidity levels, with a much greater proportion of ripe tartaric to unripe malic than any other vintage on record. Since both 1990 and 1996 have unique acidity to ripeness ratios, I should explain the difference. There are always exceptions, but as a rule of thumb, any Champagne harvest that averages a potential alcohol of 10% ABV or more is probably "vintage quality" and the best total acidity that can reasonably be expected will be eight-point-something, with a pH just above three. Go up to 11% and the acidity falls to six-point-something, with the danger of pH levels hitting 3.1. The average ripeness in 1990 was 11.1%, the highest since 1959 (12%), yet the average total acidity was an 8g/l (expressed as sulphuric), with a pH of 3.04. This was an unprecedented acidity to ripeness ratio. Compare it to what was perceived at the time as an overripe 1976 harvest, which averaged 10.5% ABV with a total acidity of 6.2g/l. Okay, that's why 1990 is special. In 1996, at 10.3% ABV, the average ripeness was closer to 1976, but with an incredible total acidity of 9.9g/l and a pH of 2.97! Break the acidity down and although there is a very healthy 8.3g/l of tartaric acid (only slightly less than 1989 at 8.6 and 1990 at 8.9), we can see that the reason for such a high total acidity and low pH: 9.3g/l of malic acid! In a non-vintage year like 1987 there will only be 8g/l of malic acid. In a vintage-ripe year like 1996 it is nothing short of phenomenal.*

*A note of caution: [1] Some UK cellared 1990s have aged rapidly, whereas the same wines disgorged on the same date and not moved from Champagne are in perfect condition - beware buying 1990s outside the region.*

<95>**Billecart-Salmon 1990 Grande Cuvée, Brut**

<95>**Pol Roger 1990 Brut Vintage**

<95>**Perrier-Jouët 1990 Cuvée Belle Epoque Brut**

<91>**Bollinger 1990 R.D. Extra Brut**

<90>**Boizel 1990 Cuvée Sous Bois, Brut**

<90>**Comte Audoin de Dampierre 1990 Blanc de Blancs Grand Cru**

<90>**Duval-Leroy 1990 Blanc de Blancs Chardonnay, Brut**

<89>**Vilmart 1990 Grand Cellier d'Or, Brut**

<88>**Charles Heidsieck 1990 Blanc des Millénaires, Brut**

<87>**Jacquinet 1990 Symphony Brut Grande Réserve**

<87>**Arlaux 1990 Brut**

<87>**Doquet-Jeanmaire 1990 Blanc de Blancs, Brut Premier Cru**

**<85>Bruno Paillard 1990 N.P.U. Nec Plus Ultra, Brut**

**Champagne Vintage Brut 1989**

*The middle year of the great trio of exceptional successive vintages, 1989 was marked by the Pinot Noir, which had a physiological disorder, causing coloration problem that was most noticeable in some of the cheaper, earlier-released Champagnes. The acidity was very low and pH too high for such a hyped-up vintage (only 1999 has had worse readings in the last 20 years), consequently some Champagnes were too heavy and oxidative.*

**<92>Noble Cuvée de Lanson 1989 Brut**

**<90>Pommery 1989 Louise Brut**

**<90>Henriot 1989 Cuvée des Enchanteleurs, Brut**

**Champagne Vintage Brut 1988**

*Although this vintage comes second to the 1990 out of the trio of three successive Champagne vintages, the best 1988s will probably last as long as the best 1990s.*

**<95>Krug 1988 Brut**

**<88>Henriot 1988 Cuvée des Enchanteleurs, Brut**

**<85>Pol Roger 1988 Brut Vintage**

**Champagne Vintage Brut 1987 & older**

*Only buy older vintages of Champagne that have come direct from the producer's cellars into the wine-merchant's cellars, and only then if you also know that the wine-merchant's own cellars are good. Preferably buy direct from the producer on a visit. Only buy mature Champagne at auction if the provenance adheres to the above or you have tasted the an example from exactly the same lot.*

**<97>Pol Roger 1979 Brut Vintage (Jeroboam)**

**<96>Krug 1985 Brut**

**<96>Perrier-Jouët 1979 Cuvée Belle Epoque Brut**

**<96>Pol Roger 1985 Brut Vintage (Jeroboam)**

**<94>Perrier-Jouët 1985 Cuvée Belle Epoque Brut**

**<93>Perrier-Jouët 1959 Grand Brut**

**<92>Nicolas Feuillatte 1985 Palmes d'Or Brut**

**<90>Jacquart 1987 Brut**

**<90>Perrier-Jouët 1971 Cuvée Belle Epoque Brut**

**<85>Maurice Vesselle 1976 Brut Millésime, Bouzy Grand Cru**

**Champagne Vintage Blanc de Blanc 1998**

*The Chardonnay was better than Pinot Noir in 1998, but so far there is little evidence to suggest it was good enough to excel on its own.*

**<85>G. Fluteau 1998 Cuvée Prestige, Blanc de Blancs Brut**

**<85>Philippe Gonet 1998 Blanc de Blancs, Brut Grand Cru**

**<84>Pierre Gimonet 1998 Gastronome Brut 1er Cru**

**<83>Th. Blondel 1998 Blanc de Blancs Brut Premier Cru**

**<82>Terres de Noël, Brut Sélection 1998 Grand Cru, Milan**

**<82>Pierre Moncuit, Cuvée Nicole Moncuit 1998 Vieille Vigne**

**<81>G. Gruet et Fils 1998 Blanc de Blancs, Brut Millésimé**

### **Champagne Vintage Blanc de Blanc 1997**

*Strangely few and far between, with only one wine standing out so far, and that's to die for.*

<90>**Amour de Deutz 1997 Blanc de Blancs Brut**

### **Champagne Vintage Blanc de Blanc 1996**

*This is shaping up to being a great blanc de blanc vintage, even though the 1996s blended from both Chardonnay and Pinot are definitely superior.*

<92>**Pol Roger 1996 Brut Chardonnay**

<87>**Deutz 1996 Blanc de Blancs, Brut**

<90>**R.C. Lemaire 1996 Chardonnay, Millésime Premier Cru Brut**

<90>**Pannier 1996 Blanc de Blancs**

<90>**Bonnaire 1996 Cuvée Prestige, Blanc de Blancs Grand Cru**

<89>**Jacquart 1996 Blanc de Blancs, Brut Mosaique**

<88>**Pierre Gimonnet 1996 Premier Cru Chardonnay, Brut**

<88>**Louis Brison 1996 Cuvée Tendresse, Brut**

<87>**Pierre Moncuit 1996 Brut Grand Cru, Blanc de Blancs**

<87>**Pierre Gimonnet 1996 Fleuron Brut 1er Cru**

<87>**G. Fluteau 1996 Cuvée Prestige, Blanc de Blancs Brut**

<87>**Duval-Leroy 1996 Blanc de Chardonnay Brut**

<86>**Louis Roederer 1996 Blanc de Blancs Brut**

<85>**Michel Gonet 1996 Prestige 2000 Brut Grand Cru**

<84>**Philippe Gonet 1996 Blanc de Blancs, Grand Cru**

<84>**Nicolas Feuillatte 1996 Blanc de Blancs Brut Premier Cru**

### **Champagne Vintage Blanc de Blanc 1995**

*Some amazing blanc de blancs are emerging from this vintage.*

<95>**Taittinger Comtes de Champagne 1995 Blanc de Blancs Brut**

<91>**Pierre Gimonnet 1995 Millésime de Collection (*magnum*)**

<91>**Amour de Deutz 1995 Blanc de Blancs Brut**

<90>**Pol Roger 1995 Brut Chardonnay**

<90>**Le Mesnil 1995 Réserve Sélection, Blanc de Blancs Brut**

<90>**Billecart-Salmon 1995 Blanc de Blancs**

<90>**Drappier 1995 Cuvée Signature, Blanc de Blancs Brut**

<89>**G. Fluteau 1995 Cuvée Prestige Brut (*magnum*)**

<89>**Guy Charbaut 1995 Memory**

<89>**Nicolas Feuillatte 1995 Mesnil**

<89>**Nicolas Feuillatte 1995 Cramant**

<88>**Pierre Gimonnet 1995 Fleuron Brut 1er Cru**

<88>**Pierre Gimonnet 1995 Cuvée Oenophile, Extra-Brut**

<88>**Jacquesson 1995 Blanc de Blancs, Brut Grand Cru**

<88>**G. Fluteau 1995 Cuvée Prestige, Blanc de Blancs Brut**

<88>**Alain Thienot 1995 Cuvée Stanislas, Blanc de Blancs Brut**

<87>**Nicolas Feuillatte 1995 Chouilly**

<87>**Palmer 1995 Blanc de Blancs Brut**

<86>**Terres de Noël, Brut Sélection 1995 Grand Cru, Milan**

- <86>**Pierre Moncuit, Cuvée Nicole Moncuit 1995 Vieille Vigne**
- <85>**J. de Telmont 1995 Cuvée Grand Couronnement Brut**
- <85>**A.R. Lenoble 1995 Gentilhomme, Brut Grand Cru**
- <85>**Alexandre Bonnet 1995 Blanc de Blancs, Brut**
- <83>**Th. Blondel 1995 Vieux Millésime Chardonnay**

### **Champagne Vintage Blanc de Blanc 1993 & older**

*Only buy older vintages of Champagne that have come direct from the producer's cellars into the wine-merchant's cellars, and only then if you also know that the wine-merchant's own cellars are good. Preferably buy direct from the producer on a visit. Only buy mature Champagne at auction if the provenance adheres to the above or you have tasted the an example from exactly the same lot.*

- <97>**Krug Clos du Mesnil 1988 Brut Blanc de Blancs**
- <95>**Dom Ruinart 1993 Blanc de Blancs**
- <93>**Le Mesnil 1990 Vigne Sélectionnée Blanc de Blancs Brut**
- <90>**Jacquart 1992 Blanc de Blancs, Cuvée Mosaïque**
- <90>**Boizel 1989 Joyau de Chardonnay, Cuvée des Auctionnaires**
- <88>**Charles Heidsieck 1990 Blanc des Millénaires, Brut**
- <87>**Salon 1990 Blanc de Blancs Brut**
- <87>**Palmer 1985 Blanc de Blancs Brut**
- <87>**Doquet-Jeanmaire 1985 Blanc de Blancs, Brut Premier Cru**
- <86>**Palmer 1985 Blanc de Blancs Brut (magnum)**
- <83>**Doquet-Jeanmaire 1986 Coeur de Terroir, Brut 1er Cru**

### **Champagne Vintage Rosé**

*Interesting to note that the number of vintaged Champagne rosé submitted dropped by more than 60% over previous years. This happens occasionally, when houses have over-produced during a rosé revival, only to discover it has waned by the time a vintage Champagne reaches the market, some five years later. As the French will drink only the freshest Champagne rosé, the producers switch to selling off these wines as non-vintage, rather than be seen to offer an old vintage, hoping that customers will not notice that the wine is orange!*

- <98>**Cuvée Dom Pérignon 1992 Rosé Brut, Moët & Chandon**
- <93>**Gosset Celebris 1998 Rosé Brut**
- <92>**Louis Roederer 1995 Cristal Brut Rosé**
- <91>**Pol Roger 1995 Brut Rosé**
- <90>**Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin 1990 La Grande Dame Rosé, Brut**
- <90>**Pommery 1992 Louise Rosé, Brut**
- <90>**Perrier-Jouët 1997 Cuvée Belle Epoque Rosé Brut**
- <90>**Bollinger 1995 Grande Année Rosé, Brut**
- <89>**Grand Siècle Alexandra 1990 Brut Rosé par Laurent-Perrier**
- <85>**Alain Thienot 1996 Brut Rosé**
- <85>**Bollinger 1996 Grande Année Rosé, Brut**
- <86>**Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin 1995 Brut Rosé Réserve**
- <83>**Nicolas Feuillatte 1997 Rosé Brut**

### **Other French**

**Other French Brut & Rosé (Non-vintage & vintaged)**

*All French sparkling wines other than Champagne have been combined, with the Loire taking top honours, but both Alsace and the Loire equally dominant throughout the performance table.*

- <89>**Bouvet Ladubay 1999 Tresor, Brut Saumur**
- <82>**Baumard NV Carte Corail, Crémant de Loire Brut Rosé**
- <82>**Bestheim 2000 Crémant d'Alsace Brut**
- <82>**Champalou NV Vouvray Brut**
- <82>**Domaine de Brizé NV Saumur Brut**
- <82>**Domaine de la Galinière 1998 Cuvée Clément, Vouvray Brut**
- <80>**Baumard NV Carte Turquoise, Crémant de Loire Brut**
- <80>**Baumard 2000 Brut Millésime, Crémant de Loire**
- <80>**Bestheim NV Crémant d'Alsace Brut**
- <80>**Château de Moncontour 1999 Cuvée Prédilection Vouvray Brut**
- <80>**Clos de l'Epina NV Tête de Cuvée, Vouvray Brut**
- <80>**Gratien & Meyer NV Cuvée Flamme, Saumur Brut**
- <80>**Jean Becker NV Crémant d'Alsace**
- <80>**Joseph Freudenreich NV Crémant d'Alsace Brut**
- <80>**Koehly NV Blanc de Noirs, Crémant d'Alsace**
- <80>**Wolfberger NV Cuvée de l'An 2000 Brut (*Magnum*)**
- <79>**C. Greffe NV Tête de Cuvée, Vouvray Brut**
- <79>**CP de Vouvray NV Tête de Cuvée Brut**
- <79>**Gratien & Meyer NV Brut Rosé, Saumur**
- <79>**Jean Geiler NV Blanc de Blancs Brut Prestige**
- <79>**Joseph Gruss NV Crémant d'Alsace Brut**
- <79>**René Muré 1997 Cuvée Prestige Brut**
- <79>**Stoffel NV Crémant d'Alsace Brut**
- <79>**Yves Lambert NV Brut Rosé, Crémant de Loire**
- <78>**CV de Kientzheim-Kaysersberg NV Anne Boecklin Brut**
- <78>**CV de Saumur NV Cuvée de la Chevalerie Brut**
- <78>**Domaine de Brizé NV Brut Rosé, Saumur**
- <78>**Domaine de Nerleux NV Crémant de Loire Brut**
- <78>**Domaine Dutertre 2000 Cuvée Vendanges Brut**
- <78>**Dopff Au Moulin 1999 Cuvée Bartholdi Brut**
- <78>**Engel Fernand NV Tradition Brut**
- <78>**Hartenberger NV Blanc de Blancs Brut**
- <78>**Jean Geiler Médaille d'Or Paris 2000 NV Brut**
- <78>**Jean-Claude Buecher NV Crémant d'Alsace Brut**
- <78>**Meyer Fonné NV Crémant d'Alsace Brut Extra**
- <78>**Monmousseau NV Cuvée JM Brut, Touraine**
- <77>**Ackerman Laurance NV Cuvée Laurance, Saumur Brut**
- <77>**Château de Montguéret NV Crémant de Loire Brut**
- <77>**Domaine du Clos de l'Epina NV Vouvray Brut**
- <77>**Domaine Dutertre NV Brut Rosé, Crémant de Loire**
- <77>**Dopff & Irion NV Crémant d'Alsace Brut**
- <77>**Dopff Au Moulin NV Cuvée Pierre Dopff Brut**

<77>Eblin Fuchs NV Blanc de Noirs Brut  
<77>François Schwach NV Crémant d'Alsace Brut  
<77>Jean Geiler NV Crémant d'Alsace Brut  
<77>Langlois NV Saumur Brut  
<77>Mayerling NV Crémant d'Alsace Brut  
<77>Sipp Mack NV Crémant d'Alsace  
<77>Wolfberger NV Cuvée Prestige Brut  
<76>Camille Braun NV Riesling, Crémant d'Alsace Brut  
<76>Chapelle de Cray 1998 Brut Vintage, Montlouis  
<76>Château de Putille NV Crémant de Loire Brut  
<76>CV de Hunawihhr NV Calixte, Crémant d'Alsace Brut  
<76>Domaine Claude Bléger NV Crémant d'Alsace Brut  
<76>Dopff Au Moulin NV Cuvée Julien Brut  
<76>Emile Beyer NV Crémant d'Alsace Brut  
<76>Engel Fernand 1999 Chardonnay Brut  
<76>Joseph Gruss NV Brut Prestige  
<76>Louis Sipp 1999 Crémant d'Alsace Brut  
<76>Lucien Albrecht NV Riesling, Crémant d'Alsace Brut  
<76>Ruhmann NV Crémant d'Alsace Brut  
<76>Schaeffer-Woerly 1999 Crémant d'Alsace Brut  
<76>Schaller NV Blanc de Noir, Crémant d'Alsace Brut  
<75>Ackerman Laurance NV Cuvée Laurance Brut  
<75>Ackerman Laurance NV Vouvray Brut  
<75>Barth René 1999 Crémant d'Alsace Brut, Michel Fonné  
<75>Caves Louis de Grenelle NV Crémant de Loire Brut  
<75>Château de Montguéret 1998 Tête de Cuvée Brut  
<75>CV de Hunawihhr NV Calixte Brut Rosé  
<75>de Neuville NV Cuvée Prestige Brut  
<75>Domaine de la Perruche NV Saumur Brut  
<75>Domaine Laffond NV Blanquette de Limoux  
<75>Dopff Au Moulin 1998 Chardonnay Brut  
<75>Langlois NV Crémant de Loire Brut  
<75>Mirault NV Vouvray Brut  
<75>Rieflé NV Crémant d'Alsace Brut  
<75>Stempfel NV Crémant d'Alsace Brut  
<75>Veuve Amiot 1995 Cuvée Elisabeth, Saumur Brut  
<75>Welty NV Brut Rosé, Crémant d'Alsace  
<75>Yves Lambert NV Crémant de Loire Brut  
<74>Ackerman Laurance NV Cuvée Privée Brut  
<74>Bernard Humbrecht NV Cuvée des Amis  
<74>Caves Louis de Grenelle NV Louis de Grenelle Brut  
<74>Charles Baur NV Crémant d'Alsace Brut  
<74>Château de Moncontour NV Crémant de Loire Brut  
<74>CV de Saumur 1999 Cuvée de la Chevalerie Brut Rosé  
<74>Koehly NV Crémant St-Urbain, Crémant d'Alsace  
<74>Odile et Danielle Weber NV Crémant d'Alsace Brut

<74>**Varichon & Clerc 1997 Royal Seyssel, Brut**  
<73>**Domaine Hervé Duloquet NV Saumur Brut**  
<72>**Blanc Foussy NV Touraine Brut**  
<72>**CP de Vouvray NV Extra Réserve Brut**  
<72>**Château de Moncontour 1995 Cuvée Prédilection Brut**  
<72>**Gratien & Meyer NV Saumur Brut**  
<70>**Gratien & Meyer NV Crémant de Loire Brut**  
<70>**Veuve Amiot NV Crémant de Loire Brut**

## **Argentina**

*See South America*

## **Australia**

### **Australian Brut & Rosé (Non-vintage & vintaged)**

*The presence of a vintage on an Australian fizz usually represents a step up in terms of quality, although there is no legal obligation, and any variation in the different years is more likely to be attributed to learning curves than climatic conditions.*

<90>**Croser 1999 Petaluma**  
<89>**Croser 1999 Pinot Noir Chardonnay**  
<88>**Pirie 1995 Pipers Brook**  
<87>**Chandon 1998 Vintage Brut**  
<87>**Chandon 1998 Blanc de Blancs**  
<87>**Chandon 1998 Rosé**  
<87>**Green Point by Chandon 1998 Vintage Brut**  
<87>**Pirie 1996 Pipers Brook**  
<87>**Yarrabank 1994 Thibaut & Gillet Cuvée, Brut**  
<86>**Chandon 1997 Cuvée Riche**  
<86>**Pirie 1997 Pipers Brook**  
<85>**Jansz of Tasmania 1996 Pipers River Cuvée Brut**  
<85>**Yarrabank 1998 Thibaut & Gillet Cuvée, Brut**  
<84>**Chandon NV Brut**  
<81>**Arras 1997 Chardonnay Pinot Noir**  
<81>**Green Point by Chandon 1997 Vintage Brut Rosé**  
<80>**Blue Pyrenees 1998 Chardonnay Pinot Noir Pinot Meunier**  
<80>**Blue Pyrenees 1998 Midnight Cuvée Chardonnay**  
<80>**Kamberra Tumbarumba 1999 Pinot Noir Chardonnay**  
<80>**Meeting Place 2000 Pinot Noir Chardonnay, Kamberra**  
<80>**Jansz of Tasmania 1996**  
<80>**Yalumba 1997 D Brut**  
<80>**Starvedog Lane 1998 Sparkling Chardonnay Pinot Noir Pinot Meunier**  
<80>**Yarrabank 1997 Thibaut & Gillet Cuvée, Brut**  
<80>**Yarrabank 1997 Cuvée Pinot Noir Chardonnay**  
<80>**Yarrabank 1997 Sparkling**  
<79>**Arras 1995 Pinot Noir Chardonnay**  
<79>**Jansz of Tasmania NV**

<78>**Bethany Wines 1998 Barossa Cuvée Chardonnay Pinot Noir Brut**  
 <87>**Chandon 1999 Vintage Brut**  
 <78>**Omni NV Brut**  
 <78>**Sir James 1997 Vintage Pinot Noir Chardonnay**  
 <78>**Brown Brothers NV King Valley Sparkling Pinot Noir & Chardonnay**  
 <78>**Brown Brothers 1996 Pinot Noir Chardonnay Brut, Milawa Vineyard**  
 <78>**Grant Burge NV Barossa Valley Pinot Noir Chardonnay Brut**  
 <78>**La Cache 1995**  
 <78>**Seaview 1999 Chardonnay Blanc de Blancs, Vintage Reserve Brut**  
 <78>**Seaview 1994 Section 353 Pinot Chardonnay**  
 <77>**Nottage Hill 1999 Riverland Sparkling Chardonnay Brut**  
 <77>**Yarra Burn 1999 Pinot Noir Chardonnay Pinot Meunier**  
 <77>**Brown Brothers 1996 King Valley Whitlands Pinot Chardonnay Brut**  
 <77>**Green Point by Chandon 1998 Vintage Brut Rosé**  
 <77>**Seaview 1998 Chardonnay Blanc de Blancs**  
 <76>**Currabridge NV Brut**  
 <76>**Currabridge NV Rosé Brut**  
 <76>**Jacob's Creek NV Chardonnay Pinot Noir Brut Cuvée**  
 <75>**Bimbadgen Estate NV Hunter Valley Sparkling Pinot Noir Chardonnay**  
 <75>**Bay of Fires 1997 Pinot Noir Chardonnay**  
 <75>**Brown Brothers 1998 Pinot Noir Chardonnay, Milawa Vineyard**  
 <75>**Chandon 1997 Blanc de Noirs**  
 <75>**Aldridge Estate NV Sparkling Brut**  
 <75>**Macedon NV Cuvée 8**  
 <75>**Rosemount NV "V" Sparkling Chardonnay**  
 <74>**Macedon NV Cuvée 6**  
 <74>**Yellowglen NV Pinot Noir Chardonnay Grande Cuvée**  
 <73>**Hollick 1998 Sparkling Merlot**  
 <72>**Deakin Estate NV Brut**  
 <72>**Yellowglen 1998 Vintage**

### **Australian: sparkling red**

*This is very much Australia's own style of sparkling wine. Most wines in this category are sparkling Shiraz, but you can get fizzed up versions of Cabernet, Merlot and various blends. The appearance of Pinot Noir is a rarity, especially in its pure form, which is odd since the first Australian red fizz was a "Sparkling Burgundy" back in 1881. The wines today are generally on the sweet side, very deep in colour and fall into one of two categories: cedary-oaky or fruit-driven. The sight of anything this colour with bubbles can give those brought up on Champagne a shock and this is only made worse by the big smack of tannin encountered in those sparkling red wines of the cedary-oaky style. Champagne drinkers who refuse to consider anything other than the genuine article will be brought within a mile of these wines, but those who are positively interested in the development of sparkling wines beyond the confines of northern France should at least try to understand Australian sparkling red wine. Although the bulk of Aussie red fizz is seen as nothing more (or anything less) than barbecue fodder, there is something of a cult-following for the very best wines.*

<90>**Glaetzer NV Sparkling Shiraz**

<89>**Charles Melton NV Sparkling Red**  
 <88>**Chandon NV Pinot Shiraz**  
 <88>**Yalumba 1996 D Black, Sparkling Cabernet Shiraz**  
 <87>**Primo Estate 2001 Joseph Sparkling Red**  
 <86>**Chandon NV Sparkling Pinot Noir Shiraz**  
 <85>**Hollick 1999 Sparkling Merlot**  
 <80>**Bleasdale NV Sparkling Shiraz**  
 <80>**The Peppermint Paddock NV Red Chambourcin**  
 <80>**Black Queen 1994**  
 <80>**Knappstein 1999 Chainsaw Shiraz**  
 <80>**Rumball NV Sparkling Merlot**  
 <80>**Rumball NV Sparkling Shiraz Special Cuvée**  
 <80>**Seppelt 1996 Sparkling Shiraz**  
 <80>**Tatachilla NV Sparkling Malbec**  
 <78>**Bersano NV Brachetto d'Acqui Dolce**  
 <78>**Bleasdale 2001 Sparkling Shiraz**  
 <78>**Banrock Station NV Sparkling Shiraz**  
 <78>**Brown Brothers 1998 Sparkling Shiraz, Milawa Vineyard**  
 <76>**Leasingham Classic Clare 1994 Sparkling Shiraz**  
 <76>**Sir James NV Sparkling Shiraz**  
 <76>**Andrew Garrett 1998 Sparkling Shiraz**  
 <76>**Wingara 2000 Select Sparkling Shiraz**  
 <75>**Barossa Valley Estate 1996 E & E Sparkling Shiraz**  
 <75>**Gibson's NV Sparkling Merlot**  
 <75>**Morris NV Sparkling Shiraz Durif**  
 <75>**Rumball NV Sparkling Shiraz**  
 <73>**Miranda 1997 Family Reserve Sparkling Shiraz**

## **Brazil**

*See South America*

## **England**

*England's climate is every bit as variable as Champagne's and the White Cliffs of Dover are part of the same chalk basin that extends under Channel and Paris to emerge in Champagne as the Côte des Blancs. Consequently, it is little wonder that sparkling wine is England's great wine hope. Furthermore, the English deliberately put the bubbles into wine long before the French did. This was documented by Christopher Merret in 1662, six years before Dom Pérignon set foot in Hautvillers, which explains why sparkling Champagne was famous enough to be mentioned in wax The Man of Mode (Sir George Etherege, 1676), 43 years before the French claim to have invented it! Merret's document was reproduced for the first time in Christie's World Encyclopedia of Champagne & Sparkling Wine.*

<90>**Nyetimber 1998 Premier Cuvée, Chardonnay Blanc de Blancs**  
 <89>**Nyetimber 1999 Classic Cuvée Brut**  
 <89>**Nyetimber 1996 Classic Cuvée Brut**  
 <89>**Nyetimber 1993 Classic Cuvée Brut**  
 <89>**Nyetimber 1992 Première Cuvée, Chardonnay Blanc de Blancs**

<88>Nyetimber 1999 Première Cuvée, Chardonnay Blanc de Blancs  
 <88>Nyetimber 1997 Classic Cuvée Brut  
 <88>Nyetimber 1993 Première Cuvée, Chardonnay Blanc de Blancs  
 <88>Bloomsbury 1997 Cuvée Merret Brut, Ridgeview Estate  
 <87>Limney Brut 1999 Davenport  
 <87>Nyetimber 1998 Classic Cuvée Brut  
 <87>Nyetimber 1995 Classic Cuvée Brut  
 <87>Knightsbridge 1999 Cuvée Merret, Ridgeview Estate  
 <85>Limney Brut 2000 Davenport  
 <85>Nyetimber 1995 Première Cuvée, Chardonnay Blanc de Blancs  
 <85>South Ridge 1999 Cuvée Merret, Ridgeview Estate  
 <85>Cavendish 1998 Cuvée Merret Brut, Ridgeview Estate  
 <80>Bearsted 1997 Brut  
 <80>Chapel Down 1999 Pinot Réserve  
 <78>Breaky Bottom 1999 Cuvée Réserve Brut  
 <78>Breaky Bottom 1996 Millennium Cuvée Maman Mercier  
 <78>Camel Valley 2001 Cornwall Pinot Noir  
 <78>Chapel Down NV Epoch Brut Rosé  
 <77>Danebury 1999 Cossack, Brut  
 <75>Danebury 1998 Cossack, Brut  
 <75>Chapel Down 1995 Epoch Vintage Brut  
 <74>Camel Valley 2001 Cornwall Brut  
 <74>Camel Valley 2000 Cornwall Brut  
 <74>Camel Valley 1998 Cornwall Brut  
 <74>Chapel Down NV Epoch Brut  
 <71>Test Valley Vineyard NV Seyval Blanc Premium Reserve Brut  
 <70>Warden Vineyard 1996 Extra Brut

## Germany

*Sekt has historically appealed to Germans and few others. Production is enormous, more than twice that of Champagne, but most of this is blended from the dregs of several countries and very little is exported. Until 1986 Deutscher Sekt was a oxymoron, but now has to be the exclusive product of German wine. Smaller producers have always existed, but the quality of their wines was little better than that of the biggest bottlers until recently. Riesling makes a classic Sekt, but not a classic sparkling wine. Its terpene-laden character overwhelms the subtle influence of autolysis, thus no sparkling wine made from this variety will ever achieve classic bottle-fermented aromas. What it will achieve, however, is what any good still Riesling can accomplish and that is a classic Riesling bottle-aroma. Call it petrolly or what you like, but this usually takes a few years after disgorgement, hence a certain maturity is required. A Champagne-lover who is also a Riesling-lover should enjoy a mature Riesling Sekt if preconceived notions of what a sparkling wine should be are put to one side.*

<90>Solter 1988 Rheingau Riesling Brut  
 <82>Lingenfelder NV Satyr Brut  
 <82>Ökonomierat Rebholz 1997 Spätburgunder Brut  
 <82>Solter NV Rheingau Riesling Brut  
 <80>Georg Breuer 1994 Georg Breuer Brut

<80>Reichsrat von Buhl 1997 Forster Pechstein Riesling  
 <79>Castell'sches Domänenamt NV Schloss Castell Riesling Brut  
 <79>Von Kageneck'sche 1999 Bugginger Maltesergarten Spätburgunder  
 <78>Johann Geil 1999 Bechtheimer Hasensprung Weissburgunder  
 <78>Grafen Neipperg 2000 Riesling Brut  
 <78>Reichsrat von Buhl 1998 Weissburgunder Extra Brut  
 <78>Schloss Reinhartshausen 1998 Erbacher Rheinhell Chardonnay  
 <77>Winzergenossenschaft Beckstein 2000 Riesling Trocken  
 <77>Reichsgraf von Kesselstatt 1995 Palais Kesselstatt Riesling  
 <76>Georg Breuer 1999 Riesling Brut  
 <76>Hessische Staatsweingüter Kloster Eberbach 1999 Erbacher Marcobrunn Riesling  
 <76>Göttelmann 1999 Münsterer Kapellenberg Riesling Trocken  
 <76>Ratzenberger 1998 Bacharacher Kloster Fürstental Riesling  
 <76>Staatliche Weinbaudomäne Trier 2000 Domäne Avelsbach Riesling  
 <76>Sektellerei Am Turm 2000 Turm Carat Brut  
 <76>Schloss Vollrads 1999 Riesling Brut  
 <76>Winzersekt 2000 Spätburgunder Extra Trocken Weissherbst  
 <75>Geil's Sekt und 1999 Schwarzriesling Brut Rosé  
 <75>Fürst von Metternich Sektellerei 1999 Riesling Brut  
 <75>Schloss Saarstein 1998 Riesling Brut  
 <75>Sonnenhof, Bezner-Fischer 2000 Spätburgunder Brut Rosé  
 <75>Sektellerei Am Turm NV Turm Rubin Spätburgunder Trocken  
 <74>Franz Friedrich-Kern 1999 Cuvée Katharina Riesling Brut  
 <74>Lauffen 1999 Lauffener Katzenbeisser Spätburgunder Trocken  
 <74>Staatsweingut Meersburg 1999 Baden Brut  
 <74>Vereinigte Hospitien 1999 Riesling Brut  
 <74>Volk 1999 Steuermann Riesling Brut  
 <74>im Zwölberich 1998 Zwölberich Royal Brut  
 <73>Schloss Saarstein 1997 Riesling Trocken  
 <72>Alfred Blaul, Hofgut Gönnheim NV Pinot Extra Brut  
 <72>Bickensohl 1999 Spätburgunder Brut  
 <72>Deidesheim 1999 Pfalz Trocken  
 <72>Fries 1998 Noviander Klosterberg Riesling Halbtrocken  
 <72>Neuweier-Bühlertal 2000 Neuweierer Schloss Rodeck Riesling Trocken

## Israel

*The quality of these sparkling wines from the Golan Heights improves with every vintage.*

<78>Yarden NV Brut Galilee  
 <77>Yarden 1997 Blanc de Blancs  
 <76>Yarden 1998 Blanc de Blancs  
 <70>Yarden 1996 Blanc de Blancs

## Italy

*The best response as always has come from Franciacorta, one of the few places in the world where high quality sparkling wine can be made in large volumes. At long last I am receiving full*

*cooperation from Asti and Brachetto d'Acqui, thus the significant number of wines recommended from those appellations.*

### **Franciacorta**

*The only Italian sparkling wine appellation that must be made by méthode champenoise.*

*Franciacorta also happens to be the only compact wine area producing world class sparkling wine in Italy. Why hasn't a Champagne house set down some roots here? Franciacorta would be the ideal location for a Taittinger operation like Domaine Carneros.*

### **Franciacorta Extra-Brut**

- <80>**Ricci Curbastro 1998 Franciacorta Extra Brut**
- <79>**Lo Sparviere NV Franciacorta Extra Brut**
- <77>**Castel Faglia NV Franciacorta Extra Brut**
- <76>**Ferghettina 1995 Franciacorta Extra Brut**
- <75>**Cola NV Franciacorta Extra Brut**
- <75>**Barbogio DeGaioncelli NV Franciacorta Extra Dry**
- <74>**Bredasole NV Franciacorta Extra Brut**

### **Franciacorta Brut**

- <85>**Barone Pizzini 1999 Franciacorta Satèn**
- <84>**Ricci Curbastro 1999 Franciacorta Satèn Brut**
- <83>**Bellavista 1997 Franciacorta, Gran Cuvée Brut**
- <83>**Villa 1999 Franciacorta Satèn Brut**
- <82>**Bellavista NV Franciacorta, Gran Cuvée Satèn**
- <82>**Monogram 1994 Franciacorta Brut Millesimato**
- <80>**Antica Fratta 1995 Franciacorta Brut**
- <80>**Antica Fratta NV Franciacorta Satèn Brut**
- <80>**Bredasole 2000 Franciacorta Satèn**
- <80>**Ca'del Bosco 1995 Cuvée Annamaria Clementi**
- <79>**Il Mosnel 1998 Franciacorta Brut Satèn**
- <78>**Barone Pizzini NV Franciacorta Brut**
- <78>**Ca'del Bosco 1997 Franciacorta Brut**
- <78>**Conti Bettoni Cazzago 1994 Tetellus, Franciacorta Brut**
- <77>**Bredasole NV Franciacorta Brut**
- <77>**Tenuta Castellino Bonomi 1998 Franciacorta Brut**
- <77>**Tenuta Castellino Bonomi 1996 Franciacorta Millesimato**
- <77>**Contadi Castaldi 1997 Franciacorta Satèn**
- <76>**Il Mosnel NV Franciacorta Brut**
- <75>**Antica Fratta NV Franciacorta Brut**
- <75>**Bellavista NV Franciacorta Cuvée Brut**
- <75>**Fratelli Berlucchi 1995 Casa delle Colonne, Franciacorta**
- <75>**Ca'del Bosco 1997 Franciacorta Dosage Zéro**
- <75>**Conti Bettoni Cazzago NV Tetellus, Franciacorta Brut**
- <75>**Cola NV Franciacorta Brut**
- <75>**Mirabella NV Franciacorta Brut Rosé**
- <74>**Barone Pizzini 1998 Franciacorta, Cuvée Bagnadore**

<74>Ca'del Bosco 1997 Franciacorta Satèn Brut  
<74>Ca'del Bosco NV Franciacorta Brut  
<74>Cavalleri 1998 Franciacorta Brut Satèn, Blanc de Blancs  
<74>Cavalleri 1998 Franciacorta Pas Dosé, Blanc de Blancs  
<74>Cola 1998 Franciacorta Brut  
<74>Cornaletto 1997 Franciacorta Rosé Brut  
<74>Lantieri NV Franciacorta Satèn  
<73>Cà dei Frati 1998 Cuvée dei Frati, Brut

### **Asti & Brachetto**

*Not as exciting as last year, but at least the Fontanafredda demonstrates that some big producers can compete at the highest quality level.*

<88>Fontanafredda 2001 Asti Millesimato  
<87>Arione NV Asti Dolce  
<87>Vigne Regali NV Asti, Spumante Dolce  
<84>Capetta NV Asti Dolce  
<80>Bava NV Malvasia di Castelnuovo don Bosco, Rosé Dolce  
<80>Bera 2001 Cascina Palazzo Asti  
<80>Bersano NV Asti Dolce  
<70>Bersano 1998 Arturo Bersano, Riserva Brut

### **New Zealand**

*This country vies with Australia's Tasmania as the greatest potential sparkling wine area in the Southern Hemisphere. Although the Northern Hemisphere's Loire and Burgundy regions share the same potential, they do not exploit it to the same degree. Sparkling wine producers in New Zealand and Tasmania enthusiastic and ambitious. It will be interesting to see which of these Southern Hemisphere fizz regions eventually comes out on top as the fight it out over the next couple of decades.*

<90>Montana Deutz 1996 Blanc de Blancs  
<90>Saveé 2000 Sparkling Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough  
<88>Kim Crawford Rory 1996 Brut  
<88>Hunter's 1998 Brut  
<86>Vic. Williams Selection 1997 Marlborough  
<85>Vic. Williams Selection 1998 Marlborough  
<85>Lindauer NV Special Reserve  
<85>Montana Deutz NV Marlborough Cuvée  
<80>Cuvée Virginie 1997 Marlborough  
<80>Miru Miru 1999 Brut  
<80>Morton Estate NV Premium Brut  
<80>Chauvet NV Brut  
<80>Soljans Estate 1998 Legacy Brut  
<78>Pelorus NV Marlborough  
<78>Lindauer NV Brut  
<77>Daniel No.1 NV Brut  
<75>Voyage Special Cuvée Brut NV Giesen  
<75>Lindauer NV Rosé

<75>**Fusion NV Hawkes Bay**

<74>**Elstree 1997 Brut**

## **South Africa**

*For the second consecutive year two Cap Classique wines have matched the quality of a very good Champagne. Graham Beck's Synergy is also the highest-scoring Cap Classique, while two other cuvées are within spitting distance of the magical 85-point barrier. The only problem - and it is a huge one - is that one producer is dominating the field. As stated in the previous edition, Cap Classique has the potential to develop internationally, but it won't do so until there are at least ten-times as many producers as there are now. First there was Nicky Krone, who achieved great things in the vintages of the early-1990s, but he has had many setback that I am amazed that he is still fighting away. Hopefully he won't lose his bottle [in-joke: sorry!] now that his crown has been snatched by Pieter Ferreira of Graham Beck. But only when there is a critical mass of Cap Classique producers, will they be able to push each other forward and will we will begin to know what the true potential is. This does not diminish the achievements of either Pieter or Nicky. On the contrary, it is even more impressive that they have reached this standard in isolation.*

<88>**Graham Beck 2000 Synergy, Cap Classique**

<85>**Graham Beck 1994 Pinot Noir-Chardonnay Brut (magnum)**

<84>**Graham Beck 1996 Brut Blanc de Blancs, Cap Classique**

<83>**Graham Beck 1997 Brut Blanc de Blancs, Cap Classique**

<80>**Graham Beck NV Chardonnay-Pinot Noir Brut, Cap Classique**

<77>**Tribal NV South African Sparkling Wine**

## **South America**

*Interesting to see Brazil beating Argentina, albeit in a sweet style and submissions limited to Chandon this year. Good news and bad news about South American fizz: the good news is that Chandon has given up selling domestic fizz as Champaña in Brazil and Champahna in Argentina (it only took them over 30 years to stop abusing their own name), but the bad news is that Henri Piper in Argentina is still sold as Champahna (Piper-Heidsieck has sold the company, but still owns the name and drives revenues from sales, so the hypocrisy continues).*

<80>**Chandon Brasil NB Passion**

<75>**Cuvée Spéciale Baron B. NV Rosé**

<75>**Chandon Argentina NV Brut**

<73>**Cuvée Spéciale Baron B. 1999 Brut Nature Millésimé**

<72>**Chandon Brasil NV Demi Sec**

<71>**Cuvée Spéciale Baron B. NV Extra Brut**

## **Spain**

*There are Cava fans out there who think that I hate Cava unless it has been crafted in the style of a Champagne, but I'm a Cava-sceptic, not a Cava-hater and I am perfectly willing to acknowledge quality in a Cava produced from Parellada, Macabéo and Xarel.lo grapes. The fact that most of the very best Cavas have been produced from Champagne grapes, whether pure or blended is hardly surprising: these varieties have established their credential as the best for sparkling wine throughout the world. Cava's so-called traditional grapes have not. Traditional*

*Cava fans who revere these three vin ordinaire varieties often accuse me of bias, but they tend to overlook the fact that I actually recommend more traditionally-based products than Chardonnay-based Cavas. It would be strange if I didn't. I taste hundreds of Cava every year and most are made from Parellada, Macabéo and Xarel.lo, thus it is inevitable that the majority of my recommendations are old-school Cava.*

### **Cava Brut Nature**

*Brut Nature is restricted to a maximum of three grams per litre of residual sugar. In the last edition I pointed out that I had never recommended so many Brut Nature in any category of sparkling wine, including Champagne. This year I have recommended half as many again!*

<80>**Oriol Rossell NV Cava Brut Nature**  
<78>**Ferret Reserva Antiga 1998 Cava Brut Nature Reserva**  
<78>**Torre Galimany NV Cava Brut Nature**  
<78>**Kripta Gran Reserva 1997 Cava Brut Nature**  
<78>**Vallformosa 1999 Cava Brut Nature**  
<77>**Castell d'Age Poculum Boni Genit NV Cava Brut Nature**  
<77>**Torrents Carbo 1998 Cava Brut Nature Gran Reserva**  
<77>**Gradiva NV Cava Brut Nature**  
<77>**Castell de Vilarnau 2000 Cava Chardonnay Brut Nature**  
<76>**Torrents Carbo 1998 Cava Brut Nature Gran Reserva**  
<76>**Duc de Foix 1999 Cava Brut Nature**  
<75>**Maria Casanovas 1999 Cava Brut Nature Gran Reserva**  
<75>**Marques de Gelida Gran Selecció 1996 Cava Brut Nature**  
<75>**Gramona, III Llustros 1997 Cava Brut Nature**  
<75>**Eudald Massana Noya 1998 Cava Brut Nature**  
<75>**Mont-Ferrant Blanes Nature NV Cava Extra Brut**  
<75>**Elias i Terns NV Cava Brut Nature**  
<75>**Torre Oria 1998 Cava Brut Nature**  
<74>**Huguet 1999 Cava Brut Nature**  
<74>**Gran Claustro 2000 Cava Brut Nature**  
<70>**Grimau Reserva Familiar NV Cava Brut Nature**  
<70>**Sumarroca 1999 Cava Brut Nature Gran Reserva**  
<70>**Sumarroca 1997 Cava Brut Nature Gran Reserva**  
<70>**Parató NV Cava Brut Nature**

### **Cava Extra-Brut**

*Extra-Brut may have up to six grams per litre of residual sugar. Only one recommendation this year and no coincidence I suspect that it is Masblanc again.*

<77>**Masblanc NV Cava Extra Brut**

### **Cava Brut**

*In the last edition the four highest scoring Cava Brut were all non-vintage, the year before the three highest-scoring Cavas were non-vintage, and here we can see that no less than six of the top seven are not vintaged. Are Cava producers beginning to understand the usefulness of blending wines from different years or are these wines essentially from individual vintages, but released younger?*

<85>Freixenet Trépat 1998 Cava Brut  
 <82>Freixenet NV Rosado  
 <82>Extremarium Brut de Mont-Marçal NV Cava Brut  
 <80>Chandon NV Cava Reserva Brut  
 <80>Anna de Codorníu NV Cava Brut  
 <80>Rimat NV Cava Gran Brut  
 <80>Rimat Chardonnay NV Cava Brut  
 <80>Juvé & Camps 1997 Cava Millesimé Brut  
 <80>Oriol Rossell NV Cava Brut  
 <80>Castillo de Perelada NV Cava Brut Reserva  
 <78>Aretey 2000 Cava Brut Reserva  
 <78>Huguet 1999 Cava Reserva Brut Classic  
 <78>Ferret NV Cava Brut  
 <78>Marques de Monistrol NV Reserva Selección Especial  
 <78>Marques de Monistrol NV Gran Reserva de la Familia Rosado  
 <78>Segura Viudas NV Cava Gran Brut  
 <78>Vallformosa NV Cava Brut  
 <78>Vallformosa 2000 Cava Brut Rosé  
 <78>Castell de Vilarnau NV Cava Brut  
 <76>Castell d'Age 1998 Cava Brut  
 <75>Lacrima Baccus Primerisimo Gran Cuvée 1999 Cava Brut  
 <75>Marques de Monistrol 1997 Cava Gran Reserva Privada Brut  
 <75>Raventós i Blanc 1998 Cava Brut  
 <70>Aretey NV Cava Brut

## United States of America

*California was the first New World area the champenois chose to establish a serious méthode champenoise operation, when Moët established Domaine Chandon in 1973. This state still leads the way, but with Washington and Oregon in the wings.*

<90>Domaine Carneros 1995 Le Rêve, Blanc de Blancs Brut  
 <90>L'Ermitage 1996 Brut, Roederer Estate  
 <88>DVX by Mumm Cuvée Napa 1996 Brut  
 <87>Argyle 1997 Brut  
 <87>Argyle 1996 Knudsen Vineyard Brut  
 <85>Iron Horse 1997 Classic Vintage Brut  
 <85>J 1997 Brut  
 <85>Mountain Dome 1997 Brut  
 <85>Roederer Estate NV Brut  
 <84>Roederer Estate NV Brut Rosé  
 <83>Domaine Carneros 1998 Brut  
 <82>Domaine Carneros 1998 Brut  
 <82>Domaine Carneros 1997 Brut  
 <82>Mumm Cuvée Napa 1996 Vintage Reserve Brut  
 <81>Schramsberg 1998 Blanc de Blancs  
 <80>Gloria Ferrer NV Blanc de Noirs  
 <80>Gruet 1997 Blanc de Blancs

<80>Iron Horse 1994 Blanc de Blancs  
 <80>J 1995 Brut (*magnum*)  
 <80>Mumm Cuvée Napa NV Blanc de Noirs Brut  
 <80>Schramsberg 1996 J. Schram  
 <80>Mirabelle NV Brut, Schramsberg  
 <79>Piper Sonoma NV Select Cuvée, Blanc de Noir  
 <79>Schramsberg 1998 Blanc de Noirs  
 <78>Gruet NV Brut Blanc de Noirs  
 <78>Mumm Cuvée Napa 1997 Blanc de Blancs Brut  
 <78>Schramsberg 1999 Brut Rosé  
 <77>Gruet 1998 Grande Réserve  
 <77>Iron Horse 1998 Wedding Cuvée  
 <77>Iron Horse 1992 Brut LD  
 <77>Mumm Cuvée Napa NV Brut Prestige  
 <77>Pacific Echo 1996 Blanc de Blancs  
 <76>Pacific Echo NV Brut  
 <75>Iron Horse 1996 Brut Rosé  
 <75>Pacific Echo 1997 Brut Rosé  
 <74>Gloria Ferrer NV Brut

## By style

*A comparison of some sweeter styles and red sparkling wines from across the board.*

### Sec & Extra-Sec of all abodes

*Champagne comes out on top, but Germany acquits itself well.*

<87>Louis Roederer NV Rich Sec  
 <85>E. Barnaut NV Cuvée Douceur, Sec Grand Cru  
 <82>Caves Louis de Grenelle NV Rosé Sec, Saumur  
 <80>Moët & Chandon NV White Star Extra Dry  
 <77>Winzergenossenschaft Beckstein 2000 Riesling Trocken  
 <76>Göttelmann 1999 Münsterer Kapellenberg Riesling  
**Trocken**  
 <76>Erzeugergemeinschaft Winzersekt 2000 Spätburgunder Extra Trocken Weissherbst  
 <75>Barboglio DeGaioncelli NV Franciacorta Extra Dry  
 <75>Sektellerei Am Turm NV Turm Rubin Spätburgunder Trocken  
 <74>Weingärtnergenossenschaft Lauffen 1999 Lauffener Katzenbeisser Spätburgunder  
**Trocken**  
 <73>Schloss Saarstein 1997 Riesling Trocken  
 <72>Winzerverein Deidesheim 1999 Pfalz Trocken  
 <72>Winzergenossenschaft Neuweier-Bühlertal 2000 Neuweierer Schloss Rodeck Riesling  
**Trocken**

### Demi-Sec or sweet styles of all abodes

*Again Champagne wins through, but with Loire rather than Germany the second most successful wine region.*

<88>Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin 1995 Rich Réserve

<87>Pol Roger NV Rich Special Demi-Sec  
<85>G.H. Mumm NV Demi-Sec  
<82>Oudinot NV Medium-Dry  
<80>Caves Louis de Grenelle NV Rouge Demi-Sec, Mousseux  
<80>Gruet NV Demi-Sec  
<80>Schramsberg 1999 Crémant Demi-Sec  
<77>Mas des Combes NV Gaillac Demi-Sec  
<76>Veuve Amiot NV Demi-Sec Saumur  
<75>Veuve Amiot NV Rouge Demi-Sec, Mousseux  
<72>Blanc Foussy NV Demi-Sec Touraine  
<72>Chandon Brasil NV Demi Sec  
<72>Fries 1998 Noviander Klosterberg Riesling Halbtrocken  
<72>CV de Saumur NV Cuvée Habit Pourpre, Rouge Demi-Sec  
<72>Chandon Brasil NV Demi Sec

#### **Intensely sweet styles of all abodes**

*As expected, almost totally dominated by Asti and Brachetto.*

<88>Fontanafredda 2001 Asti Millesimato  
<87>Arione NV Asti Dolce  
<87>Vigne Regali NV Asti, Spumante Dolce  
<85>Duchessa Lia NV Brachetto d'Acqui, Spumante Dolce  
<84>Capetta NV Asti Dolce  
<83>Aimery Méthode Ancestrale NV Suave et Fruité, Tête de Cuvée  
<80>Arione NV Piemonte Brachetto Dolce  
<80>Bava NV Malvasia di Castelnuovo don Bosco, Rosé Dolce  
<80>Bera 2001 Cascina Palazzo Asti  
<80>Bersano NV Asti Dolce  
<80>Chandon Brasil NB Passion  
<80>Dezzani NV Brachetto d'Acqui Dolce  
<78>Bersano NV Brachetto d'Acqui Dolce  
<78>Fontanafredda 2001 Acqui, Brachetto d'Acqui

#### **Sparkling reds of all abodes**

*Dominated by Australia, as might be expected.*

<90>Glaetzer NV Sparkling Shiraz  
<89>Charles Melton NV Sparkling Red  
<88>Chandon NV Pinot Shiraz  
<88>Yalumba 1996 D Black, Sparkling Cabernet Shiraz  
<87>Primo Estate 2001 Joseph Sparkling Red  
<86>Chandon NV Sparkling Pinot Noir Shiraz  
<85>Duchessa Lia NV Brachetto d'Acqui, Spumante Dolce  
<85>Hollick 1999 Sparkling Merlot  
<83>Aimery, La Méthode Ancestrale NV Suave et Fruité, Tête de Cuvée  
<80>Ackerman Laurance NV Rouge Cuvée Royale, Vins Mousseux  
<80>Arione NV Piemonte Brachetto Dolce

<80>**Bleasdale NV Sparkling Shiraz**  
 <80>**Knappstein 1999 Chainsaw Shiraz**  
 <80>**The Peppermint Paddock NV Red Chambourcin**  
 <80>**Dezzani NV Brachetto d'Acqui Dolce**  
 <80>**Caves Louis de Grenelle NV Rouge Demi-Sec, Mousseux**  
 <80>**Black Queen 1994**  
 <80>**Rumball NV Sparkling Merlot**  
 <80>**Rumball NV Sparkling Shiraz Special Cuvée**  
 <80>**Seppelt 1996 Sparkling Shiraz**  
 <80>**Tatachilla NV Sparkling Malbec**  
 <78>**Bersano NV Brachetto d'Acqui Dolce**  
 <78>**Bleasdale 2001 Sparkling Shiraz**  
 <78>**Banrock Station NV Sparkling Shiraz**  
 <78>**Brown Brothers 1998 Sparkling Shiraz, Milawa Vineyard**  
 <78>**Fontanafredda 2001 Acqui, Brachetto d'Acqui**  
 <76>**Leasingham Classic Clare 1994 Sparkling Shiraz**  
 <76>**Sir James NV Sparkling Shiraz**  
 <76>**Sir James NV Sparkling Shiraz**  
 <76>**Andrew Garrett 1998 Sparkling Shiraz**  
 <76>**Wingara 2000 Select Sparkling Shiraz**  
 <75>**Barossa Valley Estate 1996 E & E Sparkling Shiraz**  
 <75>**Graham Beck NV Pinotage Sparkling Red, Cap Classique**  
 <75>**Gibson's NV Sparkling Merlot**  
 <75>**Morris NV Sparkling Shiraz Durif**  
 <75>**Rumball NV Sparkling Shiraz**  
 <75>**Yalumba 1996 D Black**  
 <75>**Veuve Amiot NV Rouge Demi-Sec, Mousseux**  
 <73>**Miranda 1997 Family Reserve Sparkling Shiraz**  
 <72>**CV de Saumur NV Cuvée Habit Pourpre, Rouge Demi-Sec**

## **2003 A-Z of Tasting Notes**

### **Abelé**

Champagne Henri Abele  
 50 rue de Sillery  
 51051 Reims  
 France

**Phone** (326) 87.79.80

**Fax** (326) 87.79.81

Abelé used to be a good value source of toasty-rich Champagnes, but the following is not much to show for the wines tasted. You can buy better sparkling wines cheaper from its parent company Freixenet, and regular readers will know that I'm not exactly a fan of Cava, so that's saying something. A pity.

<84>

### **Henri Abelé NV Brut**

Fresh and creamy Bartlett pears.

Drink now-2005.

**Ackermann-Laurance**

19 rue Léopold Palustre  
St-Hilaire-St-Florent  
49400 Saumur  
France

**Phone** (241) 53.03.21

**Fax** (241) 53.03.29

Part of Remy-Pannier, which was taken over by an alliance of five Loire cooperatives in 2002.  
<75>

**Ackerman Laurance NV Cuvée Laurance, Crémant de Loire Brut**

Fresh and fruity. A good gulp.

Drink upon purchase.

<74>

**Ackerman Laurance NV Cuvée Privée, Crémant de Loire Brut**

Fresh, clean and rich.

Drink upon purchase.

<77>

**Ackerman Laurance NV Cuvée Laurance, Saumur Brut**

Creamy-citrusy aromas, with a clean expression of Chenin fruit on the palate.

Drink now-2004.

<75>

**Ackerman Laurance NV Vouvray Brut**

Fresh, clean, elegant.

Drink upon purchase.

<80>

**Ackerman Laurance NV Rouge Cuvée Royale, Vin Mousseux**

Very fruity aromas, sweet and rich. Ideal for anyone who is used to drinking Oz sparkling Shiraz wants to get into fizzy French wines.

Drink upon purchase.

**Adam-Garnotel**

Champagne Adam-Garnotel  
15 rue de Chigny  
51500 Rilly-la-Montagne  
France

**Phone** (326) 03.40.22

**Fax** (326) 03.44.47

<84>

**Adam-Garnotel NV Brut Tradition**

Copper-tinged, very young and fresh with some sherbety fruit on finish.

Drink now-2005.

**Age**

Castell d'Age

Carretera de Martorell a Capellades, 6-8  
La Beguda Baixa  
08782 Barcelona  
Spain

**Phone** (93) 7725181

**Fax** (93) 7727061

<76>

**Castell d'Age 1998 Cava Brut**

Some finesse.

Drink now-2004.

<77>

**Castell d'Age Poculum Boni Genit NV Cava Brut Nature**

Big, rich and exceptionally full-flavoured for a Cava. Good acidity. More character, though, than finesse.

Drink now-2004.

**Agrapart**

Champagne Agrapart

57 avenue Jean-Jaurès

51190 Avize

France

**Phone** (326) 57.51.38

**Fax** (326) 57.05.06

<85>

**Agrapart NV Brut Blanc de Blancs Grand Cru**

Lightly rich and creamy. Creamy mousse.

Drink now-2005.

Aimery, Sieur d'Arques

**Albrecht**

Lucien Albrecht

9 Grand'Rue

68500 Orschwihr

France

**Phone** (389) 76.95.18

**Fax** (389) 76.20.22

<76>

**Lucien Albrecht NV Riesling, Crémant d'Alsace Brut**

Soft peachy Riesling fruit on a firm mousse base.

Drink upon purchase.

**Antica Cantina Fratta**

Via Fontana

11 - 25040 Monticelli Brusati

Italy

**Phone** (30) 652661

**Fax** (30) 652661

<80>

**Antica Fratta 1995 Franciacorta Brut**

Better acidity than the 1998 (75 point in the last edition), this vintage also has lots of creamy-malo - potentially creamy-biscuity, finesse.

Drink now-2005.

<80>

**Antica Fratta NV Franciacorta Satèn Brut**

I prefer the basic brut on the nose to the floral-malo aromas here, although there is nothing actually negative about this nose, just that it does not have as much elegance. On the palate, however, the story is much different, with the extraordinary floral-fruit in this wine having all the elegance. Both will go creamy-biscuity, but this is the one that will have the finesse.

Drink now-2004.

<75>

**Antica Fratta NV Franciacorta Brut**

Fresh and elegant on the nose, with malo peeping through like a hint of toffee sauce on the palate.

Drink now-2004.

**Aretey**

Arvic Arety

Av. Barcelona, 95

08720 Vilafranca del Penedès

Spain

**Phone** (93) 310 2262

**Fax** (93) 310 0671

<78>

**Aretey 2000 Cava Brut Reserva**

Rich, violety fruity.

Drink now-2004.

<70>

**Aretey NV Cava Brut**

Sweet, elevated fruit.

Drink upon purchase.

**Argyle**

Argyle Winery

691 N. Hwy 99W

Dundee

OR 97115

**Phone** (503) 538-8520

**Fax** (503) 538-2055

<87>

**Argyle 1997 Brut**

Another Argyle vintage with elevated fruit. Although excellent, neither the 1996 (88 points) nor this vintage are as special as the Argyle's straight 1995 Brut (90 points). If Rollin Soles persists

with this lifted style he should release the wine two years younger. Only tip-top acidity has kept this at such a high quality level.

Drink upon purchase.

<87>

**Argyle 1996 Knudsen Vineyard Brut**

The quality and class has been compromised by elevated fruit aromas. If this has any lifted aromas, they have been swamped by creamy-rich, rock-solid fruit.

Drink upon purchase.

**Arione**

Via Luigi Bosca 135

14053 Canelli

Italy

**Phone** (141) 823172

**Fax** (141) 835172

<87>

**Arione NV Asti Dolce**

The intensely sweet Moscato fruit has such crisp acidity that it almost has menthol-like cooling effect (I hasten to add that there is nothing menthol or remotely minty in taste or aroma, it's a purely physical effect).

Drink upon purchase.

<80>

**Arione NV Piemonte Brachetto Dolce**

The fruit is not as rich as some of the Brachetto d'Acqui, but has a finer point acidity.

Drink upon purchase.

**Arlaux**

Champagne Arlaux Père & Fils

20 rue de la Vigne du Roi

51390 Vreigny

France

**Phone** (326) 03.60.22

**Fax** (326) 03.47.33

<87>

**Arlaux 1990 Brut**

Rich and ready. Great acidity.

Drink now-2006.

<86>

**Arlaux 1995 Brut**

Attractive, firm-fruited Champagne with a touch of exotic aroma, and heaps of acidity.

Drink now-2006.

<84>

**Arlaux NV Brut**

Fresh, fruity, creamy mousse.

Drink now-2006.

**Arnould**

Champagne Michel Arnould & Fils

28 rue de Mailly

51360 Verzenay

France

**Phone** (326) 49.40.06

**Fax** (326) 49.44.61

<86>

**Michel Arnould NV Rosé Brut Grand Cru**

The *cuvée* due to be released in September 2002 is everything you could wish for in an easy-drinking, uncomplicated, fruity rosé, with deliciously fresh strawberry Verzenay Pinot Noir on the finish.

Drink now-2005.

<85>

**Michel Arnould NV Brut Grand Cru**

The release due out in September 2002 is much finer, fresher and fruitier than the overly oxidative current *cuvée*.

Drink now-2004.

<85>

**Michel Arnould NV Réserve Brut Grand Cru**

The *cuvée* I tasted was a pre-release sample of the next release due in December 2002 and it obviously needs a little ageing, but has lovely Pinot Noir fruit dominating.

Drink 2004-2007.

**Auche**

Champagne Ch. de l'Auche

Coopérative Vinicole

51390 Janvry

France

**Phone** (326) 03.63.40

**Fax** (326) 03.66.93

<90>

**Ch. de l'Auche 1996 Nectar de St Rémi, Brut**

Wonderful violet fruit with sublime creamy-vanilla finish.

Drink now-2008.

**Ayala**

Champagne Ayala

2 Boulevard du Nord

51160 Ay-Champagne

France

**Phone** (326) 55.15.44

**Fax** (326) 51.09.04

<84>

**Ayala 1993 Brut Millésimé**

Very young for a 1993. Obviously recently disgorged.

Drink 2004-2007.

**Bardoux**

Champagne Bardoux  
5-7 rue Saint-Vincent  
51390 Villedommange  
**Phone** (326) 49.25.35  
**Fax** (326) 49.23.15

<?>

**Bardoux NV L'An 2000 Brut**

Fizzy oak-sap in a gaudy blue bottle. For colour-blind lovers of 4x2 only.  
Drink upon purchase.

**Barnaut**

Champagne Barnaut  
13 rue Pasteur  
51150 Bouzy  
France  
**Phone** (326) 57.01.54  
**Fax** (326) 57.09.97

<85>

**E. Barnaut NV Rosé Authentique, Brut Grand Cru**

Cherry-coloured and cherry-flavoured Pinot Noir fruit dominating.  
Drink now-2005

<85>

**E. Barnaut NV Cuvée Douceur, Sec Grand Cru**

Very fruity, albeit somewhat elevated, with tangy pineapple notes, and a medium-sweet finish.  
Drink upon purchase.

<85>

**E. Barnaut NV Grande Réserve, Brut Grand Cru**

The nose needs to come together, but the palate has gently rich, pineapple fruit (unusual for Bouzy), with a soft, sweet ripeness on the finish.

Drink now-2005.

<77>

**E. Barnaut NV Sélection, Extra Brut Grand Cru**

If this wine had more acidity, more dosage, less oxidative treatment and no malolactic, it would score 87 rather than 77.

Drink now-2006.

**Baron Albert**

Champagne Baron Albert  
Grand Porteron  
02310 Charly-sur-Marne  
France  
**Phone** (323) 82.02.65  
**Fax** (323) 82.02.44

<85>

**Cuvée Jean de la Fontaine 1996 Brut Millésime**

Very fine, floral aromas, with rich fruit underneath. The fruit is not classic Champagne, although the acidity is.

Drink now-2004.

<85> **La Préférence de Baron Albert 1994 Brut Millésime** One of the better 1994s, ironically this is cleaner and better focused than other generally superior vintages of La Préférence, with a very crisp, clean finish. Drink now-2004.

<85>

**Baron Albert NV Brut Rosé**

Fresh, crisp and vital, with excellent acidity and a chewy-creaminess on the finish.

Drink now-2004.

**Barone Pizzini**

Via Brescia

25050 Timoline di Cortefranca

Italy

**Phone** (30) 984136

**Fax** (30) 9884650

Barone Pizzini

<74>

**Barone Pizzini 1998 Franciacorta, Cuvée Bagnadore**

A rich-flavoured cuvée that needs a lighter touch for more elegance and finesse.

Drink upon purchase.

<85>

**Barone Pizzini 1999 Franciacorta Satèn**

True Satèn *barrique*-fermented fruit supported by true Satèn-smooth mousse, all lemons and limes, with splendid acidity.

Drink now-2005.

<78>

**Barone Pizzini NV Franciacorta Brut**

Fresh, lemony fruit that will go toasty-lemoney.

Drink now-2004.

**Barossa Valley Estate**

Heaslip Road

Angle Vale

SA 5117

Australia

**Phone** (8) 8284 7000

<75>

**Barossa Valley Estate 1996 E & E Sparkling Shiraz**

The deepest coloured sparkling Shiraz of the tasting, with some oxidative aromas, bags of fruit and a rich oak finish. Definitely in the oak-driven mould.

Drink now-2005.

**Baumard**

Domaine des Baumard  
8 rue de l'Abbaye  
49190 Rochefort-sur-Loire  
France

**Phone** (241) 78.70.03

**Fax** (241) 78.83.82

<80>

**Baumard 2000 Brut Millésime, Crémant de Loire**

Has finesse on nose, but needs 6-9 months for palate to catch up.  
Drink now-2004.

<80>

**Baumard NV Carte Turquoise, Crémant de Loire Brut**

Very fresh, slightly peppery, but quite attractive fruit. Excellent acidity.  
Drink upon purchase.

<82>

**Baumard NV Carte Corail, Crémant de Loire Brut Rosé**

Excellent aperitif style rosé from 100% Cabernet franc. Finely focused finish.  
Drink now-2004.

**Baur**

4 rue Roger Frémeaux  
68420 Voegtlinshoffen  
France

**Phone** (389) 49.30.97

**Fax** (389) 49.21.37

<74>

**Charles Baur NV Crémant d'Alsace Brut**

The current 1999-based cuvée is lovely and fresh with attractive apple-blossom fruit and good, clean acidity.

Drink upon purchase.

**Bava**

Strada Monferrato 2  
14023 Cocconato  
Italy

**Phone** (141) 907083

**Fax** (141) 907085

<80>

**Bava NV Malvasia di Castelnuovo don Bosco, Rosé Dolce**

More flavour than most Brachetto d'Acqui, but not as fresh and crisp as in the last edition (85 points).

Drink upon purchase.

**Bearsted Vineyard**

Caring Lane

Bearsted  
Maidstone  
Kent  
Great Britain  
**Phone** (1622) 736974  
**Fax** (1622) 736974  
<80>

**Bearsted 1997 Brut**

The pre-release sample was excellent, with lots of lovely fresh fruit. It shows what can be achieved with primarily Seyval (80%) in some English vineyards. Not my favourite grape, although it is probably my favourite amongst the French hybrids and German crosses that infest English vineyards. None of these grapes will figure prominently in the future of top class English wine, but when the quality is as obvious, only biased old fool would ignore it.  
Drink upon purchase.

**Beaumont des Crayères**

Champagne Beaumont des Crayères  
64 rue de la Liberté  
Mardeuil 51318 Epernay  
France  
**Phone** (326) 55.29.40  
**Fax** (326) 54.26.30  
<85>

**Beaumont des Crayères NV Grand Rosé Brut**

A serious rosé with rich, creamy, yeast-complexed fruit on the finish, but will go oxidative if kept, so drink on purchase.  
Drink upon purchase.  
<85>

**Beaumont des Crayères NV Demi-Sec Grande Réserve**

Elegantly rich, vanilla-infused fruit.  
Drink upon purchase.

**Beck, Graham**

Graham Beck Wines  
Robertson 6705  
South Africa  
**Phone** (23) 626 1214  
**Fax** (23) 626 5164  
<85>

**Graham Beck 1994 Pinot Noir-Chardonnay Brut, Cap Classique** (*magnum*)

I cannot believe this fresh, breezy, succulently fruity wine is eight years old and hails from baking hot Robertson.  
Drink now-2004.  
<84>

**Graham Beck 1996 Brut Blanc de Blancs, Cap Classique**

Almost as classy as in the last edition, but I'm not sure if this is going to go biscuity or, perhaps, a tad malty. Drink it while it's at its best.

Drink upon purchase.

<83>

**Graham Beck 1997 Brut Blanc de Blancs, Cap Classique**

This new release is a touch lifted, but with very serious, creamy-rich fruit underneath. I envisage this going creamy-brazilnut-biscuity, but unless the acidity can be tweaked at dosage stage I suggest drinking within a few months of purchase.

Drink now-2005.

<88>

**Graham Beck 2000 Synergy, Cap Classique**

I tasted a pre-release sample of this wine, which was not due to be disgorged until May 2003 and was blown away by the concentration and potential complexity. New products are impossible to predict and I suspect my score could be grossly underrated.

Drink 2004-2006.

<80>

**Graham Beck NV Chardonnay-Pinot Noir Brut, Cap Classique**

The lifted fruit aromas remind me of in the last edition's Cuvée Two Thousand, as does the strawberry-Pinot fruit that dominates the palate, but the colour is pale, without any hint of the copper-tinge that marked that wine. I was going to drop this one point, but the fruit improves from one glass to the next.

Drink upon purchase.

<75>

**Graham Beck NV Pinotage Sparkling Red, Cap Classique**

High-toned and lifted makes this less exciting than the pre-release sample tasted a couple of years ago, but interesting winegum fruit with some tannic grip on the finish.

Drink upon purchase.

**Becker**

Jean Becker

68340 Zellenberg

France

**Phone** (389) 47.90.16

**Fax** (389) 47.99.57

<80>

**Jean Becker NV Crémant d'Alsace**

Can't say that Alsace does not have fruit!

Drink upon purchase.

Winzergenossenschaft Beckstein

Weinstrasse 30

97922 Lauda-Königshofen

Germany

**Fax** (9343) 5000

**Fax** (9343) 5277

<77>

**Winzergenossenschaft Beckstein 2000 Riesling Trocken**

This wonderfully fresh, clean and crisp wine stood out from an ocean of miserable not-so-clean Trocken Sekte.

Drink now-2004.

**Bellavista**

Via Bellavista  
5 - 25030 Erbusco  
Italy

**Phone** (30) 7762000

**Fax** (30) 7760386

<83>

**Bellavista 1997 Franciacorta, Gran Cuvée Brut**

An elegant wine with fruit so fresh and clean and young.

Drink now-2004.

<82>

**Bellavista NV Franciacorta, Gran Cuvée Satèn**

The best-ever Bellavista Satèn I've tasted. I have recommended Bellavista Gran Cuvée Satèn before, but I have always qualified my recommendation with the observation that there is nothing about the wine that would distinguish it from others as Satèn. What is Satèn? Well, the only thing it claims to be is low-pressure, like a true *crémant*, hence 'satin' texture of the mousse. In time, if Satèn is to be a distinctive and distinctly superior wine within the DOCG, it will also possibly come to mean selected grapes that have been *barrique*-fermented, but at the moment *crémant* is the only obligation. No previous Bellavista Satèn could be described as such, but L0152 certainly is and this emphasises its finesse.

Drink upon purchase.

<75>

**Bellavista NV Franciacorta Cuvée Brut**

Apple-blossom aromas followed by rich, green-apple fruit. Will go toasty.

Drink upon purchase.

**Bera**

Cascina Palazzo  
Azienda Agricola Cascina Palazzo  
Via Castellero N 12  
Neviglie 12050  
Italy

**Phone** (173) 630194

**Fax** (173) 630394

<80>

**Bera 2001 Cascina Palazzo Asti**

Rich and tasty, if a touch elevated.

Drink upon purchase.

**Berlucchi Fratelli**

Via Broletto

2 - 25050 Borgonato di Cortefranca

Italy

**Phone** (030) 984451

**Fax** (030) 9828209

<75>

**Fratelli Berlucchi 1995 Casa delle Colonne, Franciacorta Brut**

Fratelli Berlucchi's wines are usually too rustic for my taste. The curious thing is that they all have lovely cushiony mousse. This usually adds finesse to a sparkling wine, which only makes me wonder how rustic they would be without such a smooth mousse. There's a rustic, almondy quality to the fruit in this *cuvée*, but it has good acidity, better focus and more finesse than any of the others.

Drink upon purchase.

**Bersano**

Piazza Dante 21

14049 Nizza Monferrato

Italy

**Phone** (141) 721273

**Fax** (141) 701706

<70>

**Bersano 1998 Arturo Bersano, Riserva Brut**

Attractively fruity on nose and initial palate, but could do with finer acidity on the finish. Good, smooth mousse.

Drink upon purchase.

<80>

**Bersano NV Asti Dolce**

Rich and tasty, if a touch elevated.

Drink upon purchase.

<78>

**Bersano NV Brachetto d'Acqui Dolce**

Raspberry-ripple fruit.

Drink upon purchase.

**Besserat de Bellefon**

Champagne Besserat de Bellefon

19 Avenue de Champagne

51205 Epernay

France

**Phone** (326) 59.51.00

**Fax** (326) 59.51.19

<86>

**Besserat de Bellefon 1996 Brut**

High acids.

Drink 2004-2007.

<86>

**Besserat de Bellefon NV Cuvée des Moines Rosé**

Deliciously soft Chardonnay dominating, even though just 20 per cent of the blend. This is the best example of this Champagne I have tasted since it was sold as Crémant des Moines under Pernod-Ricard ownership.

Drink 2004-2007.

**Bestheim**

3 rue du Gal de Gaulle

68630 Bennwihr

France

**Phone** (389) 49.09.29

**Fax** (389) 49.09.20

<82>

**Bestheim 2000 Crémant d'Alsace Brut**

A very good fizz with exceptional acidity, but this acidity masks the VA, which is why I do not recommend it for keeping.

Drink upon purchase.

<80>

**Bestheim NV Crémant d'Alsace Brut**

This 2000-based cuvée is fresh and crisp with elegant fruit and nice, although not particularly high, acidity.

Drink upon purchase.

**Bethany Wines**

PO Box 245

Tanunda

SA 5352

Australia

**Phone** (8) 8563 2086

**Fax** (8) 8563 0046

<78>

**Bethany Wines 1998 Barossa Cuvée Chardonnay Pinot Noir Brut**

Oxidative biscuity richness.

Drink now-2004.

**Beyer**

Maison Emile Beyer

7 place du Château

68420 Eguisheim

France

**Phone** (389) 41.40.45

<76>

**Emile Beyer NV Crémant d'Alsace Brut**

A good, toasty-rich 1999-based cuvée supported by excellent acidity and a firm mousse of fine bubbles.

Drink upon purchase.

**Bickensohl**

Wg. Bickensohl  
Neunlindenstrasse 25  
79235 Vogtsburg - Bickensohl  
Germany  
**Phone** (7662) 93110  
**Fax** (7662) 931150  
<72>

**Winzer-genossenschaft Bickensohl 1999 Spätburgunder Brut**

Some talcum power Pinot.  
Drink upon purchase.

**Billecart-Salmon**

Champagne Billecart-Salmon  
40 rue Carnot  
51160 Mareuil-sur-Aÿ  
France  
**Phone** (326) 52.60.22  
**Fax** (326) 52.64.88

Not only is the quality of Billecart-Salmon one of Champagne's best-known secrets, this is one of the few houses to do the sensible thing and release the 1997s before the 1996s.

<95>

**Billecart-Salmon 1990 Grande Cuvée, Brut**

So fresh, it's wonderful, and the fruit has such potential complexity.  
Drink now-2018.

<90>

**Billecart-Salmon 1995 Blanc de Blancs**

Seductively rich and succulent fruit, the typical description of Billecart-Salmon's style?  
Drink now-2006.

<85>

**Billecart-Salmon 1997 Cuvée Nicolas François Billecart, Brut**

This might well jump several points in the future, since the oxidative character on the nose suggests that it has not been disgorged at the optimum moment, but there is no denying the quality of the rich fruit on the palate.

Drink 2004-2007.

<87>

**Billecart-Salmon NV Brut Rosé**

Fresh, rich and creamy, with admirable depth of fruit for such an elegant balance.  
Drink now-2004.

<86>

**Billecart-Salmon NV Brut Réserve**

Light, fresh and fluffy, with noticeably more length of fruit than most Champagnes of this relatively light body. Beautifully focused fruit, acidity and finesse.  
Drink now-2006.

**Billiot**

Champagne Henri BILLIOT

1 place de la Fontaine

51150 Ambonnay

France

**Fax** (326) 52.76.61

<86>

**H. Billiot Fils 1995 Brut Grand Cru**

The best of elevated fruit.

Drink upon purchase.

**Bimbadgen Estate**

Lot 21 Mc Donalds Road

Pokolbin

NSW 2321

Australia

**Phone** (2) 4998 7585

**Fax** (2) 4998 7732

<75>

**Bimbadgen Estate NV Hunter Valley Sparkling Pinot Noir Chardonnay**

Herbal-infused fruit, nice acidity, with Earl Grey aromas on the finish.

Drink now-2004.

**Binet**

31 rue de Reims

51500 Rilly-la-Montagne

**Phone** (326) 88.05.00

**Fax** (326) 88.05.05

<89>

**Binet 1995 Brut**

Bagful of fruit, lovely silky-mature depth and finesse.

Drink now-2008.

**Blanc Foussy**

Les grandes caves Saint-Roch

65 quai de la Loire

37210 Rochecorbon

France

**Phone** (247) 40.40.20

**Fax** (247) 52.65.82

<72>

**Blanc Foussy NV Touraine Brut**

Lemony fizz with small bubbles. Dry with lemony-acid finish.

Drink upon purchase.

<72>

**Blanc Foussy NV Demi-Sec Touraine**

Not too sweet. Very tangy greengage fruit.

Drink upon purchase.

**Blaul**

Weingut Alfred Blaul  
Hofgut Goennheim  
Ludwigstrasse 52  
67161 Goennheim  
Germany

**Phone** (6322) 8533

**Fax** (6322) 66060

<72>

**Weingut Alfred Blaul, Hofgut Gönheim NV Pinot Extra Brut**

Very pale apricot colour (no hint on label), soft strawberry fruit.

Drink upon purchase.

**Bleasdale**

Bleasdale Vineyards  
Wellington Road  
Langhorne Creek  
SA 5255  
Australia

**Phone** (8) 8537 3001

**Fax** (8) 8537 3224

<78>

**Bleasdale 2001 Sparkling Shiraz**

Simple but pleasing creamy-jammy fruit.

Drink now-2004.

<80>

**Bleasdale NV Sparkling Shiraz**

Creamy-oaky with raspberry fruits. More finesse than the 2001 vintage.

Drink now-2005.

**Bléger**

Domaine Bléger Claude  
23 Grand'Rue  
67600 Orschwiller  
France

**Phone** (388) 92.32.56

**Fax** (388) 82.59.95

<76>

**Domaine Claude Bléger NV Crémant d'Alsace Brut**

Crisp, fresh, pineapple fruit when first released, this wine ages very nicely for up to one year in bottle, adding a creamy richness to the mid-palate.

Drink now-2004.

**Blin, H.**

Champagne H. Blin  
5 rue de Verdun  
51700 Vincelles  
France  
**Phone** (326) 58.20.04  
**Fax** (326) 58.29.67  
<88>

**H. Blin 1996 Brut**

When freshly disgorged, this fresh, fluffy Champagne has an excellent concentration of fruit and shows even better than Blin's 1995, but after one year's post-disgorgement ageing it goes through an intermediate stage when it gains in complexity, yet loses finesse and needs more time to regain this (which it will).  
Drink now-2008.

<85>

**H. Blin NV Brut Rosé**

Almost a Strawberry Cup!  
Drink upon purchase.

<85>

**H. Blin NV Brut Tradition**

Very rich for weight. This has been a very consistent cuvée for at least five years, but it is always better on foreign markets such as the UK, where it receives extra landed-age and it is obvious that it will go creamy-biscuity. In France, however, this cuvée can be so raw and estery that is sometimes hard to imagine just how good it will turn out to be. French buyers with English tastes should keep well-celled for at least one year.  
Drink now-2006.

**Blondel**

Champagne Th. Blondel  
Les Monts Fournois  
51500 Ludes  
France  
**Phone** (326) 03.43.92  
**Fax** (326) 03.44.10  
<83>

**Th. Blondel 1995 Vieux Millésime, Chardonnay, Brut Premier Cru**

Malo-softened, creamy fruit. Will go biscuity.  
Drink now-2004.

<83>

**Th. Blondel 1998 Blanc de Blancs Millésime, Brut Premier Cru**

Due to be released in September 2002, this vintage has fine, crisp, clean fruit, but does not have the creaminess of the 1995.  
Drink now-2005.

**Blue Pyrenees Estate**

Vinoca Road  
Avoca

Vic. 3467

Australia

**Phone** (3) 5465 3202

**Fax** (3) 5465 3529

After almost 40 years of ownership, Blue Pyrenees was sold in late-October 2002 to John Ellis, a merchant banker, and Bill Anderson, a Sydney-based property developer and hotelier.

<80>

**Blue Pyrenees 1998 Chardonnay Pinot Noir Pinot Meunier**

Excellent concentration.

Drink now-2005.

<80>

**Blue Pyrenees 1998 Midnight Cuvée Chardonnay**

Intense fruit, a touch VA-lifted, but it's tasty, so obviously works.

Drink now-2005.

**Boizel**

Champagne Boizel

14 rue de Bernon

51200 Epernay

France

**Phone** (326) 55.21.51

**Fax** (326) 54.31.83

<90>

**Boizel 1989 Joyau de Chardonnay, Cuvée des Auctionnaires Brut**

It is two years since I have tasted this and the evolution is quite noticeable, going from 'exceptional finesse and complexity ... with a Pinot-like structure, particularly on the finish' to deeply Chardonnay with hints of *barrique*-fermented qualities that were not evident two years ago. The finesse is almost as much as before, the complexity even greater, with nuances of walnut and coconut emerging, while overall it has jumped up one percentile point in quality. Furthermore, there is every indication that the finesse, which is no means absent, will one day return even more strongly than before.

Drink now-2011

<90>

**Boizel 1990 Cuvée sous Bois, Brut**

Interesting: after two years of finding Cuvée Sous Bois so oxidative that I have describe it as 'Boizel meets Bollinger', it has emerged beautifully and with finesse. That's not to say there are no oxidative elements to it because there are, but they do not figure as dominant in the overall complex scheme of things.

Drink now-2006.

<88>

**Boizel 1991 Joyau de France, Brut**

The last edition's 'early-picked fruit' has transmogrified into peachy Chardonnay, helping the score to edge up one percentile point. Nice acids on the aftertaste suggest further improvements to come, plus a completely subjective feeling that this could turn into something special.

Drink 2004-2009.

<90>

**Boizel 1996 Grand Vintage, Brut Millésime**

This serious quality 1996 misses out on an even higher score in the 90s for no other reason than it should have been kept on yeast for at least another year or two. This is a great Champagne that could have been greater. I optimistically look forward to a later release.

Drink now-2009.

<85>

**Boizel NV Rosé Brut**

As fresh as a daisy, with bags of soft-strawberry, crisp-raspberry fruit.

Drink now-2004.

<90>

**Boizel NV Chardonnay Brut Blanc de Blancs**

The current blend of 1992 and 1993 is wonderfully mature and mellow, with creamy-rich Chardonnay fruit, which should go creamy-biscuity with brazilnut complexity.

Drink now-2007.

<87>

**Boizel NV Brut Réserve**

Rich and stylish with elegant fruit and superb acidity makes for a refreshing, bracing even, aperitif style of Champagne that also works well at the table. The last edition's cuvée developed a rich biscuitiness of true complexity by the end of 2001.

Drink now-2007.

**Bollinger**

Champagne Bollinger

16 rue Jules Lobet

51160 Ay-Champagne

France

**Phone** (326) 54.33.66

**Fax** (326) 54.85.59

After 25-odd years I am beginning to wonder whether the rosé style fits the Bollinger character. Maybe Madame Lily was right? She once declared that 'Champagne is a white wine' to emphasise that Bollinger would never make a rosé. What I think would be interesting would be a Bollinger *blanc de blanc*. A Vieilles Vignes Françaises Blanc de Blancs would be awesome!

<91>

**Bollinger 1990 R.D. Extra Brut**

One bottle of the RD disgorged on 12 December 2001 had a mushroom aroma, the other did not. The RD version of this outstanding vintage (92 points as a Grande Année in 2000 edition) is softer and less complex to a perfectly aged Grande Année 1990.

Drink 2004-2009.

<91>

**Bollinger 1992 Grande Année, Brut**

Intensely flavoured, barrel-fermented Champagne of very high quality. Piercing acidity.

Drink now-2021.

<97>

**Bollinger 1995 Grande Année, Brut**

Everything that stood out in the instantly complex, hugely intense, fruit-infused pre-release sample in the last edition has emerged with even more class, complexity and finesse this year.

Drink now-2023.

<97>

**Bollinger 1996 Grande Année, Brut**

The power and majesty! Drink now-2030.

<90>

**Bollinger 1995 Grande Année Rose, Brut**

Bollinger must have renewed some casks in 1995 because the oakiness is almost Selosse-like in its dominance (but without any of the raw estery character). Very rich fruit with an amazingly long aftertaste. This will keep, but is best drunk as young and as fresh as possible.

Drink now-2004.

<99>

**Bollinger 1996 Vieilles Vignes Françaises, Blanc de Noirs Brut**

Pre-release sample. Beginnings of massive fruit. Very intense. Oak showing.

Drink 2004-2010.

<85>

**Bollinger 1996 Grande Année Rosé, Brut**

The oak really stands out.

Drink now-2013.

<90>

**Bollinger NV Special Cuvée, Brut** (*magnum*)

Magnums and bottles of Special Cuvée are always like chalk and cheese, with no surprises this year, which is very much like in previous editions, with its nose chock-a-block full of autolysis and a staggering amount of acidity shoring up the fruit on the palate.

Drink 2004-2011.

<88>

**Bollinger NV Special Cuvée, Brut**

Big, rich and as clean as a whistle, with a lovely concentration of pristine fruit. Those who are addicted to Special Cuvée's blatantly oxidative style of old will be disappointed, but others like me can only be impressed by the purity and intensity of this wine, which reveals its aged components discreetly as part of a slow-building complexity on the finish and aftertaste.

Drink now-2008.

**Bonnaire**

Champagne Bonnaire

120 rue d'Épernay

51530 Cramant

France

**Phone** (326) 57.50.85<90>

**Bonnaire 1996 Cuvée Prestige, Blanc de Blancs Grand Cru**

Stunningly rich, crisp and vivacious, with intense, zippy-zingy fruit supported by great acidity. Probably has some barrel-fermented content, although there is nothing oaky about this pristine wine at all. My only reservation is a whisper of lifted fruit, which does not affect the enjoyment value, hence the high score, but does make me cautious about its potential longevity.

Drink now-2005.

**Bonnet**

Champagne Alexandre Bonnet  
138 rue du Général-de-Gaulle  
10340 Les-Riceys  
France

**Phone** (325) 29.30.93

**Fax** (325) 29.38.65

<85>

**Alexandre Bonnet 1995 Blanc de Blancs, Brut**

Really quite powerful creamy-crisp flavours building in the mouth.

Drink now-2006.

<85>

**Alexandre Bonnet NV Perle Rosée, Brut**

Rich, full-flavoured rosé for the table.

Drink upon purchase.

<82>

**Alexandre Bonnet NV Grande Réserve, Brut**

Crisp and clean with assertive mousse.

Drink now-2005.

<82>

**Alexandre Bonnet NV Blanc de Noirs, Brut**

Very fresh, clean and correct, this survived my tastings whereas some famous Champagnes did not. However, it lacks the sort of mid-palate weight or finesse that would be needed for a higher score.

Drink now-2005.

<85>

**Alexandre Bonnet NV Cuvée Prestige**

Light and fresh with lots of clean fruit.

Drink now-2005.

**Bouillot**

Domaine Louis Bouillot  
Rue des Frères Montgolfier  
21 700 Nuits-Saint-Georges  
France

**Phone** (380) 62.61.08

**Fax** (380) 62.37.38

Part of Varichon et Clerc (Savoie).

<84>

**Louis Bouillot 1998 Perle Noire, Blanc de Noirs, Brut Millésimé**

This rich, ripe, tasty, very fruity sparkling wine has excellent acidity and could almost be Champagne. Bouillot is based in Nuits-St.-George and I've not been impressed by its Crémant de Bourgogne in the past, which makes this a most pleasant surprise. In fact, after scoring it so high, I put it in the middle of a Champagne *blanc de noirs* tasting and I marked it just as high. Very good, Pinot Noir and Gamay, only the presentation lets it down. The same label lower down on a non (cheaply) embossed bottle without such an ornate neck label would look so much more classy.

Drink upon purchase.

### **Boulard**

Champagne Raymond Boulard  
Route Nationale 44  
F-51220 Cauroy-les-Hermonville  
France

**Phone** (326) 61.50.54

**Fax** (326) 61.54.92

<85>

### **Raymond Boulard NV Cuvée Rosé Brut**

Big and rich with a touch lifted fruit mingling with oxidative complexity, finishing up creamy. One for the table, but drink, don't keep.

Drink upon purchase.

<85>

### **Raymond Boulard NV Brut Tradition**

The current release has crisp, refreshing fruit that hints of pineapples and is lifted by fine acidity. The next cuvée, due out in February 2003, is a very different kettle of fish, with oak showing on the nose and softer, fuller, richer fruit on the palate. Although not over-oaked or raw and estery, as Selosse often is, Francis has hit what I believe to be the maximum amount of oak for any of his wines. If anything, he should back-pedal a bit. If he does, then the tamed-down oak could lift the score of this wine into the 90s. As it stands, both the current release and the next cuvée (a blend 1997, 1998 and 1999 as it happens) rate an identical 85 points for quality, although markedly different in style.

Drink now-2005.

### **Boursault**

Champagne Château de Boursault  
Boursault 51480 prés Epernay

**Phone** (326) 58.42.21

**Fax** (326) 58.66.12

<86>

### **Château de Boursault 1994 Blanc de Blancs Brut**

Exceptionally good for 1994.

Drink 2004-2005

<84>

### **Château de Boursault NV Brut Tradition**

A relatively light style that is fresh and fruity, the Brut Tradition always benefits from 12 months extra ageing.

Drink 2004-2005

<85>

### **Château de Boursault NV Rosé Brut**

When you taste the current cuvée you might well think "So what?", but if you cellar it for 2-3 years, it will repay dividends. It always does. The dark-coloured 1996-based Rosé Brut (Lot No. 16 10 98 11 09) has been stored in my own cellar since 1999 and is now starting to show

potential four years later, with its beautiful cherry-strawberry fruit gaining finesse with every bottle I open.

Drink 2005-2006

**Bouvet**

Bouvet Ladubay  
1 rue de l'Abbaye  
St-Hilaire-St-Florent  
49400 Saumur  
France

**Phone** (241) 83.83.83

**Fax** (241) 50.24.32

<89>

**Bouvet Ladubay 1999 Tresor, Brut Saumur**

Fresh, elegant aromas over fine, well-structured, creamy-tangy fruit. Although this is a top-top score for French fizz outside of Champagne, the 1999 vintage drops one percentile point over the 1998, due to the latter's finer acidity.

Drink now-2004.

**Braun**

Vignobles Camille Braun  
16 Grande Rue  
68500 Orschwihr  
France

**Phone** (389) 76.95.20

<76>

**Camille Braun NV Riesling, Crémant d'Alsace Brut**

The rich pineapple fruit in this Crémant d'Alsace helps it to stick out from the crowd, but is pineapple an expression of Riesling fruit? I think not. I think the pineapple in this 1998-based cuvée is an expression of VA-lifted fruit, but it works well enough in a fizz that's not going to be cellared.

Drink upon purchase.

**Breaky Bottom Vineyard**

Rodmell  
Lewes  
Sussex  
Great Britain

**Phone** (1273) 476427

**Fax** (1273) 476427

<78>

**Breaky Bottom, Millennium Cuvée Maman Mercier 1996 Cuvée Réserve Brut**

Serious Seyval fizz and so young for 1996.

Drink now-2004.

<78>

**Breaky Bottom 1999 Cuvée Réserve Brut**

The greenness on the pre-release sample of this wine (due to be launched in September 2002) would have worried me once, but it is much less noticeable on the palate than on the nose and having seen how this characteristic was present on Peter Hall's Cuvée Maman Mercier two years ago and had disappeared within a year, I'm happy to put it down as a developmental stage. Particularly as the fruit is so lovely. Wonderfully fresh, almost luscious. The mousse is velvety-smooth.

Drink upon purchase.

### **Bredasole**

Bredasole di Ferrari Giacomo

Via S. Pietro

42 - 25030 Paratico

**Phone** (35) 910407

**Fax** (35) 910407

<80>

### **Bredasole 2000 Franciacorta Satèn**

The pre-release sample of this vintage showed great promise for elegance. The oak that is beginning to insinuate itself on this style is noticeable, but certainly not obtrusive.

Drink now-2004.

<77>

### **Bredasole NV Franciacorta Brut**

Bags of fruit supported by refreshing acidity. Will go toasty.

Drink 2004-2006.

<74>

### **Bredasole NV Franciacorta Extra Brut**

White peach and green almond fruit. Should go toasty.

Drink now-2004.

### **Breuer**

Georg Breuer

Geisenheimerstrasse 9

65385 Rüdesheim-am-Rhein

Germany

**Phone** (6722) 1027

**Fax** (6722) 4531

<80>

### **Weingut Georg Breuer 1994 Georg Breuer Brut**

This excellent crisp blend provides a good stepping stone between Sekt and Champagne.

Champagne style with German expressiveness.

Drink now-2004.

<76>

### **Weingut Georg Breuer 1999 Riesling Brut**

Rich, nicely balanced fruit. More ripeness than most at this level.

Drink now-2005.

### **Brice**

Champagne Brice  
3 rue Yvonnet  
51150 Bouzy  
France  
**Phone** (326) 52.06.60  
**Fax** (326) 57.05.07

Jean-Paul Brice was one of the three owners of Barancourt before it was sold to Vranken. A quiet, intellectual type, Jean-Paul specialises in what was the most successful concept of Barancourt in its hey day, a range of mono-*cru* Champagnes.

<87>

**Brice NV Bouzy Grand Cru Brut**

Big, rich and tangy, with heaps of Pinot fruit.  
Drink now-2006

**Bricout**

Champagne Bricout  
Ancien Château d'Avize  
51190 Avize  
France  
**Phone** (326) 53.30.00  
**Fax** (326) 57.59.26

Part of the group La Financière Martin until financial problems forced its sale to the US-owned Luxembourg investment company Opson Schneider. Pierre Martin, ex-chairman and CEO of La Financière Martin, which owned Champagnes Bricout and Delbeck, was charged with fraud, fraudulent bankruptcy and breach of trust. The group's financial director, Louis Fariello and Epernay-based wine broker, Luc Lhermitte, were also charged. The new owners had discovered that over half of Bricout and Delbeck's €85 million turnover was from sales of *vins sur lattes*. This involved speculation on a massive scale (6.2 million bottles compared to the groups annual sales of less than 2 million). When Opson-Scheider took over, it found the company had not been able to meet its payments for two months. On April 24, Bricout and Delbeck filed for bankruptcy with estimated liabilities of €100m. With rights to some 400 hectares of vineyards at stake, Bricout-Delbeck will either end up in the Vranken portfolio or be swallowed up by LVMH, which will keep the vineyard contracts and sell off the brands.

<87>

**Bricout 1992 Brut Réserve**

Rich, serious.  
Drink now-2007.

<84>

**Bricout NV Brut Réserve**

Fresh, clean, easy.  
Drink now-2005.

**Brizé**

Domaine de Brizé  
49450 Martigné-Briand  
France

**Phone** (241) 59.43.35

**Fax** (241) 59.66.90

<78>

**Domaine de Brizé NV Brut Rosé, Saumur**

Clean, crisp and gluggy with peppered strawberries for fruit. Peppered strawberries. Clean, crisp and gluggy.

Drink upon purchase.

<82>

**Domaine de Brizé NV Saumur Brut**

Delicious, fruity, very Loire, very focused, absolutely clean and tangy.

Drink upon purchase.

**BRL Hardy**

Reynella Winery

Reynell Road

Reynella

SA 5161

Australia

**Phone** (8) 8392 2222

**Fax** (8) 8392 2202

<76>

**Leasingham Classic Clare 1994 Sparkling Shiraz**

Sweet jammy richness.

Drink now-2004.

<79>

**Arras 1995 Pinot Noir Chardonnay**

Oak showing through and tannins on the finish, but this is the first year that I have been able to recommend this multi-medal winning vintage. Initially I did not like its maltiness and unripe acids, but although these characteristics were gradually buried beneath the effects of autolysis and post-disgorgement aromas, the wine was still foursquare and lacking in finesse right up to mid-2001. In November, however, it started to come around and by April 2002 it was as good as it is going to get. Much has to do with the base wine used for the dosage of the most recent shipments, I suspect, but it took a long time getting there and still does not warrant more than a silver medal in my estimation.

Drink now-2004.

<81>

**Arras 1997 Chardonnay Pinot Noir**

Within a few months the same disgorgement had gone from fresh and fluffy to toasty, but it is a big improvement over the high-profile, low-selling 1995 Arras, particularly at the same stage of its life. When this wine has been properly tuned, I would like to see it released much younger.

Drink now-2005.

<75>

**Bay of Fires 1997 Pinot Noir Chardonnay**

Toasty rich, bottle mature.

Drink now-2004.

<80>

**Kamberra Tumbarumba 1999 Pinot Noir Chardonnay**

The fruit in this wine is finer and firmer than Kamberra Meeting Place, thus not as approachable, but Tumbarumba will be the better wine after a couple of years, even though both score equally for current drinking.

Drink now-2005.

<77>

**Nottage Hill 1999 Riverland Sparkling Chardonnay Brut**

Crisp-fruity aromas and fresh, crisp, sherbety fruit.

Drink now-2004.

<77>

**Yarra Burn 1999 Pinot Noir Chardonnay Pinot Meunier**

Fruit-driven, gluggy, but could work on the finesse.

Drink now-2004.

<80>

**Meeting Place 2000 Pinot Noir Chardonnay, Kamberra**

Light and fluffy with fresh, creamy fruit, a very soft mousse, excellent acidity and a perfumed finish.

Drink upon purchase.

<78>

**Banrock Station NV Sparkling Shiraz**

Fresher and more fruit-driven than most, this is an easy-drinking, rich and sweet wine brimming with black fruits when first released, but after a few months it gradually develops a talcum powder quality to the fruit, especially on the finish.

Drink now-2004.

<78>

**Omni NV Brut**

Fruity, easy-drinking with soft, sweetish fruity finish.

Drink now-2004.

<78>

**Sir James 1997 Vintage Pinot Noir Chardonnay**

Fruity with a contradictory ripe-green edge.

Drink now-2005.

<76>

**Sir James NV Sparkling Shiraz**

Sweet red fruits, quite oaky, but very rich fruit and balanced in its own way.

Drink upon purchase.

**Brown Brothers**

Gorton Drive

Mystic Park

Vic. 3581

Australia

**Phone** (3) 5457 9233

**Fax** (3) 5457 9426

<77>

**Brown Brothers 1996 King Valley Whitlands Pinot Chardonnay Brut**

Biscuity-rich fruit with the merest malty touch.

Drink now-2005.

<78>

**Brown Brothers 1996 Pinot Noir Chardonnay Brut, Milawa Vineyard**

Very soft mousse, ultra-fine bubbles, with delicate, creamy-going-biscuity-apple fruit.

Drink now-2005.

<75>

**Brown Brothers 1998 Pinot Noir Chardonnay, Milawa Vineyard**

Stewed fruits.

Drink now-2005.

<78>

**Brown Brothers 1998 Sparkling Shiraz, Milawa Vineyard**

Rich, mellow aroma, some oakiness.

Drink now-2005.

<78>

**Brown Brothers NV King Valley Sparkling Pinot Noir & Chardonnay**

Good fruit, clean, fine acidity. Should develop toasty-biscuity aromas.

Drink now-2005.

**Brugnon**

Champagne P. Brugnon

16 rue Carnot

51500 Rilly-la-Montagne

France

**Phone** (326) 03.44.89

**Fax** (326) 03.46.02

<86>

**P. Brugnon NV Cuvée Elégance, Brut Premier Cru**

So rich and nicely acidic that it almost stains the palate! Elegant new presentation.

Drink now-2006.

<85>

**P. Brugnon NV Brut Premier Cru**

Earlier in the year this was very freshly disgorged, but its youthful fruit had excellent construction and promised to make a very fine non-vintage within just a few months. By June it had fulfilled this promise.

Drink 2004-2007.

<85>

**P. Brugnon NV Brut Rosé Premier Cru**

Nice, easy-drinking, strawberry fruit.

Drink 2004-2007.

**Brulez**

Champagne Brulez

14 grande rue

10360 Noe-les-Mallets

France

**Phone** (325) 29.61.39

<88>

**Louis Brison 1996 Cuvée Tendresse, Brut**

No malolactic in this rich, fresh, intensely flavoured wine, with its concentrated fruit hinting of peaches and a suggestion of barrel-fermentation, although no oak is evident.

Drink now-2005.

<87>

**Louis Brison 1996 Cuvée Germain Brulez, Millésime Brut** (*magnum*)

Powerful autolytic aromas followed by pristine fruit underscored by fresh and almost flashy acidity. Great mousse.

Drink now-2007.

<87>

**Louise Brison 1998 Millésime Brut**

No malolactic in this vintage either and you can tell from its springtime fresh aromas and the deliciously crisp, clean fruit supported by lively acidity on the palate.

Drink now-2005.

**Brun, Roger**

Champagne Roger BRUN

1 impasse de St-Vincent

51160 Ay-Champagne

France

**Fax** (326) 54.09.40

<89>

**Roger Brun NV Brut Réserve**

Soft and fruity, lovely cushiony mousse.

Drink now-2006.

**Brun de Neuville, Le**

Champagne Le Brun de Neuville

Route de Chantemerle

Bethon 51260 Anglure

France

**Phone** (326) 80.48.43

**Fax** (326) 80.43.28

<89>

**Le Brun de Neuville 1992 Millésime Brut**

A biscuity-rich Champagne that is ideal for current drinking, yet has room for further development. Has complexity, fruit and finesse.

Drink now-2008.

**Brun Family Estate, Le**

Rapaura Road

Rapaura

Blenheim

New Zealand

**Phone** (3) 572 9876

**Fax** (3) 572 9875

<80>

**Cuvée Virginie 1997 Marlborough**

Intense fruit, will go toasty. Long aftertaste.

Drink now-2006.

<77>

**Daniel No.1 NV Brut**

The current release in mid-2002 had a lovely mousse, but the crisp fruit had a green edge (75 points), but the next release showed no greenness, although the pre-release sample I tasted was understandably estery, needing more time on yeast.

Drink 2004-2007.

**Buecher**

Paul Buecher

15 rue Ste Gertrude

68920 Wettolsheim

France

**Phone** (389) 80.64.73

**Fax** (389) 80.58.62

<78>

**Jean-Claude Buecher NV Crémant d'Alsace Brut**

This 2000-based is lovely and fresh, with bags of carefully lifted fruit, supported by fine acids and a smooth mousse. Sealed with silicone-based cork.

Drink upon purchase.

**Buhl**

Weingut Reichsrat von Buhl

Weinstrasse 16-24

67146 Deidesheim

Germany

**Phone** (6326) 965019

**Fax** (6326) 965024

<80>

**Reichsrat von Buhl 1997 Forster Pechstein Riesling Brut**

Excellent richness, acidity and freshness. Some peachiness.

Drink now-2005.

<78>

**Weingut Reichsrat von Buhl 1998 Weissburgunder Extra Brut**

Very fresh, flowery aromas; rich fruit, great acidity mid-palate.

Drink upon purchase.

**Cà dei Frati**

Via Frati 22

25010 Lugana di Sirmione

Italy

**Phone** (30) 919468

**Fax** (30) 919468

<73>

**Cà dei Frati 1998 Cuvée dei Frati, Brut**

Fat and rich. Could have been really good if it had less sulphur and more acidity.

Drink now-2004.

**Ca'del Bosco**

Via Case Sparse

20 - 25030 Erbusco

Italy

**Phone** (30) 7766111

**Fax** (30) 7268425

<80>

**Ca'del Bosco 1995 Cuvée Annamaria Clementi**

A very good Franciacorta, but not in the same class as the 1994 (85 points), although it will improve over the next few years.

Drink 2004-2007.

<78>

**Ca'del Bosco 1997 Franciacorta Brut**

Rich, fresh, sliced-apple fruit that builds in the mouth, then quickly falls away. This should lengthen with a little bottle-age.

Drink now-2004.

<75>

**Ca'del Bosco 1997 Franciacorta Dosage Zéro**

Malo aromas are lost, thankfully, on the palate, which is crisp, with a firm structure and focused fruit.

Drink upon purchase.

<74>

**Ca'del Bosco 1997 Franciacorta Satèn Brut**

This vintage of Satèn is malo-influenced whereas the 1996 was fresh, crisp and sherbety in style. The latter was better in pure quality terms, but neither style is right for Satèn, which should really be a superior Franciacorta. Ca'del Bosco's Cuvée Annamaria Clementi is perfect Satèn style, but that is a special *cuvée* in its own right. Perhaps Maurizio should be trying to make a lesser version of that great wine for his Satèn?

Drink upon purchase.

<74>

**Ca'del Bosco NV Franciacorta Brut**

Fresh, apple-blossom fruit. Needs six month's ageing to tame the mousse.

Drink upon purchase.

**Cadel**

Champagne Guy Cadel

13 rue Jean Jaurès

51530 Mardeuil

France

**Phone** (326) 55.24.49

**Fax** (326) 54.63.15

<90>

**Guy Cadel 1996 Brut**

Beautiful fruit, super-silky mousse, blissful!

Drink now-2008.

<85>

**Guy Cadel NV Grande Réserve Brut**

Rich and tasty with good acidity. Will go biscuity.

Drink now-2005.

<84>

**Guy Cadel NV Carte Blanche Brut**

This has good, characterful flavour rather than any particular finesse.

Drink now-2005.

**Camel Valley Vineyard**

Little Denby Farm

Nanstallon

Bodmin

Cornwall

PL30 5LG

Great Britain

**Phone** (1208) 77959

**Fax** (1208) 77959

Bob Lindo was the first to mention the Christopher Merret story on the back label of an English sparkling wine. Merret was the first to record the deliberate addition of sugar to guarantee a second fermentation to create a sparkling wine, in London six years before Dom Pérignon set foot in Hautvillers and more than 40 years before the French claim the revered monk invented Champagne.

<74>

**Camel Valley 2001 Cornwall Brut**

Getting fatter, would prefer crisper acidity.

Drink upon purchase.

<74>

**Camel Valley 2000 Cornwall Brut**

A tad amylic.

Drink upon purchase.

<74>

**Camel Valley 1998 Cornwall Brut**

Bob Lindo does not keep back any stocks, not even a small library for his own evaluation, so this came via a friend who served it at his daughter's wedding and had kept back a few bottles. Still very fresh and enjoyable

Drink upon purchase.

<78>

**Camel Valley 2001 Cornwall Pinot Noir**

Very fresh, silky-soft red fruits. This rosé style can handle the soft acidity much better than the brut.

Drink upon purchase.

**Can Feixas**

Canaletes 08785

Cabrera d'Anoia

Spain

**Phone** (93) 771 8227

**Fax** (93) 771 8031

<78>

**Huguet 1999 Cava Reserva Brut Classic**

Succulently fruity.

Drink upon purchase.

<74>

**Huguet 1999 Cava Brut Nature**

Rich flavoured, good acidity.

Drink upon purchase.

**Can Pujol**

C. del Duc de la Victoria 9

08770 Sant Sadurní d'Anoia

Spain

**Phone** 893) 1535

**Fax** (814) 3063

<77>

**Torrents Carbo 1998 Cava Brut Nature Gran Reserva**

Same name as below, but made with traditional Cava grapes, this is clean, gentle, but it is the persistence of its fruit that raises this wine above the norm.

Drink upon purchase.

<76>

**Torrents Carbo 1998 Cava Brut Nature Gran Reserva**

This cuvée is 100% Chardonnay. It is fresh and zesty with creamy fruit, but not quite as good as the Brut Nature Gran Reserva made from traditional Cava grapes.

Drink upon purchase.

**Canard-Duchêne**

Champagne Canard-Duchêne

1 rue Edmond Canard

Ludes le Coquet

51500 Rilly-la-Montagne

France

**Phone** (326) 61.10.96

**Fax** (326) 61.13.90

<83>

**Canard-Duchêne NV Brut**

Neither spectacular nor bad, this is good basic pouring Champagne.  
Drink now-2005.

**Capetta**

C.so Piave 140  
S. Stefano Belbo  
Italy

**Phone** (39) 0141 843282

**Fax** (39) 0141 843277

<84>

**Capetta NV Asti Dolce**

Fresh, rich and delicious, with a lovely mousse.  
Drink upon purchase.

**Cardmember Wines**

New Zealand Wine Society  
Level 4, Quay Tower  
29 Customs Street West  
Auckland 1015  
New Zealand

**Phone** (0800) 809463

Cardmember, aka the New Zealand Wine Society, is part of Beringer Blass, and Vic. Williams is the Cellar Director of the New Zealand Wine Society.

<86>

**Vic. Williams Selection 1997 Marlborough**

Rich, toasty, high acidity.

Drink now-2005.

<85>

**Vic. Williams Selection 1998 Marlborough**

Intense fruit flavour, nice structure. Should develop well.

Drink now-2006.

**Carneros**

Domaine Carneros  
1240 Duhig Road  
Napa  
CA 94558  
USA

**Phone** (707) 257 0101

**Fax** (707) 257 3020

<90>

**Domaine Carneros by Taittinger 1995 Le Rêve, Blanc de Blancs Brut**

This is as good as the 1993 and 1994 (both of which scored 90 points at their peak and were in a completely superior class to the 19992 first release), but with a few vintages under my belt, I now see this as a great sparkling wine that should not be cellared. Some of these vintages can

retain their high ratings if late-disgorged, but whenever Le Rêve is disgorged, please drink it within 12 months.

Drink upon purchase.

<?>

**Domaine Carneros by Taittinger 1996 Le Rêve, Blanc de Blancs Brut**

Not yet released, the pre-release sample I tasted was not as impressive as other pre-release vintages of Le Rêve and a couple of days in the refrigerator did not clarify the matter (it's not a fool-proof test). I still have this feeling though Wait and see.

<82>

**Domaine Carneros by Taittinger 1997 Brut**

I was not impressed by this first time around, but I detected something promising. The second bottle was exactly the same, so I re-sealed it and left it in the refrigerator for a couple of days. I like the result! This creamy-malo wine will not age long, but will go creamy-biscuity and needs one year to settle down.

Drink 2004-2006.

<83>

**Domaine Carneros 1998 Brut**

This is the UK landed version (i.e., no "By Taittinger" prominent on the label), which is as expected very similar, except curiously the mousse is much smoother and softer.

Drink upon purchase.

<82>

**Domaine Carneros by Taittinger 1998 Brut**

Not quite the same silkiness of mousse, but could turn out better than the Brit-landed version if kept one year.

Drink now-2004.

**Casanovas**

Maria Casanovas Roig

Montserrat 117

08770 Sant Sadurní d'Anoia

Spain

**Phone** (93) 8910812

**Fax** (93) 8911572

<75>

**Maria Casanovas 1999 Cava Brut Nature Gran Reserva**

Fluffy-creaming. Good strength of fruit.

Drink upon purchase.

**Castel Faglia**

Loc. Boschi

3 - Fraz. Calino 25046 Cazzago S.M.

Italy

**Phone** (59) 812411

**Fax** (59) 812424

<82>

**Monogram 1994 Franciacorta Brut Millesimato**

Distinctive lemony-oaky fruit, excellent acidity. I've tasted Satèn with harsher mousses (and this one has tiny bubbles, they're just firm rather than creamy), but if it were smoother this would make a top class Satèn indeed.

Drink upon purchase.

<77>

**Castel Faglia NV Franciacorta Extra Brut**

Fresh elegant fruit floating on a smooth mousse of tiny bubbles.

Drink upon purchase.

**Castell'sches Domänenamt**

Fürstlich Castell'sches Domänenamt

Schloßplatz 5

97355 Castell

Germany

**Phone** (9325) 60160

**Fax** (9325) 60188

<79>

**Fürstlich Castell'sches Domänenamt NV Schloss Castell Riesling Brut**

Attractive peachy Riesling aromas, showing some bottle age on nose, but very fresh on palate.

Drink now-2004.

**Castellane**

Champagne de Castellane

57 rue de Verdun

51204 Epernay

France

**Phone** (326) 51.19.19

**Fax** (326) 54.24.81

<85>

**Vicomte de Castellane 1995 Croix Rouge Brut Millésime**

A very gluggy 1995.

Drink now-2006.

<85>

**Vicomte de Castellane NV Chardonnay Brut**

Lovely lemony-toasty fruit that is best drunk now, but can be kept a year or so for those who like toast on their toast. Fresh, crisp acidity. Really quite long and satisfying.

Drink now-2004.

<84>

**Vicomte de Castellane NV Croix Rouge Brut Millésime**

This did not stand out at the 2002 Annual Champagne Tasting, although it was technically okay, but the sample submitted to my blind tasting had far more persistence of flavour and a particularly smooth mousse.

Drink now-2004.

<82>

**Vicomte de Castellane NV Brut Rosé**

The 2002 UK shipment was for lovers of toasty Champagnes only, while the 2003 release had no toastiness and was rich and satisfying, but not special.  
Drink now-2004.

**Castellino**

Tenuta Castellino  
Via S. Pietro  
46 - 25030 Coccaglio  
Italy  
**Phone** (30) 7721015  
**Fax** (30) 7701240

<77>

**Tenuta Castellino Bonomi 1996 Franciacorta Millesimato**

Toasty nose with fresh, soft, citrusy fruit on the palate. Hint of peaches mid-palate.  
Drink upon purchase.

<77>

**Tenuta Castellino Bonomi 1998 Franciacorta Brut**

Lemony fruit quietly going toasty.  
Drink upon purchase.

**Cattier**

Champagne Cattier  
6 & 11 rue Dom Pérignon  
51500 Chigny-les-Roses  
France  
**Phone** (326) 03.42.11  
**Fax** (326) 03.43.13

<86>

**Clos du Moulin NV Brut Premier Cru, Cattier**

If true to form, this blend of 1990, 1993 and 1995 will get better and better, but at the moment its mellowed bouquet is far too much in advance of the sherbet-lemon fruit on the palate.  
Drink 2004-2007.

**Cattin**

Cattin Frères  
19 rue Roger Frémeaux  
68420 Voegtlinshoffen  
France  
**Phone** (389) 49.30.21  
**Fax** (389) 49.26.02

<?>

**Brut Cattin NV Crémant d'Alsace**

Not sure how to score this wine because I received two samples with the same label, both with additional handwritten labels, one claiming to be 100% Auxerrois, the other 100% Pinot Blanc. Whether they are sold as such, I don't know, but the Auxerrois was much the best on the nose, although it lacked fruit and acidity on the palate, whereas the Pinot Blanc was dumb, almost dull

on the nose, yet had excellent fruit and acidity on the palate. However, a 50/50 blend on the spot was second best on nose, with better balanced fruit and more finesse on the palate than either pure varietal blend. Just goes to show that the Alsace tradition of blending these two grapes is a very practical one.

Drink upon purchase.

### **Cavalleri**

Via Provinciale  
96 - 25030 Erbusco  
Italy

**Phone** (30) 7760217

**Fax** (30) 7267350

<74>

### **Cavalleri 1998 Franciacorta Brut Satèn, Blanc de Blancs**

Quite sweet with elevated fruit.

Drink upon purchase.

<74>

### **Cavalleri 1998 Franciacorta Pas Dosé, Blanc de Blancs**

The lack of dosage is compensated by rich, lifted fruit.

Drink upon purchase.

### **Cazanove**

Champagne Charles de Cazanove  
1 rue des Cotelles  
51204 Epernay  
France

**Phone** (326) 59.57.40

**Fax** (326) 54.16.38

<90>

### **Charles de Cazanove 1995 Brut Azur, Premier Cru**

Great malo-style richness, very creamy and although the malo is obvious - not at all off-putting, the opposite in fact.

Drink now-2006.

<85>

### **Charles de Cazanove NV Cuvée Cazanova Brut**

No, it's not a typo, this cuvée is named after the infamous Cazanova with an "a" rather than Cazanove with an "e". It was originally called Grande Réserve An 2000, which received 90 points in the 2001 edition. This wine still has the same Harlequin label, but not the silkiness of fruit or creaminess of mousse. It is a much crisper style and although not in the same class as the original Grande Réserve An 2000, which is starting to go creamy-biscuity, it is nevertheless a very nice Champagne.

Drink upon purchase.

<85>

### **Charles de Cazanove NV Brut Rosé**

Very elegant fruit.

Drink now-2006.

**Cazzago**

Conti Bettoni Cazzago  
Via Marconi  
6 - 25046 Cazzago S. Martino  
Italy

**Phone** (30) 7750875

**Fax** (30) 7750875

<78>

**Conti Bettoni Cazzago 1994 Tetellus, Franciacorta Brut Millesimato**

If you can get around the sulphur on the nose of this wine, you will be rewarded by seriously structured fruit of extraordinary freshness on the palate. Pity about the sulphur, but then it is probably responsible for keeping the fruit so fresh on the palate.

Drink upon purchase.

<75>

**Conti Bettoni Cazzago NV Tetellus, Franciacorta Brut**

Bags of fruit, but needs more acidity, which would give it more finesse.

Drink upon purchase.

**Cep, El**

Vins El Cep  
Can Llopart de les Alzines  
08770 Sant Sadurní d'Anoia  
Spain

**Phone** (938) 912 352

**Fax** (938) 183 956

<75>

**Marques de Gelida Gran Selecció 1996 Cava Brut Nature**

Strong flavours.

Drink upon purchase.

**Champalou**

Didier Champalou  
7 rue Grand Ormeau  
37210 Vouvray  
France

**Phone** (247)52 6449

**Fax** (247)52 6799

<82>

**Champalou NV Vouvray Brut**

Very elegant, lightly fruity, creamy aromas, delicate sweet fruit on finish.

Drink upon purchase.

**Chandon (Argentina)**

Bodegas Chandon Argentina  
Ruta Prov. 15

Agrelo  
Luján de Cuyo CP5509  
Mendoza  
Argentina

**Phone** (54) 261-4909900

**Fax** (54) 261-4909989

<73>

**Cuvée Spéciale Baron B. 1999 Brut Nature Millésimé**

Soft and clean with a creamy mousse.

Drink upon purchase.

<75>

**Chandon Argentina NV Brut**

Rich, vinous fruit with crispness mid-palate and a smooth, creamy mousse.

Drink upon purchase.

<75>

**Cuvée Spéciale Baron B. NV Rosé**

Rich, toasty fruit with excellent core-acidity and a soft mousse.

Drink upon purchase.

<71>

**Cuvée Spéciale Baron B. NV Extra Brut**

Surprisingly vinous and well-structured fruit, with a soft, creamy mousse.

Drink upon purchase.

**Chandon (Australia)**

Domaine Chandon  
Green Point  
Maroondah Highway  
Coldstream  
Vic. 3770  
Australia

**Phone** (3) 9739 1110

**Fax** (3) 9739 1095

<84>

**Chandon NV Brut**

Nice and fresh , with good autolysis on the nose, exotic fruits and high acids on the palate. I think this is the first time I have preferred Chandon Australia's non-vintage to its straight vintage.

Drink upon purchase.

<75>

**Chandon 1997 Blanc de Noirs**

Strawberries and cherries.

Drink upon purchase.

<81>

**Green Point by Chandon 1997 Vintage Brut Rosé**

This vintage has really built up toasty aromas since the last edition.

Drink upon purchase.

<87>

**Chandon 1998 Vintage Brut**

Excellent. Gorgeous fruit and acidity. Best yet.

Drink upon purchase.

<78>

**Chandon 1999 Vintage Brut**

Too fat. Would be good from elsewhere, but a step backwards from Domaine Chandon.

Drink upon purchase.

<87>

**Chandon 1998 Blanc de Blancs**

Deliciously fruity with a perfumed aftertaste when first disgorged this wine develops a rich, creamy-biscuity complexity.

Drink upon purchase.

<87>

**Chandon 1998 Rosé**

Juicy strawberry fruit. So gluggy!

Drink upon purchase.

<87>

**Green Point by Chandon 1998 Vintage Brut**

Oodles of fruit, very creamy and sumptuous. The most decadent fizz from Green Point so far.

Drink upon purchase.

<77>

**Green Point by Chandon 1998 Vintage Brut Rosé**

Nice, but nowhere as stunning as the same wine downunder.

Drink upon purchase.

<86>

**Chandon NV Sparkling Pinot Noir Shiraz**

Pure cherry Pinot Noir fruit with Shiraz relegated to supporting role (structure). Not too sweet. Nice tannins.

Drink upon purchase.

<86>

**Chandon 1997 Cuvée Riche**

Tony Jordan poured this for me at the 2002 London Wine Trade Fair and it was the first time that I had come across a vintaged version of Cuvée Riche. It had really sumptuous creamy-Pinot-strawberry fruit, already nicely mellowed, yet with the potential to age even further.

Drink now-2008.

<88>

**Chandon NV Pinot Shiraz**

The 2000-based has wonderful Pinot fruit aromas and classy Shiraz structure. The best vintage by far of this sparkling red, but when is Chandon going to have the nerve to produce a 100% Pinot Noir, like the very first Australian sparkling burgundies?

Drink upon purchase.

**Chandon (Brasil)**

Chandon do Brasil

Av. Brazil 1814

01430-000 Jardim Europa

Sao Paulo  
Brazil  
**Phone** (11) 3062 8388  
**Fax** (11) 3061 9756

<72>

**Chandon Brasil NV Demi Sec**

Amylic fresh, with clean, sweet fruit. Much preferred to the Brut and Brut Reserve, which seemed to be in danger of breaking up.

Drink upon purchase.

<80>

**Chandon Brasil NB Passion**

Brazilian Asti with cream and honeycomb on the finish.

Drink upon purchase.

**Chandon (Spain)**

Cavas Chandon  
Mas Chandon  
08798 Sant Cugat Sesgarrigues  
Spain

**Phone** (93) 897.0505

**Fax** (93) 897.0459

<?>

**Chandon 1997 Cava Gran Reserva Brut**

Could be from anywhere. Fruit is too green.

Wait and see.

Chandon (Spain)

<72>

**Chandon NV Cava Brut Nature**

Well-aged less than fully ripe fruit.

Drink now-2004.

<80>

**Chandon NV Cava Reserva Brut**

Fluffy-fruity.

Drink upon purchase.

**Chanoine**

Champagne Chanoine  
Avenue de Champagne  
51100 Reims  
France

**Phone** (326) 36.61.60

**Fax** (326) 36.66.62

<84>

**Chanoine NV Grande Réserve Brut**

This year's blend has some concentration of fruit and an indication that it will age quite well, but I would like to see more liveliness of fruit and a fluffier mousse.

Drink now-2006.

<85>

**Tsarine NV Rosé Brut, Chanoine**

You must keep this one year in order to blow away the hint of banalising amylic aroma and reveal a serious rosé underneath. Lovely, smooth, cushiony mousse.

Drink 2004-2006.

<87>

**Tsarine NV Tête de Cuvée Brut, Chanoine**

Has the richness of a Tête de Cuvée, the character of a good grower Champagne and if left on yeast another year, it would have the finesse and cushiony mousse of a prestige cuvée.

Drink now-2007.

<89>

**Tsarine 1995 Brut, Chanoine**

A lovely richness of fruit.

Drink now-2007.

**Charbaut**

Champagne Guy Charbaut

12 rue du Pont

51160 Mareuil-sur-Aÿ

France

**Phone** (326) 52.80.59

**Fax** (326) 51.91.49

<89>

**Guy Charbaut 1995 Memory**

Memory harks back to the classic, slow-maturing Charbaut Certificate when Guy Charbaut and his late-brother René were owners of their own négociant house. This firm was taken over by Vranken, who utilised its prestigious premises on Epernay's avenue de Champagne, relegating its brand to secondary label status. I am impressed by this rich, vanilla-infused *blanc de blancs*, the only quibble being lifted fruit aromas on the finish. What intrigues me is that if Guy can achieve this quality with the 1995 vintage, when his basic *millésimé* rated only 84 points (in the 2002 edition), what will his 1996 Memory be like, when the basic version of that vintage scored 88 points?

Drink now-2009.

<88>

**Guy Charbaut 1996 Brut**

Rich fruit with oodles of classic 1996 acidity. Excellent potential, should go toasty.

Drink now-2009.

<82>

**Guy Charbaut NV Brut**

Characterful rather than elegant. Has quite a richness of fruit, but rather rustic.

Drink now-2005.

**Chartogne-Taillet**

Champagne Chartogne-Taillet

37-39 Grande Rue

51220 Merfy

France

**Phone** (326) 03.10.17

**Fax** (326) 03.19.15

<85>

**Chartogne-Taillet NV Cuvée Sainte-Anne Brut**

Classic blended Champagne (70% 1998 plus 30% reserves from 1995 and 1996), with the sweetness of ripe fruit, rather than dosage, dominating the finish.

Drink now-2006.

<85>

**Chartogne-Taillet NV Cuvée Sainte-Anne, Blanc de Blancs**

Although no vintage is claimed, the current cuvée is pure 1997. The creamy-herbal fruit will go biscuity. It is typical Chartogne-Taillet and very specific to Chardonnay grown northwest of Reims.

Drink now-2005.

**Cloudy Bay**

Jacksons Road

Blenheim

New Zealand

**Phone** (3) 572 8914

**Fax** (3) 572 8065

<78>

**Pelorus NV Marlborough**

Fat and creamy with a good fizz.

Drink now-2004.

**Clouet**

Champagne André Clouet

8 rue Gambetta

Bouzy 51150 Tours-sur-Marne

France

**Phone** (326) 57.00.82

**Fax** (326) 51.65.13

<82>

**Paul Clouet NV Brut Rosé**

Fresh yet bottle-aged cherry flavoured Pinot fruit, this rosé finishes well, but is let down by the aftertaste, otherwise it would easily have scored 85-plus.

Drink upon purchase.

**Codorníu**

Gran Via Les Corts Catalanes 644

08007 Barcelona

Spain

**Phone** (93) 301.4600

**Fax** (93) 301.7129

<80>

**Anna de Codorníu NV Cava Brut**

Very easy going. Fresh, light, elegant.

Drink upon purchase.

<80>

**Raimat NV Cava Gran Brut**

Rich and sherbety, smooth foamy mousse.

Drink now-2004.

<80>

**Raimat Chardonnay NV Cava Brut**

Smooth, creamy-sherbety fruit.

Drink now-2004.

**Cola**

Cola Battista

Via Dosso Oriane

11 - 25030 Adro

Italy

**Phone** (030) 7356195

**Fax** (030) 7356195

<74>

**Cola 1998 Franciacorta Brut**

Really quite toasty.

Drink upon purchase.

<75>

**Cola NV Franciacorta Extra Brut**

Fresh, elegant, albeit somewhat lifted, fruit.

Drink upon purchase.

<75>

**Cola NV Franciacorta Brut**

Soft, fresh fruit supported by a lovely cushiony mousse.

Drink upon purchase.

**Collet**

Champagne Raoul Collet

14 boulevard Pasteur

51160 Ay-Champagne

France

**Phone** (326) 55.15.88

**Fax** (326) 54.02.40

<83>

**Raoul Collet 1993 Carte d'Or Brut**

Peachy fruit, but low dosage requires a little loosening up.

Drink 2004-2007.

<88>

**Raoul Collet 1995 Carte d'Or Brut (*magnum*)**

Like the fruity 75cl bottle, but with more autolysis, thus will ultimately gain far more finesse.  
Drink now-2008.

<85>

**Raoul Collet 1995 Carte d'Or Brut**

Very fruity, easy drinking, excellent acidity.  
Drink now-2006.

<85>

**Raoul Collet NV Carte Perle, Brut 1er Cru**

Big toasty aromas on the nose followed by crisp, lemony fruit. For toast-lovers only, although this has such good acidity it is elegant and not at all heavy, full or blowsy.  
Drink now-2004.

<83>

**Raoul Collet NV Brut Rosé**

Rich, tasty, firm cherry fruits, but will go oxidative, so drink, do not keep.  
Drink upon purchase.

<88>

**Raoul Collet NV Carte Rouge Brut Millésime (*magnum*)**

I wish I could tell you the obligatory EU Lot number of the magnum I tasted, but I cannot and it was not for lack of looking! The 75cl bottle-size did not warrant recommendation, but the magnum most certainly does. It's chock-a-block full of autolytic finesse on the nose and possesses a formidable attack of fresh, crisp, vital fruit on the palate. Terrific acidity, excellent depth, great length and finish. What more do you want? As for the EU Lot number, it probably does not matter, since the champenois tend to put more magnums through their bottling lines at a time than they can sell in one year, thus you stand every chance of buying exactly the same wine within the first few months of publication at least.

Drink now-2007.

**Contadi Castaldi**

Fornace Biasca - Via Colzano  
32 - 25030 Adro  
Italy

**Phone** (30) 7450126

**Fax** (30) 7450322

<77>

**Contadi Castaldi 1997 Franciacorta Satèn**

Lesson learned! The touch of early-picked fruit detected in the last edition's preview sample is not present in the final commercial product. A developmental phase only. This is really quite rich and satisfying, with peaches and plums in the fruit and a true Satèn mousse. The rosé, not recommended, had absolutely no colour, although that was not the reason for its rejection.  
Drink upon purchase.

**Cornaletto di Lancini Luigi**

Via Cornaletto  
2 - 25030 Adro  
Italy

**Phone** (30) 7450507

**Fax** (30) 7450552

<74>

**Cornaletto 1997 Franciacorta Rosé Brut**

Soft raspberry-cherry fruit supported by a smooth mousse.

Drink upon purchase.

**COVIDES**

CV del Penedès Sociedad Cooperativa Catalana

Ram Nostra Senyora 45

08720 Vilafranca del Penedès

Spain

**Phone** (93) 817.2552

**Fax** (93) 817.1798

<76>

**Duc de Foix 1999 Cava Brut Nature**

Rich, lemony fruit with a touch of furniture polish (in the nicest of senses!)

Drink now-2004.

**Cranswick Estate**

Walla Avenue

Griffith

NSW 2680

Australia

**Phone** (2) 6962 4133

**Fax** (2) 6962 2888

<75>

**Aldridge Estate NV Sparkling Brut**

Very fresh, fruity and easy-drinking with a good, medium firm mousse.

Drink upon purchase.

**Crawford**

Kim Crawford Wines

Dominion Road

Auckland

New Zealand

**Phone** (9) 630 6263

**Fax** (9) 630 6293

<88>

**Kim Crawford Rory 1996 Brut**

Delicious fruit. Sumptuous. Lengthy.

Drink now-2005.

**Cray**

Chapelle de Cray

37400 Lussault-sur-Loire

France

This property belongs to English wine shipper Paul Boutinot.

<76>

**Chapelle de Cray 1998 Brut Vintage, Montlouis**

Fresh and more fruity than previous vintages with honeyed-sweetness on finish.

Drink now-2004.

**Curbastro**

Ricci Curbastro

Via Adro

37 - 25031 Capriolo

Italy

**Phone** (30) 736094

**Fax** (30) 7460558

<80>

**Ricci Curbastro 1998 Franciacorta Extra Brut**

Oak a bit dominant, but a lovely mousse that's quite firm and lively, yet smooth with tiny bubbles. I'd like to see freshness and finesse pushed ahead of the oak.

Drink upon purchase.

<84>

**Ricci Curbastro 1999 Franciacorta Satèn Brut**

This was submitted as 1999, but has not been vintaged before. Definitely 1999, whether the bottle indicates a vintage or not. Rich *barrique* aromas integrating with the fruit. The mousse is not as firm as in the last edition, but not as smooth as the year before. If this were packaged differently (i.e., more understated and classy), the perception would be equally different.

Drink now-2005.

**Currabridge**

An own label belonging to UK shipper Siegel Wine Agencies.

<76>

**Currabridge NV Brut**

Very fresh and frothy with rich, yummy fruit and a soft mousse.

Drink upon purchase.

<76>

**Currabridge NV Rosé Brut**

Just as fruity as the Brut, but slightly drier and more perfumed.

Drink upon purchase.

**D'Arenberg Wines**

PO Box 195

McLaren Vale

SA 5171

Australia

**Phone** (8) 8323 8206

**Fax** (8) 8323 8423

<80>

**The Peppermint Paddock NV Red Chambourcin**

Crisp, lean, yet very rich fruit.  
Drink upon purchase.

**Dampierre**

Champagne Comte Audoin de Dampierre  
5 Grande Rue  
51140 Chenay  
France

**Phone** (326) 03.11.13

**Fax** (326) 03.18.05

<90>

**Comte Audoin de Dampierre 1990 Blanc de Blancs Grand Cru**

A deliciously fresh and elegant 1990 that shows class.

Drink now-2008.

<88>

**Comte Audoin de Dampierre 1995 Grand Cru**

Bags of fruit, not sure about the finesse.

Drink now-2008.

<85>

**Comte A. de Dampierre 1996 Brut Grand Cru**

Tight with high acids. Needs at least one year's additional post-disgorgement ageing.

Drink 2004-2009.

<83>

**Comte Audoin de Dampierre NV Blanc de Blancs, Brut Grand Cru**

Rich and tasty with a slightly green, early-picked character, which will go toasty given 12 months more bottle-age.

Drink now-2004.

**Danebury**

Danebury House  
Nether Wallop  
Stockbridge  
Hants

SO20 6JX

Great Britain

**Phone** (1264) 781851

**Fax** (1264) 782212

<75>

**Danebury 1998 Cossack, Brut**

Fresh, crisp, aperitif style with refreshing acidity. Much preferred to the more expensive 1996 Cossack, which I reserved opinion over in the last edition and did not survive this year's tastings.

Drink upon purchase.

<77>

**Danebury 1999 Cossack, Brut**

This vintage is not due to be commercialised until March 2004 or thereabouts, which is a mistake, since this wine is perfectly ready to drink now. It will not gain anything from further yeast contact. Indeed, it will not be half the wine it is now.

Drink upon purchase.

**Davenport**

Limney Farm

Castle Hill

Rotherfield

East Sussex

TN6 3RR

Great Britain

**Phone** (1892) 852 380

**Fax** (1892) 852 381

<87>

**Limney Brut 1999 Davenport**

This year's re-release sample has edged up one point over in the last edition's pre-release sample. It's also gained a name, Limney Brut, as opposed to Davenport Reserve Brut as presented in the last edition. It should not be too long after this edition is published before this inaugural vintage of Limney Brut is launched. At the time of writing, this wine was due to be released in November 2002 and after my second preview tasting I think that is about right, but it should be very interesting to see how it ages. Absolute stonking acidity provides the steel for highly focused, precision fruit riding gently on a wonderfully smooth, cushiony mousse.

Drink now-2006.

<85>

**Limney Brut 2000 Davenport**

If I had not tasted the 1999 I would have been as excited about the 2000, rather than almost as excited. I do not know whether it is the vintage or the difference in cépage (this is 50/50 Pinot Noir/Auxerrois as opposed to the 1999, which is 73/27 Pinot Noir/Auxerrois), but does not quite have the intensity that the inaugural vintage had at the same age. There's still a long way to go, but I think that this will be easier-drinking, more fresh and fruity style, but that will only make it even more friends.

Drink 2004-2007.

**Deakin Estate**

PO Box 1333

South Melbourne

Vic. 3205

Australia

**Phone** (3) 9682 5000

**Fax** (3) 9682 5200

Part of the Wingara Wine Group.

<72>

**Deakin Estate NV Brut**

Tasty, rich, firm mousse, creamy fruit.

Drink upon purchase.

**Deidesheim**

Winzerverein Deidesheim  
Prinz-Rupprecht-Strasse 8  
67146 Deidesheim  
Germany

**Phone** (6326) 968842

**Winzerverein Deidesheim 1999 Pfalz Trocken**

Rich Pinot fruit, creamy fruit.  
Drink upon purchase.

**Delamotte**

Champagne Delamotte  
7 rue de la Brèche d'Oger  
51190 Le Mesnil-sur-Oger  
France

**Phone** (326) 57.51.65

**Fax** (326) 57.79.29

<89>

**Delamotte 1996 Blanc de Blancs Brut**

Excellent, with very fine fruit.  
Drink now-2006

<?>

**Delamotte 1995 Blanc de Blancs Brut**

A preponderance of acetaldehyde dominated this wine at the 2002 Annual Champagne Tasting and it was much too mature at my blind tasting, but the bottle submitted to WINE Magazine's showed lovely biscuity-mature fruit. Quite a bit of bottle variation then, but probably safe to say this is one of the more early-maturing 1995s and, possibly, it is particularly sensitive to storage conditions, hence the variation.

Drink upon purchase.

<86>

**Delamotte NV Brut**

Plenty of fruit with a fine sherbety edge of Chardonnay currently dominating.  
Drink now-2006.

**Delbeck**

Champagne Delbeck  
39 rue du Général Sarrail  
51100 Reims  
France

**Phone** (326) 77.58.00

**Fax** (326) 77.58.01

*See* Bricout for the fraud story.

<86>

**Delbeck NV Brut Héritage**

Rich fruit, very fresh, with a lean edge. Excellent.

Drink now-2006.

**Delouvin Nowack**

Champagne Delouvin-Nowack

29 rue Principale

51700 Vandières

France

**Phone** (326) 58.02.70

**Fax** (326) 57.10.11

<86>

**Delouvin Nowack 1996 Brut Extra Selection**

The fruit is elevated, particularly on the nose, but it is impressive nonetheless, particularly on the palate. Intense, high acids.

Drink now-2005.

**Déthune**

Champagne Paul Déthune

2 rue du Moulin

51150 Ambonnay

France

**Phone** (326) 57.01.88

**Fax** (326) 57.09.31

I take my hat off to Paul Déthune for releasing something as fascinating, educational and quality-driven as its Trilogy initiative.

<85>

**Paul Déthune NV Brut Rosé, Grand Cru**

Not a longterm prospect, but keep this six months and you will be handsomely rewarded by deepening strawberry fruit on no little complexity and finesse.

Drink now-2004.

<83>

**Paul Déthune NV Blanc de Noirs, Grand Cru Brut**

Rich, lifted fruit with a creamy-strawberry hint, good underlying acidity and a firm mousse.

Drink now-2004.

<88>

**Princesse des Thunes NV Ambonnay Grand Cru**

The cuvée shipped in 2003 was wonderfully rich, certainly a different class to the one shipped in 2002, and probably the best Princesse des Thunes I have ever tasted.

Drink now-2008.

<88>

**Paul Déthune 1998 Brut Ambonnay Grand Cru**

Excellent richness, beautifully focused Pinot Noir fruit.

Drink now-2008.

<90>

**Paul Déthune 1996 Brut Ambonnay Grand Cru, Trilogy Cuvée**

Three bottles sold in one handsome wooden box: Cuvées 1, 2 & 3. Your mission, should you decide to undertake it, is to identify the composition of each cuvée. Answers are on a roll, so I

won't spoil your fun. All three are excellent, but my favourite, regardless of composition, is Cuvée No.2.  
Drink now-2010.

**Deutz**

Champagne Deutz  
16 rue Jeanson  
51160 Ay-Champagne  
France

**Phone** (326) 56.94.13

**Fax** (326) 58.76.13

<89>

**Deutz NV Brut Classic**

A beautiful quality of seductively rich, creamy-biscuity fruit. Different winemakers and different philosophies, yet this particular cuvée has distinctly edged towards the style of the parent company Roederer. Excellent anyway!

Drink now-2006.

<90>

**Amour de Deutz 1997 Blanc de Blancs Brut**

So fresh, crisp and zesty with lime-peel aromas. Extraordinary finesse for the year. The mousse with get creamier with time in bottle.

Drink now-2007.

<91>

**Amour de Deutz 1995 Blanc de Blancs Brut**

Deliciously fresh fruit supported by super-silky mousse of creamy bubbles. Great finesse.

Drink now-2009.

<90>

**Cuvée William Deutz 1995 Brut**

Biscuity heaven!

Drink now-2008.

<89>

**Deutz 1995 Brut**

Although I was not impressed with this at the 2002 Annual Champagne Tasting, it received a well-earned 89 points in the last edition for its exquisitely rich fruit and slow-building biscuity complexity and this was almost word for word my note at WIN magazine's Champagne tasting and my own blind tastings. Different disgorgements, perhaps?

Drink now-2007.

<88>

**Deutz 1996 Brut Rosé**

Biscuity aromas followed by biscuity fruit with a touch of youthful pepperiness, supported by great acidity and a long, long finish.

Drink now-2007.

<92>

**Deutz 1996 Blanc de Blancs, Brut**

This has developed beautifully between 2002 and 2003. One year ago the fruit was nice and biscuity on the nose and starting to go biscuity on the palate. Now it has creamy-walnut

complexity and finesse, which makes it different to and better than the very good toasty-vanilla 1995 (85 points).  
Drink now-2005.

**Devaux**

Champagne Veuve A. Devaux  
Domaine de Villeneuve  
10110 Bar-sur-Seine  
France

**Phone** (25) 38.30.65

**Fax** (25) 29.73.21

Climbing back up to form after a few lean years.  
<90>

**Veuve A. Devaux 1996 Cuvée Millésimée, Brut**

So smooth and complete. Violet-vanilla fruit.

Drink now-2006.

<88>

**Veuve A. Devaux 1996 D de Devaux**

Explosive mousse; fresh, tropical fruits touch exotic. Clear and precise. Several months later the mousse had calmed down and the exotic character had straightened into a more conventional, but no less exciting, rich Champagne character with excellent acids.

Drink now-2006.

<85>

**Veuve A. Devaux NV Cuvée D Brut**

Excellent richness and acidity. Good medium term keeper. Should go toasty.

Drink now-2007.

<85>

**Veuve A. Devaux NV Blanc de Noirs Brut**

The creamy-rich Pinot fruit in this 1996-based cuvée is showing beautifully.

Drink now-2007.

**Dezzani**

Via P. Giachino 140  
14023 Cocconato d'Asti  
Italy

**Phone** (141) 907044

<80>

**Dezzani NV Brachetto d'Acqui Dolce**

Very fresh, excellent acidity.

Drink upon purchase.

**Dopff & Irion**

1 cour du Château  
68340 Riquewihr  
France

**Phone** (389) 47.92.51

**Fax** (389) 47.98.90

<77>

**Dopff & Irion NV Crémant d'Alsace Brut**

Lovely balance of fresh fruit and crisp, clean acidity brings out the finesse in this wine.

Drink upon purchase.

**Dopff Au Moulin**

68340 Riquewihr

France

**Phone** (389) 49.09.69

**Fax** (389) 47.83.61

<75>

**Dopff Au Moulin 1998 Chardonnay, Crémant d'Alsace Brut**

A good wine that could be great in Alsace fizz terms had the grapes been picked riper, the malolactic been prevented and, if only it were legal, the acidity adjusted upwards.

Drink upon purchase.

<78>

**Dopff Au Moulin 1999 Cuvée Bartholdi, Crémant d'Alsace Brut**

Gently rich, creamy fruit supported by a backbone of fine acidity.

Drink upon purchase.

<77>

**Dopff Au Moulin NV Cuvée Pierre Dopff, Crémant d'Alsace Brut**

I tasted the 2000-based Cuvée Pierre Dopff (100% 2000 in fact) and it has much richer fruit than either of the 2000-based Cuvée Julien cuvées, but not the finesse, although it is not lacking in that department.

Drink upon purchase.

<76>

**Dopff Au Moulin NV Cuvée Julien, Crémant d'Alsace Brut**

Dopff Au Moulin's best-selling Cuvée Julien is currently adorned with a separate label proclaiming 'Cuvée du Centenaire 1901-2001'. This is somewhat misleading, since consumers might reasonably surmise that this is a special one-off blend when in fact three versions were submitted: [1] 25% 1999 + 75% 2000, which had the strongest fruit with stone-fruits and the barest hint of vanilla on the finish (73 points); [2] 100% 2000 with 14 months on yeast, which had beautiful fruit and by far the most finesse, plus the barest hint of the barest hint of vanilla on the aftertaste (78 points); and [3] 100% 2000 with only 9 months on yeast, which was similar to the second wine and already very drinkable, but not quite the finesse (76 points).

Drink now-2004.

**Doquet-Jeanmaire**

Champagne Doquet-Jeanmaire

44 Chemin Moulin Cense Bizet

51130 Vertus

France

**Phone** (326) 52.16.50

**Fax** (326) 59.36.71

<87>

**Doquet-Jeanmaire 1985 Blanc de Blancs, Brut Premier Cru**

The freshness of such rich, clean, sweet-ripe fruit is remarkable after 17 years.

Drink now-2005.

<87>

**Doquet-Jeanmaire 1990 Blanc de Blancs, Brut Premier Cru**

Rich and succulent.

Drink now-2005.

<83>

**Doquet-Jeanmaire 1986 Coeur de Terroir, Blanc de Blancs, Brut 1er Cru**

Part of a vertical tasting of 6 vintages, which you can purchase a bottle of each for 121 Euros.

This would be great value and represent an amazing vinous privilege, except for the fact that four of the vintages were undrinkable (the 1990, 1989 Coeur de Terroir, 1985 Coeur de Terroir and 1979 all had mercaptan problems, which I suspect have developed in all bottles of these wines over the years, but there were no back-up samples, so I was unable to confirm this). The fact that a lesser vintage like the 1986 could still be good whereas younger, greater vintages were not is bizarre, just as is the fact that one of this wine's most attractive aspects is its lifted fruit because the very nature of lifted fruit shortens potential longevity!

Drink upon purchase.

<85>

**Doquet-Jeanmaire NV Rosé, Brut Premier Cru**

Rich, creamy and already quite complex, but drink now before it goes oxidative.

Drink upon purchase.

**Drappier**

Champagne Drappier

Rue des Vignes

10200 Urville

France

**Phone** (25) 27.40.15

**Fax** (25) 27.41.19

Well worth a visit, Drappier has moved from the Grande rue and is now housed in a tastefully renovated former school.

<83>

**Drappier 1999 Millésime Exception**

Rich, but frankly too fat and liable to develop rather rapidly, this was, however, the best 1999 I had tasted at the time of writing. Smart packaging.

Drink now-2007.

<91>

**Drappier 1992 Carte d'Or Brut (*magnum*)**

Courtesy of extended lees contact and the magnum effect, this vintage has outperformed itself, with bags of autolysis on the nose and huge yeast-complexed fruit on palate.

Drink now-2007.

<92>

**Drappier 1995 Grande Sendrée, Brut**

This has shot up three percentile points over in the last edition's rating, which is no mean feat around the 90-point mark, but the most recent disgorgement is just so chock-a-block full of

autolytic aromas, with such beautifully focused fruit on the palate a nice edge to the acidity and a luscious creaminess building up on the finish that even a child could predict this is heading for a sumptuous peak of creamy-biscuity fruit of outstanding complexity and finesse. This single vineyard Champagne has, for a couple of years, had its disgorgement date printed down the curving right side of the label.

Drink now-2008.

<90>

**Drappier 1995 Cuvée Signature, Blanc de Blancs Brut**

This was okay, but did not really stand out at the 2002 Annual Champagne Tasting or *Decanter* magazine's 1995/1996 Champagne tasting, but was gorgeously creamy-rich at Drappier in Urville just one month later, super-smooth at my blind tastings in 2002, and beautifully soft and sweet, vanilla-spiced fruit in France one year later.

Drink now-2005.

<91>

**Drappier 1996 Grande Sèndrée Rosé Brut**

Currently showing a lovely Chardonnay creaminess, but the Pinot will soon kick-in for an even more complex, creamy-biscuity richness.

Drink now-2007.

<94>

**Drappier 1996 Grande Sèndrée**

A Champagne of exceptional elegance; very floral, fine fruit. What structure! What acidity!

Drink now-2009.

<80>

**André et Michel Drappier NV Brut Nature, Pinot Noir Zero Dosage**

The last edition's cuvée was a blend of 1997 & 1998 (90 points), whereas this year's is a blend of 1998 & 1999 disgorged in March 2002, which should make it somewhat more forward and theoretically not quite as good, but one plus one seldom makes two in Champagne. True the quality is nothing like in the last edition's cuvée, but there are some quite prominent estery notes, which indicate that it should not have been disgorged for 9-12 months.

Drink now-2004.

<88>

**Drappier NV Carte d'Or Brut**

Bags of turbo-charged fruit that will quickly go deliciously biscuity, the evolution of this cuvée is one of the most predictable, due to Drappier's low-sulphur regime. The current cuvée (87 points) and the next (88) also happen to be two of the best releases in memory.

Drink now-2005.

**Duchessa Lia**

Corso Piave 140

12056 S. Stefano Belbo

Italy

**Phone** (141) 843006

**Fax** (141) 843929

<85>

**Duchessa Lia NV Brachetto d'Acqui, Spumante Dolce**

Lovely, fresh and flavoursome fruit. Impressive acidity underlying the sweetness.

Drink upon purchase.

**Duloquet**

Domaine Hervé Duloquet  
Mousseaux  
49700 Les Verchers-sur-Layon  
France

**Phone** (241) 59.17.62

**Fax** (241) 59.37.53

<73>

**Domaine Hervé Duloquet NV Saumur Brut**

Frothy greengage fruit. Very clean, with tangy acidity.  
Drink upon purchase.

**Dumangin**

Champagne J. Dumangin Fils  
3 rue de Rilly  
51500 Chigny-les-Roses  
France

**Phone** (326) 03.46.34

**Fax** (326) 03.45.61

<84>

**J. Dumangin Fils 1995 Brut Millésimé, Premier Cru**

This rich, smooth and tangy Champagne is excellent, but the tactile impression of what seems like tannin on the finish robs this vintage of some finesse. I thought it performed much better at *Decanter* magazine's 1995/1996 Champagne tasting.

Drink now-2005.

<83>

**J. Dumangin Fils 1997 Carte d'Or, Brut Premier Cru**

The pre-release sample was a touch oxidative. Hopefully this will not show on the commercial disgorgement because the fruit is rich and fine, with excellent acidity and promises to go biscuity.

Drink now-2004.

<84>

**J. Dumangin Fils NV Rosé Brut, Premier Cru**

Light, fresh, raspberry fruit.

Drink now-2004.

**Dumont**

Champagne Daniel Dumont  
11 rue Gambetta  
51500 Rilly-la-Montagne  
France

**Phone** (326) 03.40.67

**Fax** (326) 03.44.82

<83>

**Daniel Dumont NV Grande Réserve, Brut Premier Cru**

Fresh fruit salad fruit with correct structure, but lacks that something extra to take it into the 85-point bracket.

Drink now-2005.

**Dutertre**

Domaine Dutertre

2021 rue d'Enfer

Place du Tertre

37530 Limeray

France

**Phone** (247) 30.10.69

**Fax** (247) 30.06.92

<78>

**Domaine Dutertre 2000 Cuvée Vendanges, Crémant de Loire Brut**

Very dry and winey, which might not sound too attractive, but has a certain charm and promises to age well for limited period.

Drink now-2006.

<77>

**Domaine Dutertre NV Brut Rosé, Crémant de Loire**

Fresh, light and elegantly fruity strawberry-pink colour.

Drink upon purchase.

**Duval-Leroy**

Champagne Fleur de Champagne

69 avenue de Bammental

F-51130 Vertus

France

**Phone** (326) 52.10.75

**Fax** (326) 57.54.01

Duval-Leroy has never in the premier league, but it is heading that way. It has always been a good value producer, but the consistency of quality and style throughout the 1990s has exceeded that of most so-called grandes marques, and this has been thanks to Hervé Jestin, Duval-Leroy's quietly spoken, highly talented winemaker. Couple this with Carol Duval's focus on the primary brand to the detriment of the firm's BOB business (once its staple) and it is easy to appreciate just how close Duval-Leroy was to premier league promotion at the turn of the millennium. I just hope Champagne's Iron Maiden realizes just how special Jestin is. If I were put in charge of one of half-a-dozen famous Champagne houses, the very first thing I would do would be to try and tempt Jestin away.

<90>

**Duval-Leroy 1990 Blanc de Blancs Chardonnay, Brut**

I cannot believe I am giving such a high score to a Champagne that tastes of coconut, but it is so succulent and sexy. The creamy-coconutty richness in this wine is not the immediate effect American oak, but a characteristic found in the very best Champagnes after many years of slow evolution.

Drink 2004-2010.

<90>

**Duval-Leroy 1992 Fleur de Champagne, Millésimé Brut**

Tangy fruit, still has a way to go, needs more post-disgorgement aromas.

Drink 2004-2010.

<90>

**Duval-Leroy 1995 Fleur de Champagne, Extra Brut**

Exquisitely fine, fresh and fluffy when first disgorged, this takes on a gentle, creamy character after a couple of months. It has a softer, better integrated mousse than the 1996 Extra Brut with atypically easy fruit for a low dosage wine. Vanilla on finish, potentially very complex.

Drink 2008-2013.

<90>

**Femme de Champagne 1995 Brut Millésime**

Not due to be launched until the end of 2002, the pre-release sample I tasted was wonderfully fresh on the nose with tight, intense fruit on the palate. The aromas promise to go toasty. Please do not go oxidative on me, as all the disgorgements except the first of the 1990 did. This cuvée more than most requires precision disgorgement dates.

Drink now-2008.

<87>

**Duval-Leroy 1996 Blanc de Chardonnay Brut**

Due to be released in September 2002, a preview sample tasted at Decanter's 1995/1996 Champagne tasting in April was fresh and fruity (85 points), but its easy-drinking mode for an early 1996 raised an eyebrow or two. However, this was exactly the same score as an even earlier preview sample had notched up in the previous edition, when its 'relatively forward' characteristics were duly noted. Tasted blind, but with more time for reflection at my own blind tastings, this wine crept up two points and although still forward in a rich, creamy style, with peachy aromas and quite fat for a 1996, it has developed more depth and intensity, which has stretched its drinking window by a few years.

Drink now-2008.

<85>

**Duval-Leroy 1996 Brut Vintage**

This had bags of fruit, extract and acidity at the Decanter 1995/1996 Champagne tasting, when I would have given it 88 points, but creamy-caramel malo aromas were more prominent by the time of my blind tastings in June.

Drink now-2006.

<86>

**Duval-Leroy 1998 Blanc de Blancs [en Futs] Brut**

Sweet-ripe fruit. Not sure how the label will describe this wine, which was vinified entirely in oak, although it is not at all oaky.

Drink now-2006.

<87>

**Duval-Leroy 1998 Blanc de Blancs [Biody, en Futs] Brut**

Again, not sure how the label will describe this wine. Virtually the same wine, but from vines that have been farmed biodynamically. Also vinified entirely in oak, and also not oaky.

Drink now-2006.

<84>

**Duval-Leroy NV Brut**

A smoother mousse than this year's Premier Cru Fleur de Champagne, but simpler, fatter fruit, with less acidity and thus seemingly sweeter.

Drink upon purchase.

<87>

**Duval-Leroy NV Fleur de Champagne, Brut Premier Cru**

Fine, crisp fruit on a firm mousse of persistent bubbles.

Drink now-2006.

<85>

**Duval-Leroy NV Fleur de Champagne, Rosé de Saignée Brut**

Rich and full with toasty complexity lifted by freshness and a light balance.

Drink now-2004.

<85>

**Duval-Leroy NV Fleur de Champagne Brut Non Vintage**

Fresh and gentle, the fruit in this cuvée was softer than normal at the 2002 Annual Champagne Tasting in March, but back to its usual crisp self under the new livery in May and June, when the only softness to be found was in its immaculate creamy mousse. First witness of the anglicised "Non Vintage" on a Duval Leroy label and, I dare say, the same as one of its other pre-new-label cuvées, but I shall have to report on it separately until the new names and labels settle down.

Drink now-2006.

<87>

**Duval-Leroy NV "Paris" Brut**

A richly flavoured, elegantly balanced Champagne, the intensity of which builds up on the finish.

Drink upon purchase.

**Eberbach**

Hessische Staatsweingüter Kloster Eberbach

Schwalbacherstrasse 56-62

65343 Eltville

Germany

**Phone** (6123) 92300

**Fax** (6123) 923090

<76>

**Hessische Staatsweingüter Kloster Eberbach 1999 Erbacher Marcobrunn Riesling Brut**

Classic, clean, fresh Riesling Sekt.

Drink upon purchase.

**Eblin Fuchs**

Joseph et Christian Eblin-Fuchs

75 Route du Vin

68340 Zellenberg

**Phone** (389) 47.91.14

**Fax** (389) 49.05.12

<77>

**Eblin Fuchs NV Blanc de Noirs, Crémant d'Alsace Brut**

I tasted the 1999-based blend of this elegantly presented cuvée and enjoyed the richness, ripeness and acidity of its fruit.

Drink upon purchase.

<?>

**Eblin Fuchs NV Crémant d'Alsace Brut**

The 2000-based blend of this cuvée is very estery, indicating that a further 9 months or so on yeast would have been preferable (although I have tasted other 2000-base Crémant d'Alsace that are already very drinkable), but the fruit shows rich potential. This could go malo-dominated and/or oxidative, so the jury's still out, but it would be interesting to cellar for six months or nine at the most.

Wait and see.

**Ellner**

Champagne Charles Ellner

1 & 6 rue Côte Legris

51207 Epernay

France

**Phone** (326) 55.60.25

**Fax** (326) 51.54.00

<85>

**Charles Ellner 1995 Millésime Brut**

Biscuity fruit, high acids.

Drink now-2006.

**Engel Fernand**

Rorschwihr 68590

France

**Phone** (389) 73.77.27

**Fax** (389) 73.63.70

<76>

**Engel Fernand 1999 Chardonnay, Crémant d'Alsace Brut**

A tad more yellow, richer and sweeter than Engel's straight Brut non-vintage.

Drink upon purchase.

<78>

**Engel Fernand NV Tradition, Crémant d'Alsace Brut**

This is drier than Engel's Chardonnay cuvée, but good fruit nonetheless, with a fresh, crisp finish and capable of ageing.

Drink now-2004.

**English Wine Plc**

Tenterden Vineyard

Small Hythe

Tenterden

Kent TN30 7NG

**Phone** (1580) 763033

**Fax** (1580) 765333

<75>

**Chapel Down 1995 Epoch Vintage Brut**

Only on mid-to-end palate can you experience the vigour and expressiveness this wine once had. Come on guys, when are you going to sell off in bulk three or four vintages of this *cuvée* so that you can proudly release it at its best?

Drink upon purchase.

<80>

**Chapel Down 1999 Pinot Réserve**

I might have under-scored this 70/30 Pinot Noir/Pinot Blanc blend, as it is very good, not due to be released until 2003 and unlike the Epoch vintage Brut, it could well benefit from extra time on yeast. That said, it's already motoring well, with beautifully piquant fruit, superb acidity and a flavour that builds in the mouth.

Drink now-2005.

<78>

**Chapel Down NV Epoch Brut Rosé**

This is so much better than the old, tired, pure-1995 vintage version of this pure Pinot Noir rosé I have been tasting for much too long. The reason no doubt being that it is a 1999-base blend and has terrific acidity, with sherbety sharpness to pep up the finish. Should develop cherry fruit flavours over the next 12 months.

Drink now-2004.

<74>

**Chapel Down NV Epoch Brut**

This wine is really far more impressive on the palate and finish than its score of 74 points might suggest. I just wish that they would lift the aromas to make it equally appealing on the nose. I'm not suggesting anything as base as VA-lifted, just old fashioned blending of some more aromatic material. Excellent acidity.

Drink upon purchase.

**Epinay**

Domaine du Clos de l'Epinay

L'Epinay 37210 Vouvray

France

**Phone** (247) 52.61.90

**Fax** (247) 52.71.31

<77>

**Domaine du Clos de l'Epinay NV Vouvray Brut**

Full-throttle greengage Chenin with soft, fluffy mousse.

Drink upon purchase.

<80>

**Domaine du Clos de l'Epinay NV Tête de Cuvée, Vouvray Brut**

Estery nose, would have benefited from 6-9 months more on yeast, but excellent depth of fruit and acidity.

Drink upon purchase.

**Ferghettina**

Ferghettina di Roberto Gatti

Via Case Sparse 4  
25030 Erbusco  
Italy  
**Phone** (30) 7760120  
**Fax** (30) 7768098  
<76>

**Ferghettina 1995 Franciacorta Extra Brut**

Rich, peach blossom fruit, quite full on the finish.  
Drink upon purchase.

**Ferret**

Mateu Jose  
Avda. Penedès 27.bo.la Rapita  
08730 Santa Margarida I Els Monjos  
Spain  
**Phone** (93) 898.0105  
**Fax** (93) 898.0584  
<78>

**Ferret Reserva Antiga 1998 Cava Brut Nature Reserva**

Coconutty oaky!  
Drink upon purchase.  
<78>

**Ferret NV Cava Brut**

Fresh, zesty, clean as a whistle, breezy fruit. Hideous, naff bottle.  
Drink upon purchase.

**Feuillatte**

Champagne Nicolas Feuillatte  
CV de Chouilly  
Chouilly 51206 Epernay  
France  
**Phone** (326) 54.50.60  
**Fax** (326) 55.33.04

Hopefully the great promise shown in the vintages of 1995 and 1996 are not just a flash in the pan, but I cannot confirm one way or the other because Nicolas Feuillatte still operates like a third-rate cooperative when setting up tasting for wine writers visiting their premises.  
<92>

**Nicolas Feuillatte 1985 Palmes d'Or Brut**

Unfortunately no longer available, not even in my own cellar! This was obviously a great Champagne from the moment it was released and is still extraordinarily fresh (disgorged four years). Very light in colour. Amazing.  
Drink now-2008.  
<89>

**Nicolas Feuillatte 1995 Palmes d'Or Brut**

With such remarkably pure fruit and great finesse, this is easily the best Palmes d'Or since the inaugural 1985 vintage.

Drink now-2009.

<79>

**Nicolas Feuillatte 1992 Brut Premier Cru**

Heavy on complexity, light on fruit, lacks finesse.

Drink now-2005.

<89>

**Nicolas Feuillatte 1995 Brut Premier Cru**

[Off-trade version] Delicious fruit, has finesse, smooth mousse.

Drink now-2005.

<87>

**Nicolas Feuillatte 1995 Brut Millésimé**

[On-trade version] Coconutty-creamy-biscuity rich, highlighted by truly striking acidity for the vintage.

Drink now-2005.

<88>

**Nicolas Feuillatte 1995 Cuvée Spécial**

Very fresh, floral-biscuity aromas with great acidity preceding biscuity-rich fruit on the palate.

Drink now-2006.

<89>

**Nicolas Feuillatte 1995 Cramant**

Excellent concentration, brilliant acidity, very silky fruit. This exciting Champagne has climbed three percentile points in the in the last edition.

Drink now-2005.

<87>

**Nicolas Feuillatte 1995 Chouilly**

The fluffiest mousse of all four mono-cru Champagnes. This also has most expressive citrus aromas.

Drink now-2005.

<89>

**Nicolas Feuillatte 1995 Mesnil**

Most complex, very rich and satisfying, most evolved, yet still has room for development.

Drink now-2005.

<86>

**Nicolas Feuillatte 1995 Verzy**

Very satisfying, but not as expressive as it was in the last edition. However, all four mono-cru Champagnes have performed so differently (but never poorly) on so many occasions over the last two years that it is impossible to say how any of them will develop. This could be the best of the lot again next year.

Drink now-2005.

<84>

**Nicolas Feuillatte 1996 Blanc de Blancs Millésime, Brut Premier Cru**

Sherbety, with lots of zing.

Drink upon purchase.

<88>

**Nicolas Feuillatte 1996 Palmes d'Or Rosé Brut**

Good job I reserved judgement in the last edition because although this does not have 1996's trademark acidity, and is evolving rapidly for that vintage, it is rather special with mature Burgundy notes. One to explore at the table.

Drink now-2004.

<83>

**Nicolas Feuillatte 1997 Rosé Brut**

This is nice, but not special, with good light richness of fruit. If I was disappointed following Nicolas Feuillatte's groundbreaking 1995s and 1996s, I should remember that this is a relatively modest vintage and I have never recommended this cuvée before, even in a great vintage.

Drink upon purchase.

**Fleury**

Champagne Fleury

43 Grande rue

10250 Courteron

France

**Phone** (325) 38.20.28

**Fax** (325) 38.24.65

Not just organic, but biodynamic.

<90>

**Fleury 1996 Brut**

Classic barrique-fermented Champagne. Mind-blowing barrage of aromas and flavours. Rich vanilla fruit and a sprinkling of cocoa, yet still classy.

Drink now-2009.

<86>

**Fleury NV Fleur de l'Europe Brut**

Rich, fresh and sizzingly crisp.

Drink now-2009.

<85>

**Robert Fleury 1902-1998 NV Brut**

Strikingly fresh and crisp fruit, with a pithy hint of tannin on the finish.

Drink now-2009.

**Fluteau**

Champagne G. Fluteau

5 Rue de la Nation

10250 Gyé-sur-Seine

France

**Phone** (325) 38.20.02

**Fax** (325) 38.24.84

<88>

**G. Fluteau 1995 Cuvée Prestige, Blanc de Blancs Brut**

This vintage has developed a Bolly-like biscuity-rich complexity.

Drink upon purchase.

<89>

**G. Fluteau 1995 Cuvée Prestige, Blanc de Blancs Brut** (*magnum*)

Much fruitier in magnum, with slower evolving biscuity-richness and no Bolly-like character.  
Drink now-2006.

<87>

**G. Fluteau 1996 Cuvée Prestige, Blanc de Blancs Brut**

Fruitiness is really opening out. Although I preferred this when it was at its 'turbo-charged fruit' stage two years ago (89 points) there is still plenty of excellent fruit.

Drink now-2004.

<87>

**G. Fluteau 1997 Cuvée Prestige, Blanc de Blancs Brut**

The last edition's 'precocious 1997' has developed rich, complex, vanilla fruit, but still has plenty of zippy-zingy acidity to maintain freshness and vitality.

Drink now-2005.

<85>

**G. Fluteau 1998 Cuvée Prestige, Blanc de Blancs Brut**

Due to be released in September 2002, this vintage was not together in at Fluteau itself in April 2001 (when it would have scored 80 points), but had shaped up by June, when I tasted the same disgorgement in my blind tastings. It does not, however, have the depth and quality of the 1997 (87 points).

Drink now-2005.

<86>

**G. Fluteau NV Brut Carte Blanche**

The latest cuvée had tangy fruit in April, but not quite the liveliness of previous cuvées. Like all of Fluteau's Champagnes, however, this is a very youthful wine and April was the earliest I had attempted to taste it. It was not due to be released until June 2002 and re-tasting then it had come together nicely, showing a lovely freshness on the nose and light, easy, creamy-richness of fruit on the palate.

Drink now-2004.

<86>

**G. Fluteau NV Cuvée Réserve Brut**

Fresh, zesty aromas followed by intense, sherbety fruit.

Drink now-2006.

**Fonné**

Michel Fonné

24 rue du Général de Gaulle

68630 Bennwihr

France

**Phone** (389) 47.92.69

**Fax** (389) 49.04.86

<75>

**Barth René 1999 Crémant d'Alsace Brut, Michel Fonné**

This was submitted as a 1999 vintage, yet there was no mention of any vintage on label. Fresh, crisp, apple-blossom fruit.

Drink upon purchase.

**Fontanafredda**

Via Alba 15  
12050 Serralunga d'Alba  
Italy

**Phone** (173) 613161

**Fax** (173) 613451

<88>

**Fontanafredda 2001 Asti Millesimato**

Intense Moscato fruit, beautifully balanced sweetness and the smoothest, creamiest of mousses.  
Drink upon purchase.

<78>

**Fontanafredda 2001 Acqui, Brachetto d'Acqui**

Raspberry-ripple fizz.

Drink upon purchase.

**Forget-Brimont**

Champagne Forget-Brimont

11 route de Louvois

51500 Craon de Ludes

France

**Phone** (326) 61.10.45

**Fax** (326) 61.11.58

<?>

**Forget-Brimont 1995 Cuvée Prestige, Cuvée de l'An 2000, Brut 1er Cru**

Sauternes-like richness, followed by bitterness, should not have been disgorged for 3-4 years.  
Drink upon purchase.

<85>

**Forget-Brimont NV Brut Rosé, Premier Cru**

Very rich and tasty, but lacks acidity and thus keeping power. Nevertheless, this is a good rosé, with enough depth to be useful at the table and yet a nice ripe sweetness on the finish for drinking on its own.

Drink upon purchase.

<84>

**Forget-Brimont NV Brut Premier Cru**

Sweet, tasty, deeply flavoured fruit that is rewarding, but has more character than finesse.

Drink now-2004.

**Forget-Chemin**

Champagne Forget-Chemin

15 rue Victor Hugo

51500 Ludes

**Phone** (326) 61.12.17

**Fax** (326) 61.14.51

<85>

**Forget-Chemin NV Carte Blanche Brut**

Sweet, ripe, deep and satisfying fruit.

Drink now-2004.

<84>

**Forget-Chemin NV Brut Rosé, Premier Cru**

Rich, sweet and tasty with traces of malo and lifted fruit.

Drink now-2005.

**Freixenet**

Pza Joan Sala 2

08770 Sant Sadurní d'Anoia

Spain

**Phone** (93) 891.7000

**Fax** (93) 818.3095

<85>

**Freixenet Trépat 1998 Cava Brut**

Excellent fruit, crisp acidity, length. The best Blanc de Noirs Cava ever made.

Drink now-2004.

<82>

**Freixenet NV Rosado**

Rich and fruity with good acidity.

Drink upon purchase.

**Freudenreich**

Joseph Freudenreich

3 Cour Unterlinden

68420 Eguisheim

France

**Phone** (389) 41 3687

**Fax** (389) 41 6712

<80>

**Joseph Freudenreich NV Crémant d'Alsace Brut**

The 1999-based cuvée has very fresh aromas, excellent fruit and acidity mid-palate, trailing off to a vanilla-infused finish.

Drink now-2005.

**Friedrich-Kern**

Weingut Franz Friedrich-Kern

Hauptstrasse 98

54470 Bernkastel-Wehlen

Germany

**Phone** (6531) 3156

**Fax** (6531) 7706

<74>

**Weingut Franz Friedrich-Kern 1999 Cuvée Katharina Riesling Brut**

Some peachiness and more structure than most, although not a longterm proposition.

Drink upon purchase.

**Fries**

Weingut Markus Fries  
Zum Brauneberg 16  
54484 Maring-Noviand  
Germany

**Phone** (6535) 493

**Fax** (6535) 1505

<72>

**Weingut Fries 1998 Noviander Klosterberg Riesling Halbtrocken**

Clean, fresh; good weight of fruit.

Drink upon purchase.

**Gaioncelli**

Barboglio de Gaioncelli

Via N. Sauro

25040 Colombaro di Cortefranca

Italy

**Phone** (30) 9826831

**Fax** (30) 9826831

<75>

**Barboglio DeGaioncelli NV Franciacorta Extra Dry**

You can smell the Extra Dry dosage on this wine in the form of toasted candyfloss sugar, but the acidity is there and should make succulent drinking if given another year in bottle.

Drink 2004-2006.

**Galinière**

Domaine de la Galinière

37210 Vernou

France

**Phone** (247) 52.15.92

<82>

**Domaine de la Galinière 1998 Cuvée Clément, Vouvray Brut**

Honeyed-rich fruit, excellent acidity.

Drink upon purchase.

**Gallais, Le**

Manoir de Boursault

Boursault 51480 prés Epernay

**Phone** (326) 58.42.21

**Fax** (326) 58.66.12

The cousin of Château de Boursault's Harald Fringhian farms a small part of the estate and has struck out on his own.

<84>

**Le Gallais NV Brut Cuvée du Manoir**

This rich-flavoured Champagne was the best of the first batch of Le Gallais cuvées I tasted.

Drink upon purchase.

<82>

**Le Gallais NV Rosé Cuvée du Manoir**

Deep colour, deep flavour, hinting of strawberries.  
Drink upon purchase.

**Gardet**

Champagne Gardet  
13 rue Georges Legros  
51500 Chigny-les-Roses  
France

**Phone** (326) 03.42.03

**Fax** (326) 03.43.95

<86>

**Cuvée Charles Gardet 1996 Brut**

Although raw and estery at Decanter magazine's 1995/1996 tasting, that was obviously an anomaly, as it has been fresh and crisp, with creamy fruit at my blind tasting and on several other occasions throughout the year.

Drink now-2006.

<86>

**Georges Gardet NV Brut Spécial**

Gone are days of Gardet's rather rustic, distinctly oxidative non-vintage style. This is very, very fresh, but not at all unready, with crisp, clean, well-focused fruit driving the style and, consequently, far more finesse than ever.

Drink now-2005.

**Garrett**

Andrew Garrett Vineyard Estates  
PO Box 532  
McLaren Vale  
SA 5171  
Australia

**Phone** (8) 8323 8853

**Fax** (8) 8323 8550

<76>

**Andrew Garrett 1998 Sparkling Shiraz**

Nice floral fruit on nose, although VA lift is noticeable after a while.

Drink upon purchase.

**Gatinois**

Champagne Gatinois  
7 rue Marcel Mailly  
51160 Ay  
France

**Phone** (326) 55.14.26

**Fax** (326) 52.75.99

<87>

**Gatinois 1997 Grand Cru**

Copper-tinged; great sun-blessed richness with fine, lean structure.  
Drink now-2008.

<85>

**Gatinois NV Grand Cru**

Copper-colour tinged; clean, fruity, nicely concentrated, youthful. Excellent.  
Drink now-2005.

**Geil**

Weingut Oekonomierat Johann Geil I. Erben

Kuhpfortenstrasse 11

67595 Bechtheim bei Worms

Germany

**Fax** (06242) 1546

**Fax** (0624) 2693

<78>

**Weingut Oekonomierat Johann Geil I. Erben 1999 Bechtheimer Hasensprung  
Weissburgunder Brut**

Has an excellent richness and extract balanced by high acids.

Drink upon purchase.

<75>

**Geil's Sekt und Weingut 1999 Schwarzriesling Brut Rosé**

Fresh, easy going rosé with some real pink in the colour and good length in the fruit.

Drink upon purchase.

**Geiler**

Jean Geiler

Cave Vinicole d'Ingersheim

45 rue de la République

68040 Ingersheim

France

**Phone** (389) 27.05.96

**Fax** (389) 27.51.24

<79>

**Jean Geiler NV Blanc de Blancs, Crémant d'Alsace Brut Prestige**

Fresh and rich, with excellent acidity and the finest mousse in the entire range.

Drink upon purchase.

<77>

**Jean Geiler NV Crémant d'Alsace Brut**

Attractively lifted fruit on the nose and mid-palate.

Drink upon purchase.

<78>

**Jean Geiler Médaille d'Or Paris 2000 NV Crémant d'Alsace Brut**

The Médaille d'Or version of Jean Geiler Brut cuvée has higher acidity, the greater depth and length. Otherwise it is quite similar, as indeed all blends of the same cuvée should be.

Drink upon purchase.

**Geoffroy**

Champagne René Geoffroy  
150 rue du Bois-des-Jots  
Cumières 51480 Damery  
France

**Phone** (326) 55.32.31

**Fax** (326) 54.66.50

<86>

**René Geoffroy 1996 Cuvée Sélectionnée**

Too sweet now, but will mellow out.

Drink 2005-2009.

<86>

**René Geoffroy NV Cuvée Prestige, Brut Premier Cru**

Big acidity, great depth of yeast-complexed fruit and an excellent mousse. Will develop more finesse.

Drink now-2006.

<85>

**René Geoffroy NV Cuvée de Réserve, Brut Premier Cru**

Very fresh and breezy fruit with a fine mousse of the tiniest bubbles.

Drink now-2005.

**Gibson's**

Gibson's BarossaVale Wines  
P.O. Box 83  
Light Pass  
Nuriootpa  
SA 5355  
Australia

**Phone** (8) 8562 3193

**Fax** (8) 8562 4490

<75>

**Gibson's NV Sparkling Merlot**

Cherry-fruit driven with dry tannins and not too sweet finish.

Drink now-2004.

**Giesen**

Giesen Wine Estate  
Burnham School Road  
Burnham PO Box  
11066 Christchurch  
New Zealand

**Phone** (3) 347 6729

**Fax** (3) 347 6450

<75>

**Voyage Special Cuvée Brut NV Giesen**

Fruity, easy-drinking, with green apple fruit on finish.

Drink now-2004.

**Gimonnet**

Champagne Pierre Gimonnet & Fils

1 rue de la République

51530 Cuis

France

**Phone** (326) 59.78.70

**Fax** (326) 59.79.84

<91>

**Pierre Gimonnet 1995 Brut, Millésime de Collection** (*magnum*)

Incredible intensity of flavour and chock-a-block full of finesse, but could have scored 95 points with a fractionally higher dosage.

Drink 2005-2010.

<88>

**Pierre Gimonnet 1995 Fleuron, Blanc de Blancs, Brut 1er Cru**

The fruit in this vintage was so fresh and breezy in the last edition, but an extra 12 months has given it a much richer, longer dimension, yet just as crisp and elegant.

Drink now-2006.

<88>

**Pierre Gimonnet 1995 Cuvée Oenophile, Blanc de Blancs - Extra-Brut**

Although pure in aroma and fruit on the palate, this cuvée has no dosage and will not keep. It dries out on the finish, although the intensity of flavour keeps it going. With a small dosage this could be a much greater wine.

Drink upon purchase.

<88>

**Pierre Gimonnet 1996 Premier Cru Chardonnay, Brut**

Another Gimonnet wine in the 'Club de Viticulteurs Champenois' bottle, this 1996 was nearly finished at the time of tasting and the future 1997 vintage was soon due to be released, but whereas the latter will benefit from a year in bottle, this older vintage needs another two!

Drink 2005-2010.

<90>

**Pierre Gimonnet 1996 Vieilles Vignes de Chardonnay** (*magnum*)

This is so strict that it walks all over your palate in six-inch high heeled boots.

Drink 2006-2016.

<87>

**Pierre Gimonnet 1996 Fleuron, Blanc de Blancs, Brut 1er Cru**

Probably under scored, this has fine, rich fruit on the palate, with a nicely focused finish, but there is an estery element on the nose that needs a little time to tame down. Satisfying aftertaste. Excellent acidity.

Drink 2004-2009.

<89>

**Pierre Gimonnet 1997 Premier Cru-Chardonnay, Brut**

Presented in the plump, embossed 'Club de Viticulteurs Champenois' bottle, this is already nicely developed on the palate, which is rich and creamy-biscuity, but needs time for the nose to mellow. True brut dryness. Really tip-top for the vintage.

Drink 2004-2006.

<84>

**Pierre Gimonnet 1998 Gastronom, Blanc de Blancs, Brut 1er Cru**

Although closer to Gastronom's lean-structured, intense, zippy fruit style than the rather rich and fat 1997 (86 points), it does not have the quality of that vintage, let alone the 1996 (88) or the stunning 1995 (90). However, it does reflect the intrinsic difference in quality of the 1998 vintage, thus this cuvée is true to both the year and Gimonnet.

Drink now-2005.

<85>

**Pierre Gimonnet NV Cuis Premier Cru**

Fresh, zesty, expressive fruit. Excellent finesse.

Drink now-2006.

**Giraud**

71 bd. Charles de Gaulle

51160 Ay-Champagne

France

**Phone** (326) 55.18.55

**Fax** (326) 55.33.49

<90>

**Henri Giraud 1993 Grand Cru Fût de Chêne Brut**

Sealed with an *agrafe*, this true *tête de cuvée* is produced in tiny quantities and has been *barrique*-fermented, but is not at all over-oaked, although the oak is indeed easily noticed. Exquisite fruit, sweet and ripe, will go biscuity with much finesse. Lovely, cushiony mousse. Drink now-2006.

**Glaetzer**

34 Barossa Valley Way

Tanunda

SA 5352

Australia

**Phone** (8) 8563 0288

**Fax** (8) 8563 0218

<90>

**Glaetzer NV Sparkling Shiraz**

Powerful Shiraz fruit with attractive cedary oak, not at all heavy and not as sweet as some.

Drink upon purchase.

**Gloria Ferrer**

23555 Highway 121

Sonoma

CA 95476

USA

**Phone** (707) 996 7256

**Fax** (707) 996 0378

<80>

**Gloria Ferrer NV Blanc de Noirs**

Presumably 1999-based from the three-digit Lot number ending 99 on the back label, this is the best GF Blanc de Noirs I've tasted. Very fresh looking copper-tinged colour with even fresher crisp-fruit aromas and lovely, long, rich, crisp fruit on the palate.

Drink upon purchase.

<74>

**Gloria Ferrer NV Brut**

Fresh, fruity, entry level.

Drink upon purchase.

**Gobillard**

Champagne J.M. Gobillard

38 rue de l'Eglise

51160 Hautvillers

**Phone** (326) 51.00.24

**Fax** (326) 51.00.18

<84>

**J.M. Gobillard NV Tradition**

Richer and sweeter than the Grand Réserve.

Drink now-2005.

<82>

**J.M. Gobillard NV Grande Réserve**

Very fresh and clean, with a light balance and a touch of green on the finish.

Drink now-2005.

<82>

**J.M. Gobillard 1999 Cuvée Prestige**

Very rich, with very good acidity for the year, but lacks finesse.

Drink now-2005.

**Goerg**

Champagne Paul Goerg

4 Place du Mont Chenil

51130 Vertus

France

**Phone** (326) 52.15.31

**Fax** (326) 52.23.96

<84>

**Paul Goerg NV Blanc de Blancs, Brut Premier Cru**

Creamy fruit, clean and rich on the palate, with a firm backbone and a hint of undeveloped extract on the finish.

Drink now-2004.

**Golan Heights Winery**

PO Box 183

12900 Katzrin

Israel

**Phone** (972) 4 696 8420

**Fax** (972) 4 696 2220

<70>

**Yarden 1996 Blanc de Blancs**

A past release and past its best, but just scrapes in.

Drink upon purchase.

<77>

**Yarden 1997 Blanc de Blancs**

Current release Soft, rich and biscuity, this vintage is at its best and should not be kept.

Drink upon purchase.

<76>

**Yarden 1998 Blanc de Blancs**

The Blanc de Blancs is generally creamier than the Brut Galilee blend of both classic varieties. Neither are potentially longlived, but this ages slightly slower. Theoretically that makes it superior, but hedonistically I prefer the non-vintage in its year of release. This is a pre-release sample of the forthcoming vintage.

Drink upon purchase.

<78>

**Yarden NV Brut Galilee**

This Pinot Noir/Chardonnay blend is absolutely clean with tightly focused fruit and the current 1998-based blend has nice high acids. It quickly mellows on the nose and assumes a biscuity character after just one year's post-disgorgement ageing and by the second year it is tiring. The next release (1999-based) is much softer with floral notes and likely to tire even quicker.

Drink now-2004.

**Gonet**

Champagne Philippe Gonet

1 rue de la Brèche d'Oger

51190 Le-Mesnil-sur-Oger

France

**Phone** (326) 57.51.07

**Fax** (326) 57.51.03

<85>

**Michel Gonet 1996 Prestige 2000 Blanc de Blancs Brut Grand Cru**

Very rich, lovely acidity, will go biscuity. Potentially complex.

Drink now-2006.

<84>

**Philippe Gonet 1996 Blanc de Blancs, Brut Grand Cru**

Has plenty of extract and acidity.

Drink 2005-2008.

<85>

**Philippe Gonet 1998 Blanc de Blancs, Brut Grand Cru**

The lightly rich and creamy fruit is excellent considering the vintage, but it needs time for the nose to catch up and fall in step with the palate.

Drink 2004-2006.

**Gosset**

Champagne Gosset  
69 rue Jules Blondeau  
51160 Ay-Champagne  
France

**Phone** (326) 55.14.18

**Fax** (326) 51.55.88

<93>

**Gosset Celebris 1998 Rosé Brut**

Gosset has produced the best 1998 Champagne so far with this rosé version of its elite Celebris cuvée. It has such finesse, complexity and great acidity that it even beats Cristal Rosé 1995 by one percentile point!

Drink now-2023.

<95>

**Gosset Celebris 1995 Brut**

Impressively intense fruit. Great acidity. Capable of drinking now, but Gosset aficionados will give this vintage at least three years cellaring before tackling seriously.

Drink now-2023.

<92>

**Gosset 1996 Grand Millésime Brut**

This initially started off all stone-fruits and acid, then went extraordinarily fruity for Gosset and indeed for the 1996 vintage, but has since taken on considerable gravitas and now boasts a super-smooth, violet-vanilla dimension to the fruit. Already drinkable despite its huge acidity, but all Gosset aficionados will give this vintage plenty of cellaring. One of my three top scoring wines at *Decanter* magazine's 1995/1996 Champagne tasting.

Drink now-2021.

<89>

**Gosset NV Grande Réserve Brut**

Sulphured for the future, it is the palate, not the nose, where this year's release shows its true colours. Big structure, wonderful fruit and long-lasting acidity.

Drink 2004-2010.

<88>

**Gosset NV Grande Rosé Brut**

The 2002 UK shipment needed more time on yeast, but by 2003 it was deliciously fresh, fruity and ready to drink.

Drink now-2007.

**Göttelmann**

Weingut Göttelmann  
55424 Münster Sarmsheim  
Rheinstrasse 77  
Germany

**Phone** (6721) 43775

**Fax** (6721) 42605

<76>

**Weingut Göttelmann 1999 Münsterer Kapellenberg Riesling Trocken**

Much sweeter than the Weissherbst, but just as tasty.  
Drink upon purchase.

### **Goulet**

Champagne George Goulet  
65-67 avenue de Champagne  
51200 Epernay  
France

**Phone** (326) 57.41.88

**Fax** (326) 70.63.99

Part of Group J.L. Malard.

<83>

### **George Goulet NV Brut Grande Cuvée**

Formerly sold as Tête de Cuvée, this Champagne showed a lovely core of pure Pinot fruit, with a long and tasty finish at the London Wine & Spirit Trade Fair (86 points), but malolactic was much more dominant under blind conditions.

Drink now-2005.

<82>

### **George Goulet NV Blanc de Blancs Grande Cuvée**

Fresh citrusy fruit that is a touch lifted and will go toasty, but would have benefited from another year on yeast.

Drink upon purchase.

<?>

### **George Goulet NV Rosé Grande Cuvée**

At the London Wine & Spirit Trade Fair in London, this was discreet in both colour and aroma, but full of bright Pinot fruit on the palate, and would have scored 86 points. However, both bottles submitted to my tasting had mercaptan aromas and a nasty metallic aftertaste. It was like two totally different wines or, at the very least, the latter had undergone a radically different storage.

Wait and see.

### **Goutorbe**

Champagne Henri Goutorbe  
9 rue Jeanson  
51160 Ay-Champagne  
France

**Phone** (326) 55.21.70

**Fax** (326) 54.85.11

<84>

### **Goutorbe NV Cuvée Prestige, Brut Premier Cru**

Hint of lifted fruit to the central core of Pinot-dominated flavour in this Champagne.

Drink now-2005.

<85>

### **Henri Goutorbe NV Cuvée Tradition, Brut**

Clean, focused, fruit, plums and white peach.

Drink now-2005.

<85>

**Henri Goutorbe NV Brut Rosé**

In 2002, this had firm strawberry fruit, in 2003 it was fresh and easy.

Drink now-2006.

**Gramona**

Industria 36

08770 Sant Sadurní d'Anoia

Spain

**Phone** (93) 8910113

**Fax** (93) 8183284

<75>

**Gramona, III Llustros 1997 Cava Brut Nature**

Biscuity-rich with an oxidative touch.

Drink upon purchase.

**Grant Burge**

PO Box 421

Tanunda

SA 5352

Australia

**Phone** (8) 8563 3700

**Fax** (8) 8563 2807

<78>

**Grant Burge NV Barossa Valley Pinot Noir Chardonnay Brut**

Tasted twice, this was creamy-rich with a fat finish in the UK, but just a few months earlier in Australia it was biscuity, with lemon finish, and not quite as impressive.

Drink now-2004.

**Gratien**

Champagne Alfred Gratien

30 rue Maurice Cerveaux

51201 Epernay

France

**Phone** (326) 54.38.20

**Fax** (41) 51.03.55

One of Champagne's most traditional and consistently high quality producers, Alfred Gratien became part of the Henkell Trocken group when its parent company, Gratien & Meyer, was taken over by the gigantic Sekt manufacturer in 2002.

<86>

**Alfred Gratien 1992 Brut**

Almost excruciating acidity, but great concentration for the year.

Drink 2005-2009.

<88>

**Alfred Gratien NV Brut**

Delicious richness of fruit concentration. Great potential.

Drink now-2007.

<88>

**Alfred Gratien NV Cuvée Paradis**

Velvety-textured fruit supported by plenty of ripe acidity.

Drink now-2007.

**Gratien & Meyer**

Route de Montsoreau

49401 Saumur

France

**Phone** (241) 83.13.30

**Fax** (241) 83.13.49

Now part of Henkell Trocken (see Champagne Alfred Gratien above).

<72>

**Gratien & Meyer NV Saumur Brut**

Greengage aroma; crisp, clean, tangy.

Drink upon purchase.

Gratien & Meyer

<70>

**Gratien & Meyer NV Crémant de Loire Brut**

Tasty, entry level. Clean and fruity.

Drink upon purchase.

<80>

**Gratien & Meyer NV Cuvée Flamme, Saumur Brut**

Fresh, fine aroma; creamy-rich and elegant fruit. Maybe a touch on the sweet side, but beautifully focused. Superb cushiony mousse.

Drink upon purchase.

<79>

**Gratien & Meyer NV Brut Rosé, Saumur**

Fresh and fruity; lovely pale peach colour; fresh, clean, soft fruit. Superb cushiony mousse.

Drink upon purchase.

**Greffe**

Christian Greffe

Rue Neuve

37210 Vernou sur-Brenne

France

**Fax** (247) 52.12.24

**Fax** (247) 52.12.24

<79>

**C. Greffe NV Tête de Cuvée, Vouvray Brut**

Clean, fresh, rich and tasty.

Drink upon purchase.

**Grenelle**

Caves de Grenelle

20 rue Marceau  
49415 Saumur  
France

**Phone** (241) 50.17.63

**Fax** (241) 50.83.65

<74>

**Caves Louis de Grenelle NV Louis de Grenelle, Saumur Brut**

Greengage all the way. For ardent lovers of Chenin Blanc.

Drink upon purchase.

<75>

**Caves Louis de Grenelle NV Crémant de Loire Brut**

Fine and creamy. Well focused.

Drink upon purchase.

<82>

**Caves Louis de Grenelle NV Rosé Sec, Saumur**

Strawberry-raspberry; strawberry-pink colour.

Drink upon purchase.

<80>

**Caves Louis de Grenelle NV Rouge Demi-Sec, Vin Mousseux**

Real red winey fizz with tannins. Deep colour, not as sweet as some.

Drink upon purchase.

**Grimau**

Cellers Grimau

C. Nord 8

08720 Vilafranca del Penedès

**Phone** (93) 818 1372

**Fax** (93) 892 0812

<70>

**Grimau Reserva Familiar NV Cava Brut Nature**

Big on foam. Creamy pears.

Drink upon purchase.

**Gruet, G.**

Rue de Chemin Neuf

Bethon 51260 Anglure

France

**Fax** (326) 80.44.57

<84>

**G. Gruet et Fils 1998 Gilbert Gruet Grand Réserve**

No early-picked greenness, good clean, well-focused fruit.

Drink 2004-2006.

Gruet, G.

<81>

**G. Gruet et Fils 1998 Blanc de Blancs, Brut Millésimé**

Good richness of fruit for the vintage on the palate, but an early-picked greenness on the finish.  
The latter will turn toasty.  
Drink 2004-2006.

**Gruet (USA)**

Gruet Winery  
8400 Pan American Freeway N.E.  
Albuquerque  
NM 87113  
USA

**Phone** (505) 821 0055

**Fax** (505) 857 0066

<80>

**Gruet 1997 Blanc de Blancs**

Fresh, rich, citrusy fruit. Long, with clean citrusy finish.

Drink upon purchase.

<77>

**Gruet 1998 Grande Réserve**

Not to be released until the end of 2002, this vintage has extremely lemony, high-acid fruit.

Drink upon purchase.

<80>

**Gruet NV Demi-Sec**

Excellent Demi-Sec. Fresh, crisp, lively. Not too sweet at all. Clinically clean and focused.

Drink upon purchase.

<78>

**Gruet NV Brut Blanc de Noirs**

Fresher, cleaner and crisper than Gruet's non-vintage brut.

Drink upon purchase.

**Gruss**

Domaine Gruss  
25 Grand'Rue  
68420 Eguisheim  
France

**Phone** (389) 41.28.78

**Fax** (389) 41.76.66

<79>

**Joseph Gruss NV Crémant d'Alsace Brut**

The 1999-based blend has super acidity underlying clean, crisp, racy fruit. Lovely aperitif wine.

Drink upon purchase.

<76>

**Joseph Gruss NV Brut Prestige, Crémant d'Alsace**

The 1998-based blend of this cuvée is more lifted and less exciting than Gruss's cheaper, basic non-vintage Brut, yet still better than most Crémant d'Alsace.

Drink upon purchase.

**Hanging Rock Winery**

The Jim

Jim Road

Newham

Vic. 3442

Australia

**Phone** (3) 5427 0542

**Fax** (3) 5427 0310

<74>

**Macedon NV Cuvée 6**

Big and toasty.

Drink now-2004.

<?>

**Macedon NV Cuvée 7**

Firm fruit, better acidity, but cabbagey mercaptans showing on nose.

Wait and see.

<75>

**Macedon NV Cuvée 8**

Tightest fruit of the three, but a bit tinny on the aftertaste.

Drink now-2004.

**Heidsieck, Charles**

Champagne Charles Heidsieck

4 Blvd. Henry Vasnier

51100 Reims

France

**Phone** (326) 84.43.50

**Fax** (326) 84.43.99

<88>

**Charles Heidsieck 1990 Blanc des Millénaires, Brut**

This is the latest of only three vintages to be released under this label. Unlike the 1983, which took several years of post-disgorgement ageing to attain its lovely, creamy-biscuity mellowness, and the 1985, which took equally long before it went very toasty, the 1990 shipped in 2002 already had big toasty aromas. An excellent Champagne with plenty of ripe fruit mid-palate, but I thought it should have been released a couple of years earlier. Until, that is, I tasted the current 2003 shipment in France, which was rich and creamy, but had not yet reached its third phase of development.

Drink now-2006.

<91>

**Charles Heidsieck NV Brut Réserve, Mis en Cave en 1997**

Lovely vanilla-infused yeast-complexed fruit marked by richness and intensity.

Drink now-2007.

<91>

**Charles Heidsieck NV Brut Réserve, Mis en Cave en 1996**

Such is the consistency of Brut Réserve Mis en Cave that I also described this Mis en Cave as lovely vanilla-infused, yeast-complexed fruit, but the 1996 (i.e., 1995-based) is marked by softer, smoother texture although almost as rich as the 1997 (i.e., 1996-based).

Drink now-2006.

### **Heidsieck Monopole**

Champagne Heidsieck & Co Monopole

17 avenue de Champagne

51205 Epernay

France

**Phone** (326) 59.50.50

**Fax** (326) 51.87.07

<89>

### **Heidsieck Monopole 1995 Diamant Bleu, Brut**

The fluffy complexity noted at *Decanter* magazine's 1995/1996 Champagne tasting was evident at my own blind tasting, but only after the glass had warmed up. Do not over-chill!

Drink now-2008.

<?>

### **Heidsieck Monopole 1996 Gold Top Brut**

This also did nothing for me at the 2002 Annual Champagne Tasting, but was excellent at *Decanter* magazine's 1995/1996 tasting, where the fruit was already very toasty and mellow. It showed even better at *WINE* magazine's Champagne tasting, where it was obviously more recently disgorged and very fruity. I had hoped to qualify these good but contrasting reviews with the notes from my blind tasting, but the sample submitted was corked and none of the Vranken wines had back-ups.

Wait and see.

<89>

### **Heidsieck Monopole NV Diamant Blanc, Brut**

This is new to me. It's in the same uniquely-shaped bottle as the once famous Diamant Bleu, but the glass is clear, the wine pure Chardonnay rather than a classic blend and non-vintage as opposed to vintage. It is extremely rich, with creamy-lemony fruit that is just starting to develop a peachy-citrus complexity. It is also surprisingly good for a brand that the old Mumm regime had run into the ground and Vranken had, well development.

Drink now-2006.

<85>

### **Heidsieck Monopole NV Premiers Crus Brut**

M. Vranken is not above stealing other people's ideas and this one came straight off Moët's shelf. Furthermore, the lovely fruit and soft mousse here make an infinitely superior product than Moët's current non-vintage Premier Cru Brut.

Drink now-2005.

<83>

### **Heidsieck Monopole NV Blue Top Brut**

This did nothing for me at the 2002 Annual Champagne Tasting, but it was very fresh, fruity and welcome at my blind tasting in June.

Drink now-2005.

**P&C Heidsieck**

51 Boulevard Henri Vasnier

51100 Reims

France

**Phone** (326) 84.41.94

**Fax** (326) 84.43.49

Rémy-Cointreau's umbrella company controlling its Champagne interests, primarily Piper-Heidsieck and Charles Heidsieck, but also Heidsieck, Heidsieck Heritage and Ferdinand Bonnet.

<84>

**Heidsieck Héritage NV Brut**

Unbelievably toasty!

Drink now-2004.

<82>

**Ferdinand Bonnet NV Brut Héritage**

Light, soft, easy-going style with a sweetish brut finish that should not offend anyone.

Drink upon purchase.

<86>

**Ferdinand Bonnet 1996 Brut**

Promises to go very toasty very quickly, but has the acidity to support it, plus excellent Pinot perfume to add complexity and finesse.

Drink now-2008.

**Henriet-Bazin**

Champagne D. Henriet-Bazin

9 rue Dom Pérignon

51380 Villers-Marmery

France

**Phone** (326) 97.96.81

**Fax** (326) 97.97.30

<?>

**M.N. Henriet 1995 Cuvée Prestige, Blanc de Blancs Brut**

Mix of young and fairly mature aromas. Probably in a developmental stage.

Wait and see.

**Henriot**

Champagne Henriot

3 Place des Droits de l'Homme

51100 Reims

France

**Phone** (326) 89.53.00

**Fax** (326) 89.53.10

<88>

**Henriot 1988 Cuvée des Enchanteleurs, Brut**

Absolutely stunning finesse of fruit and mouse, but the nose is so far in advance of the palate.

Drink now-2007.

<90>

**Henriot 1989 Cuvée des Enchanteleurs, Brut**

This is toasty heaven for those who like to drink Champagne with a full English breakfast inside every bottle.

Drink now-2005.

<88>

**Henriot 1996 Brut Millésime**

One sample smelly, the other fine - very fine in fact.

Drink now-2008.

<90>

**Henriot 1995 Brut Millésime**

Glorious! Wonderfully rich and smooth, sublime mousse, great finesse, complexity and finesse, what more do you want?

Drink now-2008.

<86>

**Henriot NV Blanc de Blancs Brut**

This cuvée tasted sour at the 2002 Annual Champagne Tasting, and the sample submitted to my own tasting in 2002 was creamy-malo with a firm finish, but the release tasted at the 2003

Annual Champagne Tasting was rich, flavoursome and tasty.

Drink now-2004.

**Highfield Estate**

Brookby Road

RD 2

Blenheim

New Zealand

**Phone** (3) 572 8592

**Fax** (3) 572 9257

<74>

**Elstree 1997 Brut**

High-toned, but not as malty as previous vintage.

Drink now-2004.

**Hollick Wines**

Coonawarra

SA 5263

Australia

**Phone** (8) 8737 2318

**Fax** (8) 8737 2952

<73>

**Hollick 1998 Sparkling Merlot**

Light menthol fruit with a firm mousse. Would have benefited from riper grapes.

Drink upon purchase.

<85>

**Hollick 1999 Sparkling Merlot**

Menthol Merlot fruit. Dry, lengthy and not too sweet.

Drink now-2005.

**Hostomme**

Champagne M. Hostomme  
5 rue de l'Allée  
51530 Chouilly  
France

**Phone** (326) 55.40.79

**Fax** (326) 55.08.55

<?>

**Hostomme 1996 Brut**

Another wine that should not have been disgorged for at least two years.

Drink upon purchase.

**Humbrecht**

J. Bernard Humbrecht  
10 Place de la Mairie  
68420 Guebenschwihr  
France

**Phone** (389) 49.31.42

**Fax** (389) 49.20.62

<74>

**Bernard Humbrecht NV Cuvée des Amis, Crémant d'Alsace**

Fresh and clean with good acidity.

Drink upon purchase.

**Hunawihr**

CV de Hunawihr  
48 route de Ribeauvillé  
68150 Hunawihr  
France

**Phone** (389) 73.61.67

**Fax** (389) 73.33.95

<76>

**CV de Hunawihr NV Calixte, Crémant d'Alsace Brut**

The current cuvée (2000-based with 30% reserves from 1999) has a good richness of clean fruit supported by crisp acidity.

Drink upon purchase.

<75>

**CV de Hunawihr NV Calixte, Crémant d'Alsace Brut Rosé**

Clean, easy drinking with a hint of strawberries. The sample was submitted as *millésime 2000*, but there was no mention of any vintage on bottle.

Drink upon purchase.

**Hunter's**

Rapaura Road  
Blenheim

New Zealand

**Phone** (3) 572 8489

**Fax** (3) 572 8457

<88>

**Hunter's 1998 Brut**

Classy fruit and structure now, but really needs another year's post-disgorgement ageing to show true potential complexity.

Drink now-2006.

<80>

**Miru Miru 1999 Brut**

Lovely fruit guzzler. Has length and ages surprisingly well.

Drink now-2004.

**Iron Horse**

9786 Ross Station Road

Sebastopol

CA 95472

USA

**Phone** (707) 887 1507

**Fax** (707) 887 1337

<77>

**Iron Horse 1992 Brut LD**

The acidity is fantastic and the fruit has very good initial attack, but there it does not have the complexity or the finesse of the 1991 and there is an a hint of terpene-like aroma on the nose that also detracts from the finesse. This LD is very recently disgorged and maybe going through a developmental phase. It might well improve by leaps and bounds, but I will stick by my score for the next 12 months at least.

Drink now-2005.

<80>

**Iron Horse 1994 Blanc de Blancs**

Very creamy fruit with a ball of bitter, undeveloped extract at the finish. This will go biscuity and has the potential for considerable creamy-biscuity complexity, but it needs a slightly higher dosage than that used for the pre-release I tasted. Although it was only a pre-release sample and could well end up with a totally different dosage, I have the feeling that it needs more than Forrest Tancer's ideals will permit. I can see how and why he has balanced the dosage with the wine's acidity, but it really needs more time on its second cork than this dosage would allow (without it going too oxidative). I would like to see it with four or five more grams of sugar per litre and kept a year after disgorgement before release.

Drink 2004-2006.

<75>

**Iron Horse 1996 Brut Rosé**

From in the last edition's 'exuberant mature fruit' to this years rather staid and a tad green fruit. I'm still waiting that wacky, crimson-pink fruit that made Iron Horse's rosé reputation!

Drink upon purchase.

<85>

**Iron Horse 1997 Classic Vintage Brut**

Much softer and finer than the 1996, with refreshing, crispy-crunchy fruit riding on a lovely cushiony mousse.

Drink upon purchase.

<77>

**Iron Horse 1998 Wedding Cuvée**

Fresh, light and fragrant.

Drink upon purchase.

**J Wine Company**

11447 Old Redwood Highway

Healdsburg

CA 95448

USA

**Phone** (707) 431 5400

**Fax** (707) 431 5410

<80>

**J 1995 Brut** (*magnum*)

Some terpene-like qualities creeping in.

Drink upon purchase.

<85>

**J 1997 Brut**

Fresh, crisp, refreshing, crunchy fruit, bobbing around on a medium-firm mousse of very small bubbles. The best, most accessible vintage of J as a first release in a standard 75cl bottle.

Drink upon purchase.

**Jacquart**

Champagne Jacquart

6 rue de Mars

51066 Reims

France

**Phone** (326) 07.20.20

**Fax** (326) 57.78.14

<90>

**Jacquart 1987 Brut**

Love this. Great acidity. Rich, intense. A great Champagne to explore at the table. To think that this was merely okay, not special, when released!

Drink now-2004.

<90>

**Jacquart 1992 Blanc de Blancs, Cuvée Mosaïque**

Creamy-rich oxidative aromas followed by intense, oaky-rich fruit (or what seems oaky, anyway) on finish.

Drink now-2006.

<88>

**Jacquart 1992 Brut Mosaïque**

Lovely fluffy mousse of minuscule creaming bubbles. Lean fruit propelled by refreshing acidity.

Drink now-2006.

<90>

**Jacquart 1996 Brut Mosaïque Millésimé**

Rich, deliciously succulent, brilliantly focused, sherbety fruit with bracing acidity, yet not too brut and a soft, creamy aftertaste. Exceptional finesse. A truly resounding success for an early-release 1996. One year later, the next disgorgement was much better on the palate than the nose or finish, demonstrating that Jacquart was absolutely right to release this early.

Drink now-2007.

<89>

**Jacquart 1996 Blanc de Blancs, Brut Mosaïque**

Great concentration of fruit, so pure and focused. A truly excellent vintage Champagne that is a delight to drink now and will continue to improve, but not quite in the same class as Jacquart's 1996 Brut Millésime.

Drink now-2008.

<87>

**Jacquart NV Brut Mosaïque**

The current release is 1997-based and was at its best over Christmas 2001, but had lost freshness by the 2002 Annual Champagne Tasting, when it had picked up a chocolaty nuance, which is fabulous if part of a slowly evolving rich aftertaste on a 50 year old Champagne, but odd and unwelcome on a current non-vintage cuvée. The previous release had gone malty at about the same time. The next release, however, is of an entirely different order of quality. Based on the 1998 vintage and due to be launched in October 2002, this cuvée is totally fruit-driven at the moment, but its depth, extract and acidity is exceptional for the (base) year and this will ensure a far more positive evolution than the current and previous releases.

Drink now-2006.

<85>

**Jacquart NV Brut Tradition**

This is the one that Jacquart does not bother to mention on its own website, although I cannot understand why. It is amazingly fresh, floral and focused and an absolute relief after a run of dull and boring, far more famous Champagne names.

Drink now-2004.

<90>

**Jacquart NV Brut de Nominée**

By June 2002 it became clear that the second release of this brilliant new, stylishly packaged cuvée is every bit as outstanding as the first. After drinking several bottles throughout the following year, I can safely say that it is maintaining this standard.

Drink now-2006.

<85>

**Jacquart NV Brut Mosaïque Rosé**

Soft and sweet, but balanced by acidity, with raspberries and strawberries from nose to aftertaste.

Drink now-2005.

**Jacquesson**

Champagne Jacquesson & Fils

68 rue du Colonel Fabien

51200 Dizy

France

**Phone** (326) 55.68.11

**Fax** (326) 51.06.25

This house is probably doing more than any other to improve quality from the ground up, operating a very expensive form of viticulture, from cover-cropping to ploughing, no herbicides, short pruning, double-debudding etc. Jacquesson is the first, I believe, to train Pinot Noir and Meunier on a permanent cordon, as opposed to employing a replacement branch, and growing the vines much closer together to restrict the branch length, which means fewer fruiting canes, but entails a lot more work to improve exposure and ventilation. What this means in real terms is that Jacquesson managed to harvest grapes that actually looked like grapes, even in the obscenely huge, rotten and underripe 2001 vintage. Not many others did, I can assure you.

<?>

**Jacquesson 1990 Grand Vin Signature, Brut**

Disgorged in July 2000, this had a toffee-like character at the 2002 Annual Champagne Tasting, but earlier disgorgements scored consistently high (91 points) in the 2000 and 2001 editions.

Wait for other disgorgements.

Wait and see.

<87>

**Jacquesson 1993 Grand Vin Signature, Brut**

Big for a 1993, with mature, mellow, biscuity-toffee complexity on the nose, followed by powerful fruit on the palate, hinting of coconut on the finish, with a truly excellent, cushiony mousse. Disgorged January 2001.

Drink now-2006.

<90>

**Jacquesson 1995 Grand Vin Signature, Brut**

Creamy-walnut aromas with full, rich and satisfying fruit on the palate.

Drink now-2008.

<85>

**Jacquesson 1995 Dizy "Corne Beautray"**

Deepish lemon-yellow colour with exotics aromatics mingling with more classic creamy-walnut nuances. Splendid acidity. No dosage, but would have been better with even 3-4g/l.

Drink now-2005.

<88>

**Jacquesson 1995 Blanc de Blancs, Brut Grand Cru**

Up one percentile point on the last edition's rating (which in turn was up one on the year before), the fruit in this vintage is just settling down into a rich, vanilla-dusted mode.

Drink now-2008.

<90>

**Jacquesson 1998 Dizy "Le Clos de Jacquesson"**

This is a very special wine. It is so expressive of Meunier, as might be expected of a single-vineyard, pure Meunier Champagne, yet so few exist and none come close to this in terms of either varietal character or intrinsic quality. This is everything that Moët's Les Champs de Romont should be, but is not.

Drink now-2007.

<87>

**Jacquesson NV Brut Perfection Rosé**

Fine, firm, perfumed fruit with excellent acidity.

Drink now-2004.

<83>

### **Jacquesson NV Brut Perfection**

The last edition's cuvée had become quite oxidative by the end of 2001 and the fresh and easy Brut Perfection tasted at the 2002 Annual Champagne Tasting was obviously a new blend, but it was just a bit too easy-going, not reaching the parts that others did at that event and this was exactly the same story at my own blind tasting in June 2002.

Drink upon purchase.

<90>

### **Jacquesson NV Brut Cuvée No. 728**

This is the first release of Jacquesson's new non-vintage, so it's goodbye Brut Perfection, hello Brut Cuvée No. 728. Or rather it is for a year, then it will be onto Brut Cuvée No. 729 and so on: the 728 being 2000-based, the 729 2001-based, etc. I really wish they had started with Cuvée No. 000 - it would have it a lot easier to understand what we're drinking. This is Jacquesson's biggest mistake: remember Leclerc-Briant's "Les Authentiques"? They started off with the number 43 representing 1991 as the year of bottling and jumped 10 on an annual basis. People soon grew tired of trying to work it out. Oh, and as for blending to a consistent house non-vintage every year: forget it, that notion has been chucked out of the window with the bath-water. The latest philosophy is 'Instead of ironing out vintage variation, Jacquesson's new brut will represent the best possible blend every year.' Brave or stupid? No doubt we will find out, but certainly such a dramatic change could only be carried off by a small quality house. The big brands depend on every bottle tasting near enough the same. So what do we have here? Effectively, a secondary vintage that has the luxury of manipulation by reserve wines. Whatever you call it, this concept can only work if the number of true vintages declared returns to three or four out of every ten. That would free up more higher quality base wines to fulfil Jacquesson's stated aim of producing the best possible non-vintage blend every year. It would also send out a clear message that the new philosophy is not just marketing hype. Jacquesson has to be seen to be doing something that clearly demonstrates where the added quality is coming from. What's Cuvée No. 728 like? Very good, in fact. Very floral on the nose, extremely elegant and fresh Meunier on the palate, but also rich, with seductive, vanilla-dusted fruit on the finish. It's a Champagne that can be aged and with the numbering, I suspect that it will indeed be cellared by Jacquesson aficionados.

Drink now-2007.

### **Jacquinet**

34 Maurice Cerveaux

51202 Epernay

**Phone** (326) 54.36.81

**Fax** (326) 55.67.33

<87>

### **Jacquinet 1990 Symphony Brut Grande Réserve**

Very fresh, clean, sweet-ripe fruit on the palate.

Drink now-2004.

### **Jamain**

Champagne Pierre Jamain

1 rue des Tuileries

51260 La Celle-sous-Chantemerle

France

**Phone** (326) 80.21.64

**Fax** (326) 80.29.32

<87>

**Pierre Jamain NV Brut Rosé**

The next release, due out in November 2002, is a sweet-ripe *assemblage* of 1997, 1998 and 1999, with a creamy aftertaste.

Drink now-2004.

**Jeanmaire**

Champagne Jeanmaire

Château Malakoff

3 rue Malakoff

51207 Epernay

France

**Phone** (326) 59.50.10

**Fax** (326) 54.78.52

<87>

**Jeanmaire 1992 Champagne Elysée, Brut Millésime**

If you can put up with the kitsch, brassy-metal casing around this bottle, you will be rewarded by rich, creamy, well-structured fruit that has good biscuitiness on the aftertaste, yet is capable of more complex development.

Drink now-2008.

<83>

**Jeanmaire NV Cuvée Brut**

Fresh, creamy-fruity.

Drink upon purchase.

**Juvé & Camps**

Sant Venat 1

08770 Sant Sadurní d'Anoia

Spain

**Phone** (93) 8911000

**Fax** (93) 8912100

<80>

**Juvé & Camps 1997 Cava Milesimé Brut**

Oxidative terpenes with creamy fruit on finish. Vanilla aftertaste.

Drink now-2004.

**Kageneck'sche**

Gräflich von Kageneck'sche Wein & Sektkellerei

Kupfertorstrasse 35

79206 Breisach-am-Rhein

**Phone** (7667) 901128

**Fax** (7667) 901100

<79>

**Gräfllich von Kageneck'sche Wein- und Sektkellerei 1999 Bugginger Maltesergarten Spätburgunder Brut**

I'll start off with the negative point: amylic aromas, but these will subside and underneath there is lovely, crisp Pinot fruit with the softest, fluffiest mousse.

Drink now-2005.

**Kesselstatt**

Weingut Reichsgraf von Kesselstatt

Schloss Marienlay

54317 Morscheid

Germany

**Phone** 06500 91690

**Fax** 06500 916969

<77>

**Weingut Reichsgraf von Kesselstatt 1995 Palais Kesselstatt Riesling Brut**

Fresh, crisp, clean and surprisingly young fruit for a seven year old Sekt.

Drink upon purchase.

**Kientzheim-Kaysersberg**

CV Kientzheim-Kaysersberg

10 rue des Vieux Moulins

68240 Kientzheim

France

**Phone** (389) 47.13.19

**Fax** (389) 47.34.38

<78>

**CV de Kientzheim-Kaysersberg NV Anne Boecklin, Crémant d'Alsace Brut**

The sample tasted was 1999-based with 25% reserves from 1998 and another 25% reserves from 1997, which accounts for the richness, which was noticeably greater than most other 1999-based Crémant d'Alsace. Bags of fruit, nice acidity.

Drink upon purchase.

**Knappstein**

2 Pioneer Avenue

Clare

SA 5453

Australia

**Phone** (8) 8842 2600

**Fax** (8) 8842 3831

<80>

**Knappstein 1999 Chainsaw Sparkling Shiraz**

Bags of raspberry black cherry and Victoria plum fruit. Not too sweet. Absolutely ready to gulp!

Drink upon purchase.

**Koehly**

Charles Koehly  
36 rue du Pinot Noir  
68590 Rodern  
France  
**Phone** (389) 73.00.61  
**Fax** (389) 73.05.38  
<80>

**Koehly NV Blanc de Noirs, Crémant d'Alsace**

Lovely depth of Pinot fruit underscored by excellent acidity. The fruit should go creamy-tangy over the next 12 months or so.

Drink now-2004.

<74>

**Koehly NV Crémant St-Urbain, Crémant d'Alsace**

The 1999-based blend of this cuvée has clean fruit and good acidity.

Drink upon purchase.

**Krug**

Champagne Krug  
5 rue Coquebert  
51100 Reims  
France  
**Phone** (326) 84.44.20  
**Fax** (326) 84.44.49

Part of LVMH under the wing of Veuve Clicquot, but still has members of the Krug family running the company on a day-to-day basis. Henri Krug has officially retired, but like his father Paul Krug II, he will continue to lend a hand at assemblage time.

<96>

**Krug 1985 Brut**

Simply sumptuous!

Drink now-2013.

<95>

**Krug 1988 Brut**

Stunning richness, complexity and acidity.

Drink now-2013.

<97>

**Krug Clos du Mesnil 1988 Brut Blanc de Blancs**

A luscious creaminess on the nose is followed by decadently rich fruit on the palate. Phenomenal acid balance. Incredibly complex, yet still only a baby. For those who believe in reincarnation because you can die for it several times and it will outlive you.

Drink now-2012.

<95>

**Krug NV Grande Cuvée Brut**

Exotic, oak-dominated, hell, it's just Krug!

Drink now-2013.

<87>

**Krug Rosé NV Brut**

The Krug Rosé is the least consistent of the entire range, although I have to qualify that by emphasising that this inconsistency is not intrinsic to the wine itself, but to when it is disgorged. When freshly disgorged, this cuvée is bursting with so much red fruit freshness that the oak plays a secondary role, but the balance is delicate and this fruit is soon subsumed by the oak, as in this case (Lot number LVUBAH).  
Drink upon purchase.

**LaCache**

Cape Mentelle  
PO Box 110  
Margaret River  
WA 6280  
Australia  
**Phone** (9757) 3266  
**Fax** (9757) 3233

Made by 'Mad Harry' Osborne, formerly of Schramsberg (in the very early days) and Kendall-Jackson's wayward Kristone sparkling wine, who made LeCache in a corner of Cape Mentelle when no one was looking.

<78>

**LaCache 1995**

Creamy fruit, with good acidity and nicely balanced sweetness.  
Drink upon purchase.

**Laffond**

Domaine Laffond  
11190 Serres  
France  
**Phone** (468) 69.85.56  
**Fax** (468) 69.81.06

<75>

**Domaine Laffond NV Blanquette de Limoux**

Lifted fruit makes for attractive early drinking only.  
Drink upon purchase.

**Lambert**

Yves Lambert  
Domaine de Saint-Just  
Rue de la Prée  
Mollay  
49260 Saint-Just sur Dive  
France  
**Phone** (241) 51.62.01  
**Fax** (241) 67.94.51

<75>

**Yves Lambert NV Crémant de Loire Brut**

Light, gentle fruit that will go toasty.

Drink upon purchase.

<79>

**Yves Lambert NV Brut Rosé, Crémant de Loire**

Vanilla-dusted elegant, fine clean fruit. Not at all oaky (have mentioned vanilla in both Yves Lambert wines), but more vanilla-sugar dusted fruit. Very fresh.

Drink upon purchase.

**Langlois-Château**

3 rue Léopold Palustre

St-Hilaire-St-Florent

49400 Saumur

France

**Phone** (241) 40.21.40

**Fax** (241) 40.21.49

<77>

**Langlois NV Saumur Brut**

Clean, focused and quite gluggy. Not a fresh sample. Langlois-Château likes to promote Crémant de Loire, not Saumur. Acquired elsewhere.

Drink upon purchase.

<75>

**Langlois NV Crémant de Loire Brut**

Clean, light and fruity without any of the metallic edge that dogged earlier cuvées.

Drink upon purchase.

**Lanson**

Champagne Lanson

12 Boulevard Lundy

51100 Reims

France

**Phone** (326) 78.50.50

**Fax** (326) 78.50.99

<92>

**Noble Cuvée de Lanson 1989 Brut**

Just beginning to develop walnutty-biscuity complexity. Fabulous.

Drink now-2012

<90>

**Lanson 1995 Gold Label Brut**

Like a true Lanson vintage, the 1995 has improved dramatically in the first year of its release, jumping two percentile points from an excellent 88 to a stunning 90. Absolute quality shines through the fruit, which already shows some creamy-crumbly biscuits, hints of mellow toasty complexity, and a wonderfully smooth, vanilla-infused finish.

Drink now-2010.

<94>

**Lanson 1996 Gold Label Brut**

Classic 1996 crisp, tight acidity. Brilliant lemon-lime zesty fruit. Intense. Great for drinking now only if you're into razor-sharp acidity.

Drink now-2023.

<88>

**Lanson NV Black Label**

Rich and fine, with excellent acidity, and vanilla building on the finish, this year's release will age beautifully, although can also be consumed straight away with ease: your choice. I reserved opinion in the last edition's release because I was uncertain how it (EU Lot number L35231353) would evolve. Tasted one year late it had turned out much fresher than I imagined (84 points), but I would drink it up sooner rather than later.

Drink now-2008.

**Lantieri de Paratico**

Via S. Paratico

50 - 25031 Capriolo

Italy

**Phone** (030) 736151

**Fax** (030) 736151

<74>

**Lantieri NV Franciacorta Satèn**

Fresh with a true Satèn mousse, but needs more richness of fruit to warrant a higher score.

Drink upon purchase.

**Larmandier-Bernier**

Champagne Larmandier-Bernier

43 rue du 28 août

51130 Vertus

France

**Phone** (326) 52.13.24

**Fax** (326) 52.21.00

<84>

**Larmandier-Bernier NV Blanc de Blancs Premier Cru**

Concentrated, but rustic.

Drink now-2006.

**Larroque**

Mas des Combes

81600 Gaillac

France

**Phone** (563) 57.06.13

**Fax** (563) 57.48.31

<77>

**Mas des Combes NV Gaillac Demi-Sec**

The fruit in this wine reminds me of Beauty of Bath, a variety of apple my grandmother was particularly fond of.

Drink now-2004.

**Lauffen**

Wg. Lauffen  
In Brühl 48  
74348 Lauffen  
Germany  
**Phone** (7133) 1850  
**Fax** (7133) 18560  
<74>

**Weingärtnergenossenschaft Lauffen 1999 Lauffener Katzenbeisser Spätburgunder Trocken**

Strawberries nose and palate.  
Drink upon purchase.

**Laurent-Perrier**

Champagne Laurent-Perrier  
Domaine de Tours-sur-Marne  
51150 Tours-sur-Marne  
France  
**Phone** (326) 58.91.22

**Fax** (326) 58.77.29

Rumours about a merger with Château Malakoff (Champagnes Beaumet, Jeanmaire and Oudinot).

<85>

**Laurent-Perrier 1993 Brut**

Nice, fresh, rich vintage style.  
Drink now-2006.

<89>

**Grand Siècle Alexandra 1990 Brut Rosé par Laurent-Perrier**

This vintage has not evolved since the last edition. Still waiting for the pepperiness to subside, when I expect the score to creep up. In the meantime, why does this expensive Champagne have a cheap and nasty wire cage that is neither anodised nor lacquered?

Drink 2005-2007.

<96>

**Grand Siècle NV La Cuvée par Laurent-Perrier, Brut**

The sample submitted (LX35101) beautifully toasty, with great acidity and laser-focused fruit, without any hint of pepperiness. Still years away from perfection, this is Grand Siècle at its best, and in 2003 it was simply sublime. We appear to have moved away from the pepperiness first experienced in the 1990 vintaged version of Grand Siècle, and present to one degree or another in some "La Cuvée" blends. However, I can testify from my own cellar that even the most peppery releases eventually do achieve a lovely harmony that is well worth the wait.

Drink 2004-2013.

<?>

**Laurent-Perrier NV Ultra Brut**

Tasted several times, the worst example being at the 2002 London Wine Trade Fair, when it smelled of cauliflower. Most other times it was simply dull on the nose with an ungainly pepperiness and lack of finesse on the palate. Once, just once, it was fresh and crisp with excellent fruit. I have come to the conclusion that although some shipments are definitely better

than others, this wine is particularly sensitive to variations in transport and storage conditions. Probably best to buy only in France and definitely insist on tasting first (then make sure the EU Lot number is exactly the same).

Drink upon purchase.

<85>

**Laurent-Perrier NV Brut L.P.**

More body and richness than normal.

Drink now-2006.

**Lavernoya**

Cavas Lavernoya

Sant Pere 17

08770 Sant Sadurní d'Anoia

Spain

**Phone** (93) 891 2202

**Fax** (93) 891 1159

<75>

**Lacrima Baccus Primerisimo Gran Cuvée 1999 Cava Brut**

Soft and creamy. Fresh.

Drink upon purchase.

**Lehmann**

Peter Lehmann Wines

Para Road

Tanunda

SA 5352

Australia

**Phone** (8) 8563 2500

**Fax** (8) 8563 3402

<80>

**Black Queen 1994**

Floral, cherry fruit, with grippy tannins providing added structure.

Drink upon purchase.

**Lemaire**

Champagne R.C. Lemaire

19 rue Pasteur

51200 Damery

France

**Phone** (326) 58.41.31

**Fax** (326) 58.39.28

<90>

**R.C. Lemaire 1996 Chardonnay, Millésime Premier Cru Brut**

Rich, lemony, *barrique*-fermented fruit with little oakiness and searing acidity.

Drink now-2007.

<83>

**R.C. Lemaire NV Brut Rosé**

Rich and tasty with good acidity.

Drink upon purchase.

<83>

**R.C. Lemaire NV Sélect Réserve, Brut**

Biscuity-rich, high-acid fruit going even biscuitier.

Drink now-2005.

**Lenoble**

Champagne A.R. Lenoble

34 rue Paul-Douce

51480 Damery

France

**Phone** (326) 58.42.60

**Fax** (326) 58.65.57

<85>

**A.R. Lenoble 1995 Gentilhomme, Brut Grand Cru**

The fruit is mellowed by aromas of vanilla and toast, yet still remains fresh.

Drink now-2006.

<84>

**A.R. Lenoble NV Brut Rosé**

Gluggy!

Drink upon purchase.

<83>

**A.R. Lenoble NV Réserve Extra Brut**

Fresh, light and clean, with gentle, creamy fruit.

Drink now-2004.

**Lingenfelder**

Weingut Lingenfelder

Hauptstrasse 27

67229 Grosskarlbach

Germany

**Phone** (6238) 754

**Fax** (6238) 1096

<82>

**Lingenfelder NV Satyr Brut**

Very clear, clean Riesling fruit, lovely acidity. Made without the addition of any sugar.

Drink upon purchase.

**Loriot**

Champagne Michel Loriot

13 rue de Bel-Air

51200 Festigny

France

Monsieur

**Fax** (326) 58.03.98

<84>

**Michel Lorient NV Rosé Brut**

Fresh, easy-drinking, with a hint of strawberries.

Drink upon purchase.

**Mailly**

Champagne Mailly

28 rue de la Liberation

51500 Mailly-Champagne

France

**Phone** (326) 49.41.10

**Fax** (326) 49.42.27

I have never been so impressed by this mono-cru cooperative than I am now. The quality and innovation has been on a roll for the last couple of years.

<88>

**Mailly Grand Cru 1996 Brut**

Very good fruit, structure and finesse.

Drink now-2016.

<90>

**Mailly Grand Cru 1996 La Terre Brut**

Ditto above, but smoother, with finer acids.

Drink now-2016.

<90>

**Mailly Grand Cru 1996 Les Echansons Brut**

More finesse than the standard 1996 Brut.

Drink now-2016.

<90>

**Mailly Grand Cru 1996 L'Intemporelle Brut**

Fatter, yet still crisp thanks to the acids.

Drink now-2016.

<87>

**Mailly Grand Cru 1995 Cuvée Les Echansons, Brut**

Although oxidative, it has smooth fruit with biscuity complexity on the palate.

Drink now-2006.

<85>

**Mailly Grand Cru 1995 Brut Millésime, Grand Cru**

There was nothing wrong with this vintage at the 2002 Annual Champagne Tasting, but it did not grab me and seemed to be much less expressive than the year before when its complex fruit and smooth creamy-vanilla finish earned it an honourable 83 points. It did, however, stand out at *Decanter* magazine's 1995/1996 Champagne tasting, where its smooth, violey fruit was both delicious and elegant, deserving 89 points at least.

Drink now-2005.

<85>

**Mailly Grand Cru NV Brut Réserve, Grand Cru**

Rich Pinot fruit with excellent acidity. Promises to deepen in flavour, gradually acquiring biscuity complexity.

Drink now-2006.

<84>

**Mailly Grand Cru NV Blanc de Noirs, Grand Cru**

Although drinkable now, this year's release is a bit firm and would gain much mellowness, finesse and complexity from an extra year in bottle.

Drink now-2006.

<85>

**Mailly Grand Cru NV Extra Brut, Grand Cru**

The peardrop aromas do not enthuse me, but they will subside and the fruit underneath has real creamy richness.

Drink now-2005.

**Mandois**

Champagne Henri Mandois

66 rue du Gal-de-Gaulle

51200 Pierry

France

**Phone** (326) 54.03.18

**Fax** (326) 51.53.66

I am seldom dissatisfied by Mandois, but I have to confess that I was disappointed by an experimental cuvée that I tasted in March 2003. It was a single vineyard (Les Clos), pure varietal (Meunier) Champagne, and I have been waiting for producers to craft a premium Champagne out of this allegedly lesser grape. I therefore had high hopes for Mandois' effort make the best Meunier possible, but it was nothing special, just an agreeably fresh and fruity fizz. However, its lacklustre performance could well be due to its vintage, 2000, which was not the most awe-inspiring year for Champagne, or the fact that it has had barely one year on yeast and will need at least another two before it can be released as a vintage Champagne.

<90>

**Henri Mandois 1996 Cuvée Victor Mandois, Brut**

Tightening up, but has great concentration and extract, with fresh citrus fruit on the nose and lemon-sherbet fruit on the palate. It almost achieves the last edition's high-flying 91 point score.

Give the current release at least one year on its cork, then follow its slow development by not drinking all bottles at once!

Drink 2004-2013.

<89>

**Henri Mandois 1997 Blanc de Blancs, Brut Premier Cru**

Really quite gluggy (aren't all Mandois Champagnes?), but there some serious development of yeast-complexed fruit that hold the attention on the finish and aftertaste. This should age well.

Really splendid for the year.

Drink now-2006.

<90>

**Henri Mandois 1998 Millésime Brut Premier Cru**

Rich fruit with a hint of the exotic.

Drink now-2007.

<85>

**Henri Mandois NV Brut Rosé, Premier Cru**

Fresh, rich, tasty and creamy, with hints of strawberry, but lacks the bursting summer fruits this *cuvée* normally displays.

Drink upon purchase.

<86>

**Henri Mandois NV Cuvée de Réserve, Brut**

Fresh and fruity with an invigorating, crisp, sherbety finish. My only complaint about Mandois is that it is always far too easy to drink!

Drink now-2005.

**Margaine**

Champagne A. Margaine

3 avenue de Champagne

51380 Villers-Marmery

France

**Phone** (326) 97.92.13

**Fax** (326) 97.97.45

<85>

**A. Margaine NV Brut Premier Cru**

Rich and clean fruit with a classic lean structure. Excellent length.

Drink now-2006.

**Marne et Champagne**

22 rue Maurice-Cerveaux

51205 Epernay

France

**Phone** (326) 78.50.50

**Fax** (326) 54.55.77

<87>

**Gauthier 1993 Brut**

Very soft, fluffy fresh yet smoky fruit.

Drink now-2005.

<84>

**Gauthier NV Brut**

Good basic Champagne. Youthful, will go toasty. Excellent acidity. Concentrated.

Drink now-2006.

**Marniquet**

Champagne Marniquet

8 rue des Crayères

51480 Venteuil

France

**Phone** (326) 58.48.99

<87>

**Jean-Pierre Marniquet 1992 Brut Millésime**

Creamy-liquorice aroma followed by rich, nicely acidic fruit, with something peachy-firm and yet tropical on the finish. Acidity finally dominates.  
Drink now-2006.

**Marques de Monistrol**

Marqués de Monistrol  
08970 Sant Joan Despí  
Spain

**Phone** (93) 477 6362

**Fax** (93) 477 6363

<75>

**Marques de Monistrol 1997 Cava Gran Reserva Privada Brut**

Some glugginess.

Drink upon purchase.

<78>

**Marques de Monistrol NV Cava Reserva Brut Selección Especial**

Rich and fruity, supported by smooth-creamy mousse.

Drink now-2004.

<78>

**Marques de Monistrol NV Cava Gran Reserva de la Familia Rosado Brut**

Best rosé, perfumed fruit.

Drink upon purchase.

**Martel**

Champagne GH Martel  
69 avenue de Champagne  
51318 Epernay Cedex  
France

**Phone** (326) 51.06.33

**Fax** (326) 54.41.52

Owned by Christophe Rapeneau, the least known biggest man in Champagne. In addition to Martel, he owns the eponymous house of Rapeneau, which specialises in supermarket brands, and Mansard-Baillet. He also produces Champagnes under the following brands: Charles Orban, Comte de Lamotte, Comte de Noiron, Marcel Pierre, Charles de Roy, Francois Lemmer, and Maxim's (formerly the preserve of De Castellane), whilst the Paul Louis Martin label is reserved for Coteaux Champenois. Monsieur Rapeneau has recently purchased the Aubeis Château de Bligny and its two hectare vineyard.

<84>

**Château de Bligny NV Brut Réserve**

Very rich, with plenty of fruit. A good basic Champagne

Now-2003

**Massana Noya**

Finca Maset del Lleó s/n  
08739 Sant Pau d'Ordal  
Spain

**Phone** (3) 899 4124

**Fax** (3) 899 4139

<75>

**Eudald Massana Noya 1998 Cava Brut Nature**

Sweet fruit with oxidative development. Fruit on finish. Coconutty aftertaste.

Drink upon purchase.

**Massin**

Champagne Rémy Massin & Fils

Grande Rue

10110 Ville-sur-Arce

France

**Phone** (325) 38.74.09

**Phone** (325) 38.77.67

<85>

**Rémy Massin et Fils NV Brut Réserve**

Expressive Mailly fruit dominates this Champagne. Fresh, easy drinking style with sweet fruit on the finish.

Drink now-2006.

**Mathieu**

Champagne Serge Mathieu

Les Riceys

10340 Avirey-Lingey

France

**Phone** (325) 29.32.58

**Fax** (325) 29.11.57

<89>

**Serge Mathieu 1996 Brut**

Really needs time; would benefit from extra time on yeast.

Drink 2004-2009.

<90>

**Serge Mathieu NV Cuvée Tradition, Blanc de Noirs Brut**

The current cuvée (a blend of 1996/7/8) is deliciously rich and elegant, with oodles of clean, precise fruit.

Drink now-2006.

<90>

**Serge Mathieu NV Cuvée Prestige Brut**

More complex than Cuvée Tradition, but although rich, much less emphasis on fruit. Will go creamy-biscuity. Current cuvée is a blend of 1996/7.

Drink now-2006.

<88>

**Serge Mathieu NV Tête de Cuvée Select, Brut**

The current cuvée (a blend of 1995/6) is just developing biscuity richness.

Drink now-2006.

<88>

**Serge Mathieu NV Rosé Brut**

Strawberry-Pinot, fruit-driven. Very gluggy. Everything a ready-drinking rosé should be. The current cuvée is in fact pure 1998, although it does not claim to be vintage.

Drink upon purchase.

**Meersburg**

Staatsweingut Meersburg

Seminarstrasse 6

88709 Meersburg

Germany

**Phone** (7532) 357

**Fax** (7532) 358

<74>

**Staatsweingut Meersburg 1999 Baden Brut**

Stands out for intensity of fruit, some of it green (but will go toasty).

Drink now-2004.

**Melton**

Charles Melton

Krondorf Road

Tanunda

SA 5352

Australia

**Phone** (8) 8563 3606

**Fax** (8) 8563 3422

<89>

**Charles Melton NV Sparkling Red**

Clean, pure fruit, with oak showing on the aftertaste. A beautifully smooth mousse adds to the finesse.

Drink now-2004.

**Mercier**

Champagne Mercier

68/70 avenue de Champagne

51200 Epernay

France

**Phone** (326) 51.22.00

**Fax** (326) 54.84.23

<83>

**Mercier NV Brut Rosé**

Toasty.

Drink upon purchase.

<85>

**Mercier NV Brut**

Mercier is typically fatter than Moët, but this year it is fatter still. However, it does have the structure and acidity to take this additional fatness without seeming either flabby or overweight. The last edition's release had developed a lovely touch of vanilla mid-palate by the end of 2001. Drink now-2005.

### **Mesnil**

Champagne Le Mesnil  
Union des Propriétaires Récoltants  
51390 Le Mesnil-sur-Oger  
France

**Phone** (326) 57.53.23

<93>

#### **Le Mesnil 1990 Vigne Sélectionnée Blanc de Blancs, Grand Cru Brut**

Sensational, creamy-walnut and coconut fruit. So very fresh. A beautiful wine.  
Drink now-2013.

<90>

#### **Le Mesnil 1995 Réserve Sélection, Blanc de Blancs, Grand Cru Brut**

Lovely fruit, finesse and complexity. This will go super-silky smooth.  
Drink now-2013.

<87>

#### **Le Mesnil NV Blanc de Blancs, Grand Cru Brut**

This biscuity-rich cuvée is 1997-based and rather than use reserve wine, the opposite philosophy has been applied, refreshing the blend with some 1996 instead. Great finesse.  
Drink now-2006.

### **Metternich**

Weingut Graf Metternich  
Grol 4  
77770 Durbach  
Germany

**Phone** 07814 2779

**Fax** 07814 2553

<75>

#### **Fürst von Metternich Sektkellerei 1999 Riesling Brut**

Initially very fine Riesling aromas, but the varietal character dissipates quickly. Good, rich fruit underneath.

Drink upon purchase.

### **Meyer Fonné**

Domaine Meyer Fonné  
24 Grand'Rue  
68230 Katzenthal  
France

**Phone** (389) 27.16.50

**Fax** (389) 27.34.17

<78>

**Meyer Fonné NV Crémant d'Alsace Brut Extra**

The current release is 1999-based, very fresh, fine and elegant, with good acidity.  
Drink upon purchase.

**Mignon & Pierrel**

Champagne Mignon & Pierrel  
24 Rue Henri Dunant  
51200 Epernay  
France

**Phone** (326) 51.93.39

**Fax** (326) 51.69.40

<85>

**Mignon & Pierrel NV Cuvée Florale Brut Rosé, Premier Cru**

Lovely lifted fruit of impressive depth.  
Drink now-2005.

**Milan**

Champagne Milan  
6 route d'Avize  
51190 Oger  
France

**Phone** (326) 57.50.09

**Fax** (326) 57.78.47

<86>

**Terres de Noël, Brut Sélection 1995 Grand Cru Blanc de Blancs - Milan**

This the third year I have tasted this wine and a fascinating experience it has been too. In the 2001 edition, I reserved judgement because of its high-tone character on the front-palate, yet there was something about its citrusy fruit from mid-palate to finish that gave me reason for 'much hope' and in the last edition I started to see this hope rewarded, although it still needed time for the nose to come together, hence its modest 83 points. The bouquet has since mellowed, while the fruit has deepened and become more yeast-complex. Don't drink all at once. Will still improve.

Drink now-2007.

<82>

**Terres de Noël, Brut Sélection 1998 Grand Cru Blanc de Blancs - Milan**

More richness of fruit than most 1998 *blanc de blancs*. Good acidity, crisp finish. Will go toasty.  
Drink now-2004.

<85>

**Jean Milan NV Brut Spécial, Grand Cru Blanc de Blancs**

The current blend (97/98) has the edge over the next blend (98/99), but both have lovely soft, rich fruit with an ultra-smooth, cushiony-creamy mouse.

Drink now-2004.

**Mirabella**

Via Cantarane  
2 - 25050 Rodengo Saiano

Italy

**Phone** (30) 611197

**Fax** (30) 611388

<75>

**Mirabella NV Franciacorta Brut Rosé**

Fresh, crisp and tasty with hints of raspberry on the finish.

Drink upon purchase.

**Miranda**

Barossa Valley Highway

Rowland Flat

SA 5352

Australia

**Phone** (8) 8524 4537

**Fax** (8) 8524 4066

<73>

**Miranda 1997 Family Reserve Sparkling Shiraz**

Very persistent fizz, not as sweet as some.

Drink upon purchase.

**Mirault**

Maison Mirault

30 rue de la Bonne Dame

37210 Vouvray

France

**Phone** (247) 52.71.62

**Fax** (247) 52.60.90

<75>

**Mirault NV Vouvray Brut**

Rich and tasty with nice foamy mousse of tiny bubbles.

Drink upon purchase.

**Moët & Chandon**

Champagne Moët & Chandon

20 avenue de Champagne

51200 Epernay

France

**Phone** (326) 51.20.00

**Fax** (326) 51.20.37

Champagne's largest producer has not sat on its laurels. It has introduced a number of innovative products over the last few years. However, it has failed to grasp opportunities (at a time when consumer interest was focused on Champagne's diversity, the non-vintage Premier Cru should have been a synergic step towards a range of vintaged premier cru and grand cru Champagnes), it can lose interest in a product (the Premier Cru quality really should be more exciting) and some new wines have shown errors of judgement (non-vintage single-vineyard Champagnes!).

Can Moët see what must be done to lead Champagne into a future that will demand unprecedented levels of transparency?

<80>

**Moët & Chandon NV White Star, Extra Dry**

Really quite good considering the reputation of Moët's cheapest cuvée. Fresh, crisp, clean and not too sweet.

Drink upon purchase.

<85>

**Moët & Chandon NV Brut Impérial**

Fruiter than normal, but not as fat as Mercier, this cuvée will go toasty just as quick as all the rest.

Drink now-2005.

<87>

**Moët & Chandon 1996 Millésime Blanc, Brut Imperial**

Intense and well-structured. Leave it to go a little toasty before drinking. This is the regular vintaged Brut Impérial: the "Millésime Blanc" is just a tweak in presentation.

Drink 2004-2009.

<85>

**Moët & Chandon NV Brut Impérial Rosé**

Rich, creamy and satisfying. Really quite a serious rosé.

Drink upon purchase.

<85>

**Moët & Chandon, Les Champs de Romont NV Sillery Grand Cru - Brut**

Very fresh, easy, gentle fruit. Light and elegant. Mid-palate fruit softened by fluffy mousse.

Fresh, crisp finish.

Drink now-2004.

<90>

**Moët & Chandon, Les Sarments d'Aÿ NV Aÿ Grand Cru, Brut**

Power, finesse and class, with elegant strawberry fruit still in evidence. Although this has power, its fine structure and acidity ensure that this *blanc de noirs* is not a massive wine like the Beast of Bollinger.

Drink now-2006.

<85>

**Moët & Chandon, Les Vignes de Saran NV Chouilly Grand Cru - Brut**

In a reverse of the usual way a *blanc de blancs* Champagne develops, the last edition's citrusy aromas have become floral. Considerable autolysis on nose, with creamy fruit building on palate. Some toasty notes mid-palate.

Drink now-2004.

<85>

**Moët & Chandon 1996 Millésime Rosé, Brut**

Tight, rich fruit that will go biscuity.

Drink now-2005.

<95>

**Cuvée Dom Pérignon 1995 Brut, Moët & Chandon**

Powerful lemony-toasty fruit, intense acidity.

Drink now-2009.

<98>

**Cuvée Dom Pérignon 1992 Rosé Brut, Moët & Chandon**

Lovely pale peach colour with fresh, deliciously delicate, wild strawberry fruit following from a seductive nose through a youthful palate to a long finish of great finesse. Little hint of its 10 years of age.

Drink now-2010.

**Moli Coloma**

Barrio el Rebato

08739 Subirats

Spain

**Phone** (93) 891 1092

**Fax** (93) 891 1092

<70>

**Sumarroca 1997 Cava Brut Nature Gran Reserva**

Raspberry coulis.

Drink upon purchase.

<70>

**Sumarroca 1999 Cava Brut Nature Gran Reserva**

Raspberry jam.

Drink upon purchase.

**Moncontour**

Château de Moncontour

37210 Vouvray

France

**Phone** (247) 52.60.77

<72>

**Château de Moncontour 1995 Cuvée Prédilection Grande Réserve - Vouvray Brut**

High acids. Tangy. For lovers of (clean) mature Chenin only.

Drink upon purchase.

<80>

**Château de Moncontour 1999 Cuvée Prédilection Grande Réserve - Vouvray Brut**

Freshness, elegance, yet fullness of fruit. Very expressive of Chenin without any greengage.

Drink upon purchase.

<74>

**Château de Moncontour NV Crémant de Loire Brut**

Vanilla-dusted greengage fruit. For lovers of Chenin Blanc, even though 20% Chardonnay.

Drink upon purchase.

**Moncuit**

Champagne Pierre Moncuit

11 rue Persault-Maheu

51190 Le Mesnil-sur-Oger

France

**Phone** (326) 57.52.65

**Fax** (326) 57.97.89

<86>

**Pierre Moncuit, Cuvée Nicole Moncuit 1995 Vieille Vigne, Brut Grand Cru Blanc de Blancs**

The last edition's 'too dominant buttery-malo aromas' have become more creamy-biscuity in this year's release. It's amazing what different disgorgements can do to a Champagne, although quite how Moncuit has managed to redress the 'quite fat' character is anyone's guess. Some high-octane 1996 for the dosage base wine, perhaps? Although vintage Champagne should technically be 100% from the year indicated, the authorities turn an official blind-eye to the base for the dosage, thus it might only be 98.5% of the year indicated. Not suggesting that is what Moncuit has done, but it's a possibility.

Drink now-2006.

<87>

**Pierre Moncuit 1996 Brut Grand Cru, Blanc de Blancs**

None of the buttery-malo aromas that dogged the 1995 vintage (84 points), this is fresh and crisp with lovely, lively-rich fruit that's tasty and satisfying.

Drink now-2006.

<82>

**Pierre Moncuit, Cuvée Nicole Moncuit 1998 Vieille Vigne, Brut Grand Cru Blanc de Blancs**

This showed more richness of fruit than most 1998 *blanc de blancs*, but the dosage was somewhat prominent, particularly on the nose, as is often the case with pre-release samples, and it was difficult to see through this.

Drink upon purchase.

**Monmousseau**

37210 Vouvray

France

**Phone** (247) 52.67.50

**Fax** (247) 52.67.98

<78>

**Monmousseau NV Cuvée JM Brut, Touraine**

Some finesse on nose, very fresh and clean; elegant fruit on palate with dusted vanilla sugar on finish.

Drink upon purchase.

**Mont Marçal**

Finca Manlleu

08732 Castellvi de la Marca

Spain

**Phone** (938) 918 281

**Fax** (938) 919 045

<82>

**Extremarium Brut de Mont-Marçal NV Cava Brut**

Delicious fruit, really quite stylish, nice ripe acidity.

Drink now-2004.

**Mont-Ferrant**

Córcega 73  
08029 Barcelona  
Spain

**Phone** (93) 4191000

**Fax** (93) 4193170

The oldest, surviving Cava house.

<75>

**Mont-Ferrant Blanes Nature NV Cava Extra Brut**

Really good, fresh fruit with very smooth creamy mousse. The current release has decent fresh fruit with a very smooth creamy mousse, but the next release promises to be even better with richer biscuity fruit.

Drink upon purchase.

**Montana**

Montana Marlborough Winery  
Main Road South  
State Highway 1  
Riverlands  
Blenheim  
New Zealand

**Phone** (3) 578 2099

**Fax** (3) 578 0463

<90>

**Montana Deutz 1996 Blanc de Blancs**

Gorgeous fruit, beautifully made. Fruit, finesse and style.

Drink now-2006.

<75>

**Lindauer NV Rosé**

Firm fruit, pleasantly tart acids, Pinot fruit dominating, but could be a straight (ie., white) Brut except for the colour.

Drink now-2005.

<78>

**Lindauer NV Brut**

Exuberantly fruity. Will go creamy-biscuity.

Drink now-2005.

<85>

**Lindauer NV Special Reserve**

Serious quality, lovely vanilla dusted fruit. Great length and acidity.

Drink now-2006.

<85>

**Montana Deutz NV Marlborough Cuvée**

This cuvée did not show well at the Waitrose Spring Tasting, but the most recent release tasted at the centralised ANZ tasting was of the best ever. Delicious fruit, so tasty, clean and focused, with a clear crisp finish.

Drink now-2006.

**Montgueret**

Château de Montgueret  
25 rue de la Mairie  
49560 Neuil-sur-Layon  
France

**Phone** (241) 59.26.26

**Fax** (241) 59.01.94

<75>

**Château de Montguéret 1998 Tête de Cuvée, Saumur Brut**

Drink now for intense fruit or in one year for toastiness.

Drink upon purchase.

<77>

**Château de Montguéret NV Crémant de Loire Brut**

Light, elegant, gentle fruit, with nice tangy acidity.

Drink upon purchase.

**Morton**

State Highway 2  
RD2 Katikati  
Bay of Plenty  
New Zealand

**Phone** (7) 552 0795

**Fax** (7) 552 0651

<80>

**Morton Estate NV Premium Brut**

Fine, firm, long flavour, nice tight fruit. Could age well.

Drink now-2006.

**Mosnel**

Il Mosnel di E. Barboglio  
Via Barboglio  
14 - 25050 Camignone  
Italy

**Phone** (30) 653117

**Fax** (30) 654236

<79>

**Il Mosnel 1998 Franciacorta Brut Satèn**

Rather too dominant coconutty-oak aroma (if these barrels were purchased as French, I'd get then DNA-tested!), but high quality, rich fruit underneath.

Drink upon purchase.

<76>

**Il Mosnel NV Franciacorta Brut**

Rich fruit, but rather aggressive mousse (needed more time on yeast).

Drink upon purchase.

**Mount Riley**

441 Lake Road  
Takapuna  
New Zealand  
**Phone** (9) 4860286  
**Fax** (9) 4860643  
<90>

**Saveé 2000 Sparkling Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough**

Absolutely Sauvignon Blanc. Absolutely Marlborough. Absolutely fresh. Absolutely fabulous summertime drinking.  
Drink upon purchase.

**Mountain Dome**

Mountain Dome Winery  
16315 E. Temple Road  
Spokane  
WA 99217  
USA  
**Phone** (509) 928 2788  
**Fax** (509) 922 8078  
<85>

**Mountain Dome 1997 Brut**

Not due to be released until late November 2002, this vintage has the crispest, clearest, most zippy-zingy-tangy fruit so far from Mountain Dome and I just love it! Lemons, limes, white peach kernel, touch of grapefruit. Nothing exotic (a positive comment in New World climes). Classic structure. Great acidity.  
Drink now-2006.  
<?>

**Mountain Dome NV Brut**

Don't know what's going on here. The basic non-vintage from our folks on hill has a curious blend of amylic, barrique and VA-lifted fruit aromas, the latter of which dominate the finish. Wait and see.

**Moutard**

Champagne Moutard  
Buxeuil  
10110 Bar-sur-Seine  
France  
**Phone** (25) 38.50.73  
**Fax** (25) 38.57.72  
<87>

**Moutard NV Brut Grande Cuvée**

Deliciously fruity. Not great finesse, but a great gulping fizz.  
Drink now-2005.  
<88>

**Moutard NV Cuvée aux 6 Cépages**

A taste of history, made in equal parts from Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Meunier and Champagne's lesser known Pinot Blanc, Petit Meslier and Arbane. From the 2000 harvest, fermented in two year old Burgundian *barriques*, sealed with corks rather than crown-caps for the second fermentation and lightly dosaged (six grams). The oak is not noticeable unless tasted blind with other non-*barrique* Champagnes, the fruit on the palate is rich yet light, fresh, soft and smooth. Drink now-2005.

**Moutardier**

Champagne Jean Moutardier

51210 Le Breuil

France

**Phone** (326) 59.21.09

**Fax** (326) 59.21.25

<87>

**Jean Moutardier 1996 Brut Millésime**

Nothing lifted here. Very good acidity. A fine wine that needs time.

Drink 2004-2010.

<83>

**Jean Moutardier 1995 Brut Millésime**

Lifted fruit.

Drink now-2004.

<84>

**Jean Moutardier NV Carte d'Or**

Plenty of fruit, but could do with more finesse.

Drink now-2005.

<85>

**Jean Moutardier NV Sélection Brut**

Very rich, with a structure and balance that is more classic than those of the Carte d'Or.

Drink now-2005.

**Mumm**

Champagne G.H. Mumm

29 rue du Champ-de-Mars

51053 Reims

France

**Phone** (326) 49.59.69

**Fax** (326) 40.46.13

<90>

**G.H. Mumm 1995 Cordon Rouge Brut Millésimé**

Still fresh, zesty and fluffy. This vintage showed beautifully at *Decanter* magazine's 1995/1996 Champagne tasting. One year late it had lovely, super-smooth, violet-vanilla fruit. Great finesse.

Drink now-2013.

<89>

**G.H. Mumm 1996 Cordon Rouge Brut Millésimé**

Truly excellent, but I still maintain (having harped on before) that this is being released too early. It could gain so much from a couple more years yeast contact that I suspect I would be scoring it in the early 90s. However, it should gain at least one more percentile point from ageing on cork and there is no denying the quality and intensity. For anyone following Mumm over the last decade it is an astonishing achievement. As James Halliday said to me at the National Wine Show in Canberra, November 2001, 'having recently tasted the 1996 Mumm Cordon Rouge I understand why you have been singing its praises so loudly'.

Drink 2005-2015.

<87>

**G.H. Mumm NV Grand Cru Brut**

This new non-vintaged Grand Cru cuvée has none of the malolactic aromas that so obvious in the last edition's preview sample. The fruit is much richer than the standard Cordon Rouge Brut Millésimé and it is, in it's own way, every bit as successful as the first release of Moët's Premier Cru cuvée. However, Moët did not keep up the standard. Hopefully Mumm will.

Drink now-2005.

<86>

**G.H. Mumm NV Brut Rosé**

Very fresh, glacier-clean, strawberry-dominated red-fruits, with a lovely, crisp, acidic finish.

Drink upon purchase.

<85>

**G.H. Mumm NV Demi-Sec**

Beautifully clean with a crisp sweetness and sumptuously smooth mousse.

Drink now-2007.

<83>

**G.H. Mumm NV Cordon Rouge Brut Millésimé**

The 1998-based Cordon Rouge Brut Millésimé (85 points) had a lovely cushiony mousse and fresh, creamy-mellow fruit at WINE magazine's Champagne tasting, but the blend had changed to the 1999-based at the 2002 Annual Champagne Tasting, when it was such a distinctly copper-tinged colour that it drew astonished remarks from everyone around. By June, however, it had changed again. Or at least the samples submitted had. Noticeably pale in colour, with very fresh aromas (almost amylic), this was presumably was the 2000-based cuvée, albeit released much earlier than expected. It is very fresh, crisp and elegant, but not in the same class as the 1998-based cuvée (as it was at the beginning of the year).

Drink upon purchase.

<84>

**G.H. Mumm, Mumm de Cramant NV Brut Chardonnay, Grand Cru**

The 1997-based 2002 release was fresh, almost green, early-picked rendition, with crisp, lemony-lime fruit (87 points), but the 1998-based 2003 release has too many green elements. The grapes for this cuvée should be harvested later, while the wine should be released earlier (maximum two years on yeast).

Drink now-2004.

**Mumm Napa Winery**

8445 Silverado Trail

Rutherford

CA 94573

USA

**Phone** (800) 686 6272

**Fax** (707) 942 3470

In June 1999 Seagram sold Mumm and Perrier-Jouët to a private investment firm, which then sold it on to Allied Domecq. Mumm Cuvée Napa was not part of the deal and was in fact sold by Seagram to another UK drinks giant, the Diageo group. This was a source of confusion for consumers, particularly as Mumm Cuvée Napa's label incorporates G.H. Mumm's trademarked cordon rouge, but the issue was resolved when Diageo sold Mumm Cuvée Napa to Allied Domecq in February 2002.

<88>

**DVX by Mumm Cuvée Napa 1996 Brut**

Up two points on the last edition's score and seems quite capable of creeping up at least one more over the next year or two. High acids and richness of extract so evident.

Drink now-2005.

<82>

**Mumm Cuvée Napa 1996 Vintage Reserve Brut**

This vintage is significantly superior to the 1995 at the same age. It is a wine that doesn't tell you everything with the first sip. Quite easy to dismiss, but the fruit is very concentrated and potentially complex, with excellent depth and great acidity.

Drink now-2005.

<78>

**Mumm Cuvée Napa 1997 Blanc de Blancs Brut**

Nothing if not consistent, this year's Blanc de Blancs like the last edition's needs to be aged for a year to bring complexity and finesse to the rich Chardonnay fruit that is currently somewhat staid and solid.

Drink 2004-2006.

<80>

**Mumm Cuvée Napa NV Blanc de Noirs Brut**

Rich, tasty and serious with a nice nugget of extract promising to open up.

Drink now-2004.

<77>

**Mumm Cuvée Napa NV Brut Prestige**

Loved the fine, fresh aromas and the firm yet cushiony mousse, but the fruit on the palate lacked the creaminess of the last edition's cuvée, although it showed good, crispy-crunchy fruit with plums and buckets of acid (literally!).

Drink upon purchase.

**Muré**

René Muré

RN 83

68250 Rouffach

France

**Phone** (389) 78.58.00

**Fax** (389) 78.58.01

<79>

**René Muré 1997 Cuvée Prestige, Crémant d'Alsace Brut**

Disgorged in November 2001 (this is indicated top-left of label), this wine has a pronounced, fruity nose with very rich, mature fruit on the palate, and this is supported by excellent acidity, but it is a wine to be drunk sooner rather than later.

Drink upon purchase.

**Neipperg**

Weingut des Grafen Neipperg

Im Schloss

74193 Schwaigern

Germany

**Phone** (7138) 941400

**Fax** (7138) 944007

<78>

**Weingut des Grafen Neipperg 2000 Riesling Brut**

Clean, fresh, deep and long Riesling fruit.

Drink upon purchase.

**Nerleux**

Domaine de Nerleux

4 rue de la Paleine

49260 Saint Cyr-en-Bourg

France

**Phone** (241) 51.61.04

**Fax** (241) 51.65.34

<78>

**Domaine de Nerleux NV Crémant de Loire Brut**

Strong, rich, clean. Fine mousse.

Drink upon purchase.

**Neuville**

De Neuville

BP 47 St-Hilaire-St-Florent

49426 Saumur

France

**Phone** (241) 53.03.10

**Fax** (241) 53.03.19

<75>

**de Neuville NV Cuvée Prestige, Crémant de Loire Brut**

1st corked. 2nd excellent fruit. Clean, fresh.

Drink upon purchase.

**Neuweier-Bühlertal**

Wg. Neuweier-Bühlertal

Mauerbergstrasse 32

76534 Baden-Baden Neuweier

Germany

**Phone** 07223 52074

<72>

**Winzergenossenschaft Neuweier-Bühlertal 2000 Neuweierer Schloss Rodeck Riesling Trocken**

Easy-going.

Drink upon purchase.

**Nyetimber**

Nyetimber Vineyard

Gay Street

West Chiltington

Pulborough

Sussex

RH20 2HH

Great Britain

**Phone** (1798) 813989

**Fax** (1798) 815511

Established in 1988 by an American couple, Stuart and Sandy Moss, who have won almost everything except the Noble Prize for the excellence of Nyetimber sparkling wine. It could be argued that they have contributed more to the reputation of English sparkling wine than all the British-born vineyard owners put together, so who could blame Stuart and Sandy when they received an offer for Nyetimber they couldn't refuse. It came out of the blue from English songwriter Andy Hill, who was looking for a unique home rather than a vineyard. He is an unassuming, down to earth sort of guy for someone who has written songs for likes of Diana Ross, Celine Delon, Cher and Ronan Keating. He loves wine, which was a relief from my point of view, considering what he has inherited with his purchase. Andy Hill might be more at home with a Pauillac, but he gives the impression that he will do everything possible to maintain the extraordinary quality and reputation of Nyetimber. And he has shown that he can be ruthless in this pursuit, dumping the 1994 when he realised that it was not holding up as well as the two previous years. He had customers who said they liked the 1994 warts and all, but there was no way he would risk it, so he moved on to the 1995 and 1996 and swept the board at the UK Vineyards Awards.

<89>

**Nyetimber 1992 Première Cuvée, Chardonnay Blanc de Blancs Brut**

Disgorged in February 1997, this is really has stunning, creamy-peachy fruit and is incredibly long. Much preferred to the 2002 disgorgement which has a creamy-caramel character.

Drink upon purchase.

<89>

**Nyetimber 1993 Classic Cuvée Brut**

Amazingly ethereal, with fine, elegant, peachy-rich fruit.

Drink now-2004.

<88>

**Nyetimber 1993 Première Cuvée, Chardonnay Blanc de Blancs Brut**

Complex, creamy-rich, smooth and toasty, the August 1999 disgorgement has no hint of the herbaceousness noticed earlier in its development.

Drink now-2004.

<87>

**Nyetimber 1995 Classic Cuvée Brut**

Another very rich and concentrated cuvée, the extract here could develop a liquorice intensity of flavour.

Drink now-2007.

<85>

**Nyetimber 1995 Première Cuvée, Chardonnay Blanc de Blancs Brut**

Very rich fruit that is a touch oxidative, but that may be due to the pre-release sample I tasted and there is, in any case, more than enough extract to overcome this.

Drink now-2006.

<89>

**Nyetimber 1996 Classic Cuvée Brut**

Atypical in character, but typically great in quality, this big wine has a rich, botrytis fatness that gives it an almost New World feel. A complex cuvée that might be big, but is not heavy, due to the lovely cushiony mousse that lifts the fruit in the mouth.

Drink upon purchase.

<?>

**Nyetimber 1996 Première Cuvée, Chardonnay Blanc de Blancs Brut**

The richness of fruit mid-palate was self-evident, but the pre-release sample was not showing well on the nose or finish, hence opinion reserved.

Wait and see.

<88>

**Nyetimber 1997 Classic Cuvée Brut**

Soft-silky mousse with excellent acidity, this vintage augers well for the future. Not yet available.

Drink upon purchase.

<87>

**Nyetimber 1998 Classic Cuvée Brut**

Beginning to tighten up. Obviously needs a lot more time on yeast.

Drink upon purchase.

<90>

**Nyetimber 1998 Premier Cuvée, Chardonnay Blanc de Blancs Brut**

Brilliant acidity. Such finesse. Wow!

Drink now-2010.

<89>

**Nyetimber 1999 Classic Cuvée Brut**

Fresh, light, fragrant aroma, with fine, beautifully focused fruit and a superb cushiony-velvety mousse providing a creamy texture on the finish. Not yet available.

Drink upon purchase.

<88>

**Nyetimber 1999 Première Cuvée, Chardonnay Blanc de Blancs Brut**

Exquisite pineapple fruit, beautifully focused by lovely ripe acidity. Not yet available.

Drink upon purchase.

**Oriol Rossell**

Propietat Can Cassanyes

43720 Sant Marçal  
Spain

**Phone** (977) 671061

**Fax** (977) 674061

<80>

**Oriol Rossell NV Cava Brut Nature**

Creamy-rich fruit, nice and tangy. Touch elevated, but some finesse too.

Drink now-2004.

<80>

**Oriol Rossell NV Cava Brut**

Excellent richness, flavour and acidity. Clean finish.

Drink upon purchase.

**Orlando Wyndham**

Orlando Wyndham Group

33 Exeter Terrace

Devon Park

SA 5008

Australia

**Phone** (8) 8208 2444

**Fax** (8) 8208 2403

<76>

**Jacob's Creek NV Chardonnay Pinot Noir Brut Cuvée**

Intense fruit for the price.

Drink now-2004.

<75>

**Morris NV Sparkling Shiraz Durif**

Not as elegant as some, the puckering tannins highlighting this with a certain rustic edge.

Drink upon purchase.

**Oudinot**

Champagne Oudinot

Château Malakoff

3 rue Malakoff

51207 Epernay

France

**Phone** (326) 59.50.10

**Fax** (326) 54.78.52

Malakoff brands include Beaumet, Jeanmaire and Oudinot. Rumours of a merger with Laurent-Perrier.

<84>

**Oudinot NV Brut**

Very fine mousse, clean but not amylic, with creamy fruit.

Drink now-2004.

<86>

**Oudinot NV Clos Saint-Rémy Brut**

Very good, rich and tasty fruit, with a very soft mousse and impressive length.  
Drink now-2006.

<84>

**Oudinot NV Cuvée Blanc de Noirs Brut**

Rich and concentrated with the barest hint of under-ripeness, indicating that it will go quite toasty.

Drink now-2005.

<82>

**Oudinot NV Medium-Dry**

Fresh, clean and crisp *demi-sec* with as much fruit intensity as sweetness.

Drink now-2005.

**Pacific Echo**

Scharffenberger Winery

8501 Highway 128

Philo

CA 95466

USA

**Phone** (707) 895 2065

**Fax** (707) 895 2758

<77>

**Pacific Echo 1996 Blanc de Blancs**

Precocious coffee-grinds backed up acidity.

Drink now-2005.

<75>

**Pacific Echo 1997 Brut Rosé**

Rich, malo influenced style that would have been better with more fruit emphasis (but not VA-lifted!).

Drink upon purchase.

<76>

**Pacific Echo NV Brut**

Malo less obtrusive than in the last edition, with fresh, crisp fruit on the palate. Much, much better than the amylic, somewhat sweet Crémant.

Drink upon purchase.

**Paillard, Bruno**

Champagne Bruno Paillard

avenue du Champagne

51100 Reims

France

**Phone** (326) 36.20.22

**Fax** (326) 36.57.72

All wines carry a disgorgement date, something that other producers would do well to follow, although I doubt that few big houses if any will have the nerve.

<85>

**Bruno Paillard 1990 N.P.U. Nec Plus Ultra, Brut**

Ageing this wine increases the richness of fruit on the palate, but also accentuates the *barrique* aromas. As I have said before, this should have been disgorged no later than 1996, rather than 1999, as the first release was, let alone 2000 as this year's has been and the last edition's submission was. The pity is that it is so easy to see how the incredibly rich fruit could be scoring in the early to mid 90s had the wine been disgorged at the optimum time.

Drink upon purchase.

<91>

### **Bruno Paillard 1995 Brut**

This year's disgorgement (disgorged May 2001) is so seductively rich, succulent and fruity that it jumps three percentile points over the last edition's disgorgement (disgorged June 2000) and was certainly one of the best wines at *Decanter* magazine's 1995/1996 Champagne tasting. If you purchased this vintage in the last edition you will find that the fruit has concentrated into an intense lemony-liquorice flavour and this will become finer and more complex the longer it is aged. Absolutely gorgeous! Amazing what happens when a super smooth mousse of ultra-fine bubbles comes into play.

Drink now-2010

<87>

### **Bruno Paillard NV Brut Première Cuvée**

Disgorged October 2001, this blend is as consistent as all the rest. Fresh, light and elegantly stylish, with a crisp finish. Impeccable.

Drink now-2005.

<86>

### **Bruno Paillard NV Chardonnay Réserve Privée**

An elegant *blanc de blancs* that is very soft, creamy and easy to drink (disgorged September 2001).

Drink now-2004.

<86>

### **Bruno Paillard NV Rosé Brut Première Cuvée**

Disgorged January 2002, this rosé is so fresh and elegant, with light, strawberry vacherin fruit.

Drink upon purchase.

## **Palmer**

Champagne Palmer

67 rue Jacquart

51100 Reims

France

**Phone** (326) 07.35.07

**Fax** (326) 07.45.24

<87>

### **Palmer 1985 Blanc de Blancs Brut**

Fresh, crisp, clean and toasty, with a certain peachiness to the fruit, an elegant finish and all buoyed up a super-smooth, creaming mousse.

Drink now-2005.

<86>

### **Palmer 1985 Blanc de Blancs Brut (*magnum*)**

One of those rare examples where I have marked down the magnum of the same Champagne. Usually I mark up, sometimes I mark equally, but seldom do I mark down. The reason is that this magnum (L01458) has obviously been disgorged significantly earlier than the bottle (L01469), consequently the magnum is more toasty and has a less impressively smooth mousse, good though the wine is.

Drink now-2005.

<89>

#### **Palmer 1992 Brut Millésime**

Typically Palmer toasty-mature aromas dominating the nose, with toast-rich fruit on the palate. No wonder the houses respect this cooperative.

Drink now-2006.

<87>

#### **Palmer 1995 Blanc de Blancs Brut**

The rich and tasty fruit on the front and mid-palate of this wine offers immediate appeal, but although it will age nicely in the medium term, it's not a longterm bet unless you prefer the toast, not yet evident, to heavily outweigh the fruit.

Drink now-2006.

<82>

#### **Amazone de Palmer NV Brut**

My unedited note reads: 'Soggy cornflakes on the nose, 20-year-old Champagne on the palate'. Nothing, if not un usual!

Drink upon purchase.

<82>

#### **Palmer NV Brut**

Rich, tasty and characterful fruit, with excellent acidity and going toasty, but could do with more finesse.

Drink now-2004.

#### **Pannier**

Champagne Pannier

23 rue Roger Catillon

02400 Château-Thierry

France

**Phone** (323) 69.13.10

**Fax** (323) 69.18.18

<89>

#### **Egérie de Pannier 1996 Brut**

Tasting this without dosage and not blind it is obviously superior to the pre-release sample tasted in the last edition (84 points). Much depends on the actual disgorgement.

Drink 2004-2009.

<90>

#### **Pannier 1996 Brut**

Deliciously concentrated, superb rapier-like acidity.

Drink now-2011.

<90>

#### **Pannier 1996 Blanc de Blancs**

This very tight, long, intense, crisp Champagne is a one-off blend of Avize and Le Mesnil, which offers fascinating ageing potential. However, availability is very restricted and you will probably have to visit Pannier in Château-Thierry to stand any chance of acquiring some.

Drink 2004-2013.

<89>

**Egérie de Pannier 1998 Brut**

Lovely concentration for year. Excellent. Pre-release sample.

Drink now-2006.

<86>

**Pannier NV Brut Sélection**

The 1998-based released in June 2002 was very fresh with sherbety-velvety mousse and long, crisp finish and by 2003 was going biscuity.

Drink now-2004.

**Parató**

Can Respall de Renardes

08733 El Pla del Penedès

Spain

**Phone** (93) 8988182

**Fax** (93) 8988510

<75>

**Elias i Terns NV Cava Brut Nature**

Too coconutty-oaky for any true finesse.

Drink upon purchase.

<70>

**Parató NV Cava Brut Nature**

Fresh, vinous, some perfumed fruit on finish.

Drink upon purchase.

**Payelle**

Champagne Fabrice Payelle

22 rue Saint Vincent

51150 Ambonnay

France

**Phone** (326) 57.02.57

**Fax** (326) 57.56.52

<88>

**Fabrice Payelle 1995 Cuvée du Pomponne, Brut Grand Cru**

Rich, fine and powerful.

Drink now-2007.

**Perelada**

Cavas del Castillo de Perelada

Plaza del Carmen 1

17491 Perelada

Spain

**Phone** (34) 972.538011

**Fax** (93) 2231370

<74>

**Gran Claustro 2000 Cava Brut Nature**

Very fresh, with amylic aromas nose and finish. Good depth on middle palate. Good acidity.  
Drink now-2004.

<80>

**Castillo de Perelada NV Cava Brut Reserva**

Fresh, fluffy and sherbety.

Drink upon purchase.

**Perrier**

Champagne Joseph Perrier

69 avenue de Paris

51016 Châlons-en-Champagne

France

**Phone** (326) 68.29.51

**Fax** (326) 70.57.16

<89>

**Joseph Perrier 1995 Cuvée Royale Brut**

The progress of this vintage is nothing short of amazing, from its excellent richness and finesse in the 2001 edition (87 points) through the 1996-like attack and intensity in the 2002 edition (also 87 points) to this year's wonderfully rich and velvety rendition.

Drink now-2011.

<?>

**Joseph Perrier 1996 Cuvée Royale Brut**

Although creamy-lemony-biscuity just beginning to go oxidative at WINE magazine's Champagne tasting, this wine did not show well at my blind tasting in June. Since most 1996s need more yeast contact and this has shown promise, I'll reserve my opinion for a year or two. Wait and see.

<87>

**Joseph Perrier NV Cuvée Royale, Blanc de Blancs Brut**

The second year that Joseph Perrier has turned out a *blanc de blancs* that is user-friendly when young.

Drink now-2005.

<89>

**Joseph Perrier NV Cuvée Royale Brut**

If you're lucky enough to come across any bottle marked with the EU Lot number L1282411 you will have in your possession the best example of this cuvée I have encountered in over 25 years.

The fruit is very young indeed, but this is no criticism. This cuvée is already beautiful to drink, yet has great structure and such richness that it will mature like a good vintage Champagne.

Drink now-2008.

**Perrier-Jouët**

Champagne Perrier-Jouët

26/28 avenue de Champagne

51200 Epernay

France

**Phone** (326) 55.20.53

**Fax** (326) 54.54.55

<93>

**Perrier-Jouët 1959 Grand Brut**

If the champenois had pruned for more concentration in years like this, they would have ended up with Champagne of a fortified wine strength - if that is possible. Of course it is not possible; the yeast would die at such elevated alcohol levels, All they could do was cheat, by cutting the strength with wines from previous years that were lower in alcohol and higher in acidity (vintage Champagne is supposed to 100 per cent from the year indicated on the bottle). And they did cheat. All of them! And thank goodness because otherwise we would not any great "1959s" like this, which has all the weight, massive body and fantastically preserved richness of the vintage, but also exceptional acidity and a soft, creamy mousse.

Drink now-2020.

<91>

**Perrier-Jouët 1992 Grand Brut**

This Jeroboam was, I suspect, fairly recently disgorged. It had plenty of fruit supported by a very soft mousse of ultra-fine bubbles. Still very young, not even into its second stage of development, with hardly any post-disgorgement aromas.

Drink now-2011.

<91>

**Perrier-Jouët 1996 Grand Brut Millésime**

Great concentration of fruit, great acidity and great drinking. A great Champagne that will go creamy-biscuity with a zesty-lemony finish, but it could have been an even greater Champagne with another three years or more on yeast.

Drink now-2023.

<90>

**Perrier-Jouët 1971 Cuvée Belle Epoque Brut**

Golden colour, with coconut beginning to emerge through fruit, and a very intense, almost unyielding finish that gradually gives way to toasty aromas as the wine warms in the glass (believed disgorged 1976 or 1977).

Drink now-2011.

<96>

**Perrier-Jouët 1979 Cuvée Belle Epoque Brut**

Absolutely classic lean structure, with toasty aromas mellowing crisp, white peach fruit and increasing intensity on the finish (believed disgorged 1985 or 1986).

Drink now-2019.

<94>

**Perrier-Jouët 1985 Cuvée Belle Epoque Brut**

Extremely elegant despite powerful toasty aromas, rich fruit, huge extract and spellbinding acidity (disgorged 1991).

Drink now-2015.

<95>

**Perrier-Jouët 1990 Cuvée Belle Epoque Brut**

Exquisite fruit, very precise, well-focused and not showing seven years worth of post-disgorgement aromas (disgorged 1995).

Drink now-2020.

<92>

**Perrier-Jouët 1995 Cuvée Belle Epoque Brut**

Fresh and fragrant, with crisp-biscuitiness building (disgorged 2000).

Drink now-2015.

<?>

**Perrier-Jouët 1996 Cuvée Belle Epoque Brut**

Although the underlying fruit and structure is impressive, the first disgorgements have aged surprisingly rapidly. Even at Belle Epoque's 100th Anniversary celebrations in Epernay in September 2002 this vintage had a questionmark hanging over it for a number of guests. What it really needs is another two or three years on yeast.

Wait and see.

<90>

**Perrier-Jouët 1997 Cuvée Belle Epoque Rosé Brut**

Better than the 1995, this 1997 has true vintage quality, with redcurrant Pinot Noir currently dominating the elegant fruit, but Cramant Chardonnay will eventually take over. Lovely, soft, cushiony mouse.

Drink now-2008.

<86>

**Perrier-Jouët NV Blason Rosé**

Fresh, light, crisp and fruity in a very elegant style, supported by excellent acidity.

Drink upon purchase.

<85>

**Perrier-Jouët NV Grand Brut**

Fresh, flowery-fruitiness at the beginning of 2002 had become firm and fresh with lifted fruit and a lovely, crisp finish.

Drink now-2006.

**Perruche**

Domaine de la Perruche

29 rue de la Maumenière

49730 Montsoreau

France

**Phone** (241) 51.73.36

**Fax** (241) 38.18.70

<75>

**Domaine de la Perruche NV Saumur Brut**

Liquorice richness, clean.

Drink upon purchase.

**Petaluma**

Spring Gully Road

Piccadilly

SA 5151

Australia

**Phone** (8) 8339 4122

**Fax** (8) 8339 5253

<89>

**Croser 1999 Pinot Noir Chardonnay**

Very fruity, great intensity.

Drink now-2007.

<90>

**Croser 1999 Petaluma**

The fruit is more upfront than in previous vintages, but just as classy. Excellent length.

Drink now-2006.

**Pfaffenheim**

CV de Pfaffenheim

5 rue du Chai BP 33

68250 Pfaffenheim

France

**Phone** (389) 78.08.08

**Fax** (389) 49.71.65

<78>

**Hartenberger NV Blanc de Blancs, Crémant d'Alsace Brut**

Clean fruit marked by crisp acidity.

Drink upon purchase.

**Philipponnat**

Champagne Philipponnat

13 rue du Pont

51160 Mareuil-sur-Aÿ

France

**Phone** (326) 52.60.43

**Fax** (326) 52.61.49

<90>

**Clos des Goisses 1991 Brut, Philipponnat**

Creamy-liquorice bouquet with hints of toast followed by pristine, and peachy fruit on the palate.

Quite fat. Don't be fooled by a couple of slices of toast, this is a baby and only those who have not followed Clos des Goisses will consider drinking it as soon as 2004. It will be drinking beautifully, but die-hard devotees will give it at least three years and not expect anything before five. Should go creamy-peachy-exotic.

Drink 2004-2013.

<87>

**Philipponnat 1993 Réserve Millésimée Brut**

Concentration is exceptional for the vintage.

Drink now-2006.

<85>

**Philipponnat NV Royale Réserve Brut**

Just as tasty as I remember from the last edition, but without the Pinot chewiness I imagined to be the new Philipponnat signature.

Drink now-2006.

<90>

**Philipponnat NV Cuvée 1522 Extra Brut**

A lovely concentration of fruit beautifully balanced by an exquisitely crisp finish. Disgorged November 2001.

Drink now-2006.

<88>

**Abel Lepitre 1997 Brut Millésimé**

Not quite in the class of the 1996, but slowly getting there. Great acidity underlying intense, focused fruit. Possibly has much greater ageing potential than I've indicated.

Drink now-2006.

<88>

**Abel Lepitre NV Cuvée No. 134, Blanc de Blancs Brut**

This was a favourite of mine 20 years ago, when Abel Lepitre shared the same premises and ownership as George Goulet and De Saint Marceaux. It was never a truly great Champagne, but it was always a rather special Blanc de Blanc, much in the same way as Marie Stuart's Cuvée de la Reine (90% Chardonnay, 10% Pinot Noir) was a special Champagne. Neither Champagne was well known, yet both had a very strong, small customer base that knew these cuvées intimately. There is still something special about this Cuvée No 134, even though it is under different ownership. And I'm glad they have not touched the label, even though it looks as if it has been found in a draw of old labels that has not been opened for 50 years.

Drink now-2006.

<83>

**Abel Lepitre NV Brut Rosé**

Toasty yet crisp, with full fruit mid-palate.

Drink now-2004.

**Pierrel**

26 rue Henri Dunant

51200 Epernay

France

**Phone** (326) 51.00.90

**Fax** (326) 51.69.40

<83>

**Pierrel NV Brut Premier Cru**

Apparently 100% Chardonnay, although it does not state Blanc de Blancs on the label, this Champagne has nice, clean, gentle fruit.

Drink now-2004.

<82>

**Pierrel NV Cuvée Arabesque Gold, Brut**

For lovers of mature, biscuity Champagne only.

Drink now-2004.

**Piper-Heidsieck**

Champagne Piper-Heidsieck  
51 Boulevard Henri Vasnier  
51100 Reims  
France

**Phone** (326) 84.41.94

**Fax** (326) 84.43.49

<86>

**Piper-Heidsieck 1995 Brut**

Delicious toasty, fruit really shows through.

Drink now-2007.

<85>

**Piper-Heidsieck NV Brut**

The simple fruitiness of this cuvée did not grab me at the 2002 Annual Champagne Tasting, but the sample submitted (EU Lot number L1073710406) to my blind tastings was obviously from a much earlier release given its big toasty aromas and rich, nicely acid fruit on the palate.

Drink now-2004.

<85>

**Piper-Heidsieck NV Cuvée Spéciale Jean-Paul Gaultier, Brut**

I don't normally remark on corked wines because over a period of 27 years I've probably tasted at least one corked wine from every producer I know, so why taint the notes of any specific wine when it can affect everyone. The first bottle of this had, however, the worst case of corkiness/TCA I have ever encountered. Literally the worst: bad, bad, bad! The back-up sample was absolutely fine and virtually indistinguishable from the toasty-rich Piper Brut without the basque.

Drink now-2004.

<87>

**Piper-Heidsieck NV Demi-Sec**

This cuvée in 2003 was full, rich and full of vanilla-sugar sweetness that it you would have sworn that the cuvée before dosage was Charles rather than Piper!

Drink now-2004.

**Piper Sonoma**

C/O J Winery  
11447 Old Redwood Highway  
Healdsburg  
CA 95448  
USA

Winemaker Raphael Brisbois has to work with rented equipment in the winery Piper Sonoma sold to Judy Jordan.

<79>

**Piper Sonoma NV Select Cuvée, Blanc de Noir**

The Piper Sonoma style has gone a tad amylic, especially in the Brut non-vintage. It's also in the Blanc de Noir [sic], but not as evident and the fruit underneath is richer. Really quite good richer, with excellent acidity, some finesse and a nice cushiony mousse in support

Drink upon purchase.

**Pipers Brook**

1216 Pipers Brook Road

Pipers Brook

Tas. 7254

Australia

**Phone** (3) 6332 4444

**Fax** (3) 6382 7226

Founder Andrew Pirie was kicked out in February 2003 by Belgian owned Kreglinger group, who purchased Pipers Brook in 2002.

<88>

**Pirie 1995 Pipers Brook**

Four years after being disgorged in September 1998, the malo dominates a tad too much on the nose. In the Australian cellared version, the fruit is becoming exaggerated, showing some VA and losing the incredible finesse and elegance its once had. However, in the UK cellared version (well, the Stevenson cellared one at least), there is no exaggeration of the fruit, no noticeable VA and the level of finesse is almost as it was at this wine's peak. The latter would score 90 points, but although the Australian cellared version now scores only 88 points, that is a great rating in itself and should in no way devalue the 91 points this wine originally scored. All wines decline.

Drink upon purchase.

<87>

**Pirie 1996 Pipers Brook**

By January 2002, the UK stock of this wine had started to develop a malty character and this was evident at both the Australia Day Tasting and the centralised ANZ tasting. I asked for other disgorgements to be flown over and I have to say that I much preferred it to the UK stock.

Perhaps this vintage is simply going through a phase. After all, we know as little about how it ages as we knew about Clos du Mesnil when that was first released and both Henri Krug and I wrote off the 1979 vintage when became so blowzy it was vulgar. However, after that very low point in its evolution the 1979 peaked at an even higher quality than before and it still amazes me (and Henri), so who knows what the future holds for Pirie 1996 (or 1995 for that matter)?

Drink upon purchase.

<86>

**Pirie 1997 Pipers Brook**

This is an excellent sparkling wine with plenty of exotic fruity richness initially, but this dries out a bit on the palate and it does not have the class of either the original 1995 vintage or the 1996. Great Champagnes have been through much worse wilderness years than this, so I might be unjustly hard in my rating, but this is an annual buyer's guide and I must score as the wine shows.

Drink upon purchase.

**Pol Roger**

Champagne White Foil

1 rue Henri Lelarge

51206 Epernay

France

**Phone** (326) 59.58.00

**Fax** (326) 55.25.70

<97>

**Pol Roger 1979 Brut Vintage** (*Jeroboam*)

It was a mistake to serve this 1979 after the toasty-mellow 1985 because it was disgorged seven years later (December 1998) and had hardly evolved in the meantime, needing at least another three years, but the intrinsic quality and potential for development was in no doubt. This is probably the most perfectly balanced Pol Roger vintage of my lifetime.

Drink 2005-2025

<96>

**Pol Roger 1985 Brut Vintage** (*Jeroboam*)

Disgorged in December 1991, which explains the huge toasty aroma, but it has such intensity of fruit that it can easily take such toastiness. A beautiful wine.

Drink now-2015.

<85>

**Pol Roger 1988 Brut Vintage**

Disgorged in September 1997, this vintage has developed far differently than the same vintage in my cellar (I once dubbed Pol Roger's 1988 as "the Stevenson's house wine"), having an extraordinarily exotic Lily of the Valley aroma pervading its fruit. The only other Lily of the Valley I have encountered in wine has been in New World Gewurztraminer, and it is usually attributed to a terpenoid alcohol called linalool. Where on earth it comes from in a Champagne, I have no idea. The score is for interest: I much prefer what remains of my own-cellared 1988 (91 points).

Drink upon purchase.

<?>

**Pol Roger 1989 Brut Vintage**

Disgorged March 2001, with a promisingly pale colour for the vintage and a lovely creamy-soft mousse, but spoiled by murky aromas on the nose.

Drink upon purchase.

<95>

**Pol Roger 1990 Brut Vintage**

I was glad to have the opportunity of tasting this great vintage direct from PR's cellar, as some UK cellared bottles have matured unexpectedly rapidly, developing in the worst cases mercaptan-like boiled cabbage aromas. I would have preferred tasting the original disgorgement, rather than a relatively recent one (March 1999), but I could not complain about the quality of this rich, creamy-biscuity Champagne, with its beautifully focused fruit on the palate and fresh, creamy-citrusy finish. A masterpiece!

Drink now-2030.

<85>

**Pol Roger 1993 Brut Vintage**

An October 2001 disgorgement tasted at PR in October 2002 was going almondy and obviously at its peak for that particular disgorgement.

Drink upon purchase.

<91>

**Pol Roger 1995 Brut Vintage**

A November 2001 disgorgement tasted at PR in October 2002 was exceedingly fresh, stylish and harmonious, showing great finesse. The UK shipment at the same time was more developed, with a chewiness of Pinot giving way to concentrated Chardonnay fruit, while the additionally

yeast-complexed fruit was luscious, with even greater finesse. My only concern has been a of sulphur spoiling the nose at *Decanter* magazine's 1995/1996 Champagne tasting (where it would have scored 89 points), but this had blown away by June.

Drink now-2014.

<97>

**Pol Roger 1996 Brut Vintage**

The perfect expression of potentially great complexity.

Drink 2005-2035

<90>

**Pol Roger 1993 Cuvée Sir Winston Churchill Brut**

Fresh, beguiling bouquet with slow-building toasty aromas coming out after a few minutes in the glass. Elegant fruit on the palate. Low-pressure mousse of the most minuscule pincushion bubbles.

Drink now-2010.

<91>

**Pol Roger 1995 Brut Rosé**

Absolutely delicious, with Pinot fruit flavours deepening over the last edition and the acidity bedding for a longer life at this level than I had initially imagined.

Drink now-2008.

<90>

**Pol Roger 1995 Brut Chardonnay**

This must have had subliminal TCA at *Decanter* magazine's 1995/1996 Champagne tasting because although there was no obvious sign of a fault, its very pedestrian character and lack of any buzz could not have been further from the luscious quality this vintage of Brut Chardonnay as I have always known it to be. Tasted several times since and extremely happy with its condition on each occasion: absolutely fresh with oodles of creamy fruit.

Drink now-2006.

<95>

**Pol Roger 1996 Brut Rosé**

The last edition's re-release sample notched up 94 points, while this year's crept up one percentile point, which is hard to do at this level of scoring. A stunningly vivacious rosé.

Drink now-2006.

<92>

**Pol Roger 1996 Brut Chardonnay**

Must have over scored this in the last edition (93 points)! Seriously, tasting pre-release samples blind at this level, from two disgorgements one year apart and only one percentile point difference is a huge testament to this Champagne's intrinsic quality. Intensely and exquisitely rich, with a satisfying peach and vanilla fruitiness underlying great acidity. Will go toasty. This wine was due to be released in 2003, but it is now more likely to be 2004, so I have had a pre-pre release and a pre-pre-release. I look forward to next year's pre-release!

Drink now-2010.

<87>

**Pol Roger NV Brut White Foil**

This was stylishly fruity at the 2002 Annual Champagne Tasting. The best release I can remember, although the deliciously creamy cuvée at the 2003 Annual Champagne Tasting would give it a good run for its money. Pol's non-vintage is definitely on a roll.

Drink now-2006.

<87>

**Pol Roger NV Rich Special Demi-Sec**

Some lovely old reserve wine in this cuvée gives it a barley-sugar sweetness, but there is a youthful element that will benefit from a year or so to integrate. Clean, elegant and linear in its focus. Excellent.

Drink now-2008.

**Pommery**

Champagne Pommery

5 Place du Général Gouraud

51053 Reims

France

**Phone** (326) 61.62.63

**Fax** (326) 61.62.99

<90>

**Pommery 1989 Louise, Brut**

Very fresh, delicate and floral on the nose and palate. Do not over-chill.

Drink now-2008.

<90>

**Pommery 1992 Louise Rosé, Brut**

This was so fresh that it was almost green at the 2002 Annual Champagne Tasting, but the sample submitted to my own blind tastings (Lot number LK7447) was nicely mellowed by toasty aromas. Gone are the floral aromas noted in the last edition, but the finesse is still there, as is the soft, cushiony mousse, which serves to enhance that finesse.

Drink now-2004.

<87>

**Pommery 1992 Brut Grand Cru**

Although this release shows the beginning of a slow decline on the previous two years (both 88 points), it has more to do with disgorgement windows than intrinsic quality, since well-celled examples of the previous two samples have gained in both finesse and complexity, as well as having a much smoother mousse (89 points and rising). This release will also improve, albeit not quite to the same level.

Drink now-2008.

<90>

**Pommery 1995 Cuvée Louise, Brut**

Super-smooth fruit and mousse with oodles of undeveloped extract waiting to be released.

Drink now-2013.

<85>

**Pommery 1995 Brut Grand Cru**

Not the finesse shown in the last edition, but almost certainly a different disgorgement and most probably will gain finesse with bottle-age.

Drink now-2007.

<90>

**Pommery 1996 Cuvée Louise Rosé, Brut**

It's very pale apricot colour belies the depth and intensity of this wine, which is so atypically strong for Pommery that it is more Louis than Louise. A great bottle nonetheless.

Drink 2004-2009.

<87>

**Pommery NV Brut Rosé**

Hardly any colour, but packed with crisp fruit and lovely fresh finish.

Drink upon purchase.

<85>

**Pommery NV Brut Royal**

Pommery's famed freshness and liveliness is immediately evident on the nose, but the palate is far richer and more concentrated than regular consumers of Brut Royal will be used to. However, other Champagne drinkers might well find this preferable.

Drink now-2005.

**Pouillon**

Champagne Roger Pouillon

3 Rue de la Couple

51160 Mareuil-sur-Aÿ

France

**Fax** (326) 59.49.83

Fabrice Pouillon speaks some of the best theory when it comes to the restrained use of oak *barriques* for Champagne, but is one of the biggest culprits when it comes to over-oaking.

However, he is very young and these wines take years to come to fruition, so perhaps we can look forward to some stunning future releases?

<84>

**Roger Pouillon NV Fleur de Mareuil**

Very oaky!

Drink now

**Primo Estate**

Old Port Wakefield Road

Virginia

SA 5120

Australia

**Phone** (8) 8380 9442

**Fax** (8) 8380 9696

<87>

**Primo Estate 2001 Joseph Sparkling Red**

Simply this wine has more finesse than most Aussie sparkling reds. Fruit-driven with a creamy finish.

Drink now-2004.

**Putille**

Château de Putille

49620 La Pommeraye

France

**Phone** (241) 39.02.91

**Fax** (241) 39.03.45

<76>

**Château de Putille NV Crémant de Loire Brut**

Estery, would have benefited from another 6-9 months on yeast, but might develop well for same period of post-disgorgement ageing.

Drink upon purchase.

**Quartz Reef**

Lake Dunstan  
Estate Building 6  
McNulty Road  
Cromwell  
New Zealand

**Phone** (3) 4453084

**Fax** (3) 4453086

<80>

**Chauvet NV Brut**

Fruity guzzler.

Drink now-2004.

**Ratzenberger**

Weingut Ratzenberger  
Blücherstrasse 167  
55422 Bacharach Steeg

**Phone** (6743) 1337

**Fax** (6743) 2842

<76>

**Weingut Ratzenberger 1998 Bacharacher Kloster Fürstental Riesling Brut**

Fresh, crisp Riesling fruit and a fluffy mousse. Fresher than and much preferred to the 1999.

Drink upon purchase.

**Raventós i Blanc**

Plaça del Roure s/n  
08770 Sant Sadurní d'Anoia  
Spain

**Phone** (93) 8183262

**Fax** (93) 8912500

<75>

**Raventós i Blanc 1998 Cava Brut**

Serious biscuity style, but lacks finesse.

Drink upon purchase.

**Raventós Rosell**

Campanar 6  
08770 Sant Sadurní d'Anoia

Spain

**Phone** (93) 7725251

**Fax** (93) 7727191

<77>

**Gradiva NV Cava Brut Nature**

Very fruity, some depth ... could develop, but no guarantees!

Drink now-2005.

**Rebholz**

Weingut Ökonomierat Rebholz

Weinstrasse 54

76833 Siebeldingen

Germany

**Phone** (6345) 3439

**Fax** (6345) 7954

<82>

**Weingut Ökonomierat Rebholz 1997 Spätburgunder Brut**

Fine, barrique-style Pinot Sekt. Received the highest score to this point in the tasting, but I'm not an oak fan and other Sekte scoring just 80 points were preferable. Scored per style.

Drink upon purchase.

**Reinhartshausen**

Schloss Reinhartshausen

Hauptstrasse 41

65346 Eltville-Erbach

Germany

**Phone** (6123) 676333

**Fax** (6123) 4222

<78>

**Schloss Reinhartshausen, Prinz von Preussen 1998 Erbacher Rheinhell Chardonnay Brut**

Fresh, clean and really quite intense fruit.

Drink now-2005.

**Ridgeview Estate**

Fragbarrow Lane

Ditchling Common

Sussex

BN6 8TP

Great Britain

**Phone** (1444) 258039

**Fax** (1444) 230757

<88>

**Bloomsbury 1997 Cuvée Merret Brut, Ridgeview Estate**

This cuvée was on brilliant form at the Waitrose Spring Tasting, when its fresh, biscuity complexity underscored by crisp, bracing acidity knocked (an admittedly under-performing)

Nyetimber 1994 Blanc de Blancs into a cocked hat. And the last edition's disgorgement tasted one year on was even better.

Drink now-2005.

<85>

**Cavendish 1998 Cuvée Merret Brut, Ridgeview Estate**

The pepperiness detected in the last edition (the first ever in any Ridgeview) is far more subdued, particularly on the nose where some malty notes are singing through. Magnificent richness, but unless this wine does something unexpected, it is I believe at its best now, rather than 2002-2004 as indicated in the last edition. Sorry folks, but this is not an exact science, especially when it comes to the product of new ventures such as Ridgeview.

Drink upon purchase.

<87>

**Knightsbridge 1999 Cuvée Merret Brut, Ridgeview Estate**

Due to be released early 2003 and might well improve with a little extra time on yeast, yet it is also absolutely right for drinking now. Very rich fruit, lovely acids, potentially complex. I envisage this developing a vanilla-infused, silky-smooth finish.

Drink now-2005.

<85>

**South Ridge 1999 Cuvée Merret Brut, Ridgeview Estate**

There is the same minuscule touch of pepperiness here (on the aftertaste) as I found in Ridgeview's Cavendish 1998 in the last edition, but the fruit is intense, the acidity stunning and the structure just perfect. The length is impressive.

Drink now-2004.

**Rieflé**

Domaine Joseph Rieflé

11 place de la mairie

68250 Pfaffenheim

France

**Phone** (389) 49.50.98

**Fax** (389) 40.50.98

<75>

**Rieflé NV Crémant d'Alsace Brut**

Lifted pineapple fruit for immediate drinking.

Drink upon purchase.

**Robert, Bertrand**

Champagne Bertrand Robert

3 rue du Point du Jour

51140 Trigny

**Phone** (326) 03.11.47

**Fax** (326) 03.02.49

<?>

**Bertrand Robert 1996 Cuvée Seduction, Brut**

Bit hard and harsh, yet shows potential. Needs more time on yeast.

Wait and see.

**Roederer Louis**

Champagne Louis Roederer  
21 Boulevard Lundy  
51053 Reims  
France

**Phone** (326) 40.42.11

**Fax** (326) 47.66.51

<90>

**Louis Roederer 1994 Brut Vintage**

Totally different from either in the last edition's sample or the year before (both of which scored a paltry 82 points), this particular bottle had a lovely voluminous aroma, intense fruit on the palate and such a long finish that I would never have guessed its vintage under blind conditions. Fact is it was tasted under blind conditions. At WINE Magazine (published in February 2002), so I cannot be sure it was the 1994 it claimed to be on the crib sheet. What makes me doubt it further is that the Bruno Paillard 1996 on the crib was 1995 (more likely) in the magazine. Even more curious, this Roederer, whatever its vintage, was noticeable by its absence in the magazine and there was no reason why a Champagne of this quality should miss the cut.

Drink now-2009.

<92>

**Louis Roederer 1995 Cristal Brut Rosé**

You might be forgiven for dismissing this on the nose, not for any negative reasons, simply the 'So what?' factor, as there is nothing - yet - that even hints what a glorious mouthful of fruit and finesse you are about to encounter. It has great acidity and a superb cushiony mousse. Why is it 'So what?' on the nose? Simply because it is Cristal. Both the Brut and Rosé Cristal are like that - not seemingly special - for the first few years of their life, then the finesse soars for what is a relatively short while before it levels out for five years or so. It's not one of Champagne's longest lived cuvées. Only the 1974 Cristal Rosé has soared for as long as 20 years or more. But that's part of Cristal's charm and the reason why it should be consumed at its peak.

Drink now-2007.

<90>

**Louis Roederer 1995 Cristal Brut**

The same potential complexity as in the last edition, but a different disgorgement results in less immediate finesse. Keep for at least one year.

Drink 2004-2009.

<86>

**Louis Roederer 1996 Blanc de Blancs Brut**

Rich and tasty without any of the Chablis-like character found in the 1995, although both vintages are destined to tread the same toasty trek.

Drink now-2006.

<90>

**Louis Roederer 1996 Brut Vintage**

Roederer's creamy-biscuity richness was obvious at both *Decanter* magazine's 1995/1996 Champagne tasting and my own blind tastings, but until it gets more bottle-maturity it will need to be opened an hour or so and served not to chilled.

Drink now-2009.

<91>

**Louis Roederer NV Brut Premier** (*magnum*)

Glorious, but keep well-cellared for two years if you want to really appreciate this in magnum. Drink 2005-2009.

<87>

**Louis Roederer NV Rich Sec**

Intense fruit, nectarines again. Definitely will improve with a year or two perfect cellarage. Drink now-2007.

<90>

**Louis Roederer NV Brut Premier**

Back on world-beating form after two years when this cuvée lacked bottle-age, particularly on the landed side, although its intrinsic quality remained high. This year's release is as seductively rich as it has ever been, with elegant, violet-vanilla tinged fruit that is well into its creamy stage and just beginning to pick up its biscuitiness. The last edition's release in France (no EU Lot number!) had lost its Chablis-like character and deepened in flavour, but its bracing fresh fruit still has not developed any Roederer biscuitiness. A good quality Champagne (85 points), but not the class expected from this cuvée at its best.

Drink now-2007.

**Roederer Estate**

4501 Highway 128

Philo

CA 95466

USA

**Phone** (707) 895 2288

**Fax** (707) 895 2120

<85>

**Roederer Estate NV Brut**

The next blend is the 1999-based cuvée, which has exquisite fruit, a beautiful, smooth, cushiony mousse and is already very accessible.

Drink now-2006.

<84>

**Roederer Estate NV Brut Rosé**

This is extraordinarily good by non-Champagne standards, but to be constructively critical, the current 1998-based cuvée has a malo softness that threatens to go oxidative, whereas the next (1999-based) blend is a tad VA-lifted.

Drink upon purchase.

<90>

**L'Ermitage 1996 Brut, Roederer Estate**

The rich, tangy fruit in this vintage is deeply flavoured and slowly evolving, with the potential for profound complexity.

Drink now-2007.

<?>

**L'Ermitage 1997 Brut, Roederer Estate**

This vintage has a leaner, greener, earlier-picked character, with startling acidity, which would make me wary, but for the fact that the earliest wines from Roederer Estate were all castigated

for being too green, yet turned out to be world beaters after 2-3 years bottle-age. Given this track-record, prudence is the best policy.  
Wait and see.

**Rosemount Estate**

Rosemount Road  
Denman  
NSW 2328  
Australia

**Phone** (6547) 2467

**Fax** (6547) 2742

<75>

**Rosemount NV V Sparkling Chardonnay**

Nice and creamy with good acidity and a fine mousse, but a touch amylic on finish and something lacking in expression and finesse.

Drink now-2004.

**Royer**

Champagne Royer Père  
120 Grande Rue  
10110 Landreville  
France

**Phone** (325) 38.52.16

**Fax** (325) 29.92.26

<85>

**Royer 1996 Brut**

Fresh, sherbety, ready to drink.

Drink now-2006.

<82>

**Royer NV Cuvée de Réserve**

Perfumed fruit with a touch of tannin on the finish.

Drink upon purchase.

**Ruhmann**

Gilbert Ruhmann Fils  
31 rue de l'Ortenbourg  
67750 Scherwiller  
France

**Phone** (388) 92.03.21

**Fax** (388) 82.30.19

<76>

**Ruhmann NV Crémant d'Alsace Brut**

Another fresh, clean, crisp 2000-based Crémant d'Alsace cuvée.

Drink upon purchase.

**Ruinart**

Champagne Ruinart  
4 rue des Crayères  
51100 Reims  
France  
**Phone** (326) 85.40.29  
**Fax** (326) 82.88.43

<?>

**Dom Ruinart 1988 Rosé**

Opinion reserved because of its toasty tendency and a lack of focus on the normally very focused fruit. Possibly a developmental stage. Hopefully, anyway!

Wait and see.

<95>

**Dom Ruinart 1993 Blanc de Blancs**

Wow, wow, wow! Stuff Ruinart's non-vintage *blanc de blancs*, which was new in the last edition and I have tasted many times, but has never been clean (I was hoping for a different blend this year, but it's obvious just a different release of the same one - hopefully they will shift it and move on!), this 1993 Dom was a brilliant 90 points in the last edition, but the sample submitted this year has shot up and over the stunning 1990 (93 points) that I must taste these two vintages side by side over several disgorgements next time I visit. Absolutely fabulously rich lemony-rich fruit. It's like great Corton Charlemagne with bubbles.

Drink now-2013.

<90>

**R de Ruinart 1995 Brut**

Unlike the last edition, this did show very well at the Annual Champagne Tasting and it shone at my own blind tastings three months later in both years. This vintage gains a percentile point over the last edition because its fruit did not go toasty as has been infused with vanilla-richness, and I rather like it this way.

Drink now-2008.

<88>

**R de Ruinart NV Brut**

Great concentration carried off with elegance, although the latter will gradually be traded off for toastiness, making when best to drink this Champagne a very personal choice.

Drink now-2007.

<87>

**Ruinart NV Brut Rosé**

In 2002, this was so fresh and floral (85 points), but in 2003 the 1997-based release was much richer, with intense summer fruit pudding flavour.

Drink now-2007.

**Rumball**

Rumball Sparkling Wines  
35 Charles Street  
Norwood  
SA 5067  
Australia  
**Phone** (8) 8332 2761

**Fax** (8) 8364 0188

<80>

**Rumball NV Sparkling Merlot**

The creamy-oak nose will be every cent and dime paid for this wine if you are a lover of 4x2.

Drink now-2005.

<75>

**Rumball NV Sparkling Shiraz**

Fresh red fruits, quite sweet and fruit driven.

Drink now-2005.

<80>

**Rumball NV Sparkling Shiraz Special Cuvée**

Rich, tasty and not too sweet, far better than the basic Sparkling Shiraz.

Drink now-2004.

**Saarstein**

Weingut Schloss Saarstein

54455 Serrig

Germany

**Phone** (6581) 2324

**Fax** (6581) 6523

<73>

**Weingut Schloss Saarstein 1997 Riesling Trocken**

Soft, easy-going.

Drink upon purchase.

<75>

**Weingut Schloss Saarstein 1998 Riesling Brut**

Crisp Riesling fruit with the possibility of ageing.

Drink now-2005.

**Salon**

Champagne Salon

Le Mesnil-sur-Oger

51190 Avize

France

**Phone** (326) 57.51.65

**Fax** (326) 57.79.29

<87>

**Salon 1990 Blanc de Blancs Brut**

The last edition's pepperiness, which had not been present in any of the earlier pre-releases, is still present in the same disgorgement one year on, although it is less intrusive. Both of the samples submitted this year are less peppery, but quite oxidative. If this vintage is true Salon quality (and let's face it, 1990 should be!) and if it eventually achieves the sort of super-Salon standard the pre-release samples prior to the last edition promised, then the score here is ludicrously low, but my blind tasting score must be sacrosanct in an annual guide.

Drink 2005-2017.

<98>

**Salon 1995 Blanc de Blancs Brut**

The best Salon since 1982.

Drink 2004-2025.

**Saumur, CV de**

CV de Saumur

Route de Saumoussay

49260 Saint-Cyr-en-Bourg

France

**Phone** (241) 53.06.08

**Fax** (241) 51.69.13

<74>

**CV de Saumur, Crémant de Loire 1999 Cuvée de la Chevalerie, Brut Rosé**

Fresh, perfumed, light and easy.

Drink upon purchase.

<78>

**CV de Saumur NV Cuvée de la Chevalerie, Crémant de Loire Brut**

Fresh and fluffy, plenty of fruit.

Drink upon purchase.

<72>

**CV de Saumur NV Cuvée Habit Pourpre, Rouge Demi-Sec**

Fruit-driven, sweet with some tannin on the finish.

Drink upon purchase.

**Schaeffer-Woerly**

3 Place du Marché

67650 Dambach-la-ville

France

**Phone** (388) 92.40.81

**Fax** (388) 92.49.87

<76>

**Schaeffer-Woerly 1999 Crémant d'Alsace Brut**

This has far more finesse than Schaeffer's 1999 Riesling, and well deserves the silver medal it won at Colmar.

Drink upon purchase.

**Schaller**

Edgard Schaller et Fils

1 rue du Château

68630 Mittelwihr

France

**Phone** (389) 47.90.28

**Fax** (389) 49.02.66

<76>

**Schaller NV Blanc de Noir, Crémant d'Alsace Brut**

It is as if Schaller was trying to emulate Bollinger with this creamy-nutty oxidative styled fizz.

Drink upon purchase.

**Schramsberg**

1400 Schramsberg Road

Calistoga

CA 94515

USA

**Phone** (707) 942 2414

**Fax** (707) 942 5943

<80>

**Schramsberg 1996 J. Schram**

Extraordinary richness on the palate, but let down on the nose.

Drink upon purchase.

<81>

**Schramsberg 1998 Blanc de Blancs**

Big, creamy-rich fruit that promises to develop creamy-brazilnut complexity. Big, creamy aftertaste.

Drink now-2004.

<79>

**Schramsberg 1998 Blanc de Noirs**

A tendency to go oxidative reduced this wine's score.

Drink upon purchase.

<80>

**Schramsberg 1999 Crémant Demi-Sec**

Stewed rhubarb fruit, rich, with brulée sweetness on the finish. Almost fat.

Drink upon purchase.

<78>

**Schramsberg 1999 Brut Rosé**

Creamy-rich, malo-influenced, red fruits.

Drink upon purchase.

<80>

**Mirabelle NV Brut, Schramsberg**

I don't know whether sales have dropped off, but this used to be fresh, light, easy drinking and the sample submitted this year is much rich, more serious drinking with impressive depth and complexity. If sales have declined, the extra bottle-age has achieved a miraculous change and hopefully this will attract new buyers!

Drink upon purchase.

**Schwach**

Bernard Schwach

25 route de Ste Marie aux Mines

68150 Ribeauvillé

France

**Phone** (389) 73.72.18

**Fax** (389) 73.30.34

<77>

**François Schwach NV Crémant d'Alsace Brut**

Lovely, fresh, cool fruit.

Drink upon purchase.

**Seaview**

Edwards & Chaffey Winery

Chaffeys Road

McLaren Vale

SA 5171

Australia

**Phone** (8) 8323 8250

**Fax** (8) 8323 9308

<78>

**Seaview 1994 Section 353 Pinot Chardonnay**

Biscuity.

Drink upon purchase.

<77>

**Seaview 1998 Chardonnay Blanc de Blancs**

Very fresh, solid fruit.

Drink upon purchase.

<78>

**Seaview 1999 Chardonnay Blanc de Blancs, Vintage Reserve Brut**

Creamy-biscuity rich.

Drink now-2005.

**Segura Viudas**

Segura Viudas SA (Grupo Freixenet)

Sant Antoni 11

08770 Sant Sadurní d'Anoia

Spain

**Phone** (93) 8997227

**Fax** (93) 8996006

<78>

**Segura Viudas NV Cava Gran Brut**

Light, fresh and sherbety with creamy-sweet mousse.

Drink upon purchase.

<78>

**Torre Galimany NV Cava Brut Nature**

Rich, smooth and tasty, but not as impressive as reviewed in the last edition.

Drink upon purchase.

**Selosse**

Champagne Jacques Selosse

22 rue Ernest Vallée

51190 Avize

France

**Phone** (326) 57.53.56

**Fax** (326) 57.78.22

<90>

**Jacques Selosse NV Brut Tradition, Grand Cru Blanc de Blancs**

Neither this year's nor the last edition's submission survived my blind tastings because of raw, estery, oak aromas, but the last edition's Brut Tradition (the back label of which states that it was disgorged 04/07/2000) was deliciously fresh and clean with intense, crisp fruit 12 months later. However, I have been experimenting with the effect of post-disgorgement ageing on all Selosse cuvées for five years and this was an exception. In most cases, the raw, estery oak does not magically disappear and in a number of instances the wines darken and oxidise quite rapidly. Drink now-2008.

**Seppelt**

Seppelt Great Western

Moyston Road

Great Western

Vic. 3377

Australia

**Phone** (3) 5361 2222

**Fax** (3) 5361 2200

<80>

**Seppelt 1996 Sparkling Shiraz**

Not so sweet and real red wine qualities.

Drink now-2005.

**Sieur d'Arques**

Avenue du Mauzac

11303 Limoux

France

**Phone** (468) 74.63.00

**Fax** (468) 74.63.13

The daughter of Thierry Gasco, Pommery's winemaker, is one of the winemakers here.

<83>

**Aimery, La Méthode Ancestrale NV Suave et Fruité, Tête de Cuvée**

Apple purée!

Drink upon purchase.

**Sipp**

Louis Sipp

5 Grand'Rue

68150 Ribeauvillé

France

**Phone** (389) 73.60.01

**Fax** (389) 73.31.46

<76>

**Louis Sipp 1999 Crémant d'Alsace Brut**

Crisp, clean fruit, with good acidity and length.  
Drink upon purchase.

**Sipp Mack**

Domaine Sipp Mack  
1 rue des Vosges  
68150 Hunawihr  
France

**Phone** (389) 73.61.88

**Fax** (389) 73.36.70

<77>

**Sipp Mack NV Crémant d'Alsace**

The 1999-based blend of this cuvée has an impressively smooth mousse supporting crisp almondy fruit with good acidity.

Drink upon purchase.

**Smith**

Samuel Smith & Son  
Yalumba Winery  
Eden Valley Road  
Angaston

SA 5353

Australia

**Phone** (8) 8561 3200

**Fax** (8) 8561 3393

<85>

**Jansz of Tasmania 1996 Pipers River Cuvée Brut**

So toasty-rich it's almost blowsy, but is saved by excellent high acidity.

Drink now-2005.

<80>

**Jansz of Tasmania 1996**

Nice fruit and softness on finish, with toasty-rich aftertaste.

Drink upon purchase.

<88>

**Yalumba 1996 D Black, Sparkling Cabernet Shiraz**

The Cabernet adds menthol finesse to the rich, sweet creamy Shiraz fruit.

Drink now-2004.

<80>

**Yalumba 1997 D Brut**

Good richness.

Drink upon purchase.

<79>

**Jansz of Tasmania NV**

Crisp, clean, firm, tight fruit, while a few months earlier in Australia it was biscuity rich with some hazelnut complexity. Presumably the latter was the end of one blend, the former the beginning of another.

Drink now-2004.

**Soljans**

Soljans Wines  
263 Lincoln Road  
Henderson  
New Zealand

**Phone** (6) 438 8365

**Fax** (6) 438 8366

<80>

**Soljans Estate 1998 Legacy Brut**

Good fruit, not as VA-lifted as previous vintages.

Drink now-2004.

<75>

**Fusion NV Hawkes Bay**

Demi-sec style, Asti impersonation, but with more boiled sweet fruit than fresh orange flower.

Drink upon purchase.

**Solter**

Helmut Solter  
Zum Niederwald Denkmal 2  
65385 Rudesheim-am-Rhein  
Germany

**Phone** (6722) 2566

<90>

**Solter 1988 Rheingau Riesling Brut**

Heavenly, ripe, peachy, bottle-mature Riesling of great elegance and freshness.

Drink upon purchase.

<82>

**Solter NV Rheingau Riesling Brut**

This delightfully fresh Sekt has a nice hint of bottle-mature Riesling and would have scored even higher if it had higher acidity.

Drink upon purchase.

**Sonnenhof**

Weingut Sonnenhof  
Lange Strasse 38  
65366 Geisenheim  
Germany

**Phone** (6722) 6343

**Fax** (6722) 75451

<75>

**Weingut Sonnenhof, Bezner-Fischer 2000 Spätburgunder Brut Rosé**

Good, sweet Pinot fruit.

Drink upon purchase.

**Sonop**

PO Box 1142  
Stellenbosch 7599  
South Africa  
**Phone** (21) 887 2409  
**Fax** (21) 886 4838  
<77>

**Tribal NV South African Sparkling Wine**

This did not get a mention in the last edition because of its amylic aromas and simplistic fruit, but although once again amylic the fruit is anything but simplistic. It's really quite rich, soft, exotic and, as it claims on the label, lingering. Mind you, much of the lingering is down to a sweet, luscious dosage that tastes like upper-level demi-sec!  
Drink upon purchase.

**Sparviere**

Lo Sparviere  
Gusalli Beretta di Poncelet M.  
Via Costa  
2 - 25040 Monticelli Brusati  
Italy  
**Phone** (30) 652382  
**Fax** (30) 652382  
<79>

**Lo Sparviere NV Franciacorta Extra Brut**

Bags of rich fruit, with a peachy tang mid-palate.  
Drink now-2004.

**Starvedog Lane**

18701 Gehricke Road  
PO Box 326  
Hahndorf  
SA 5245  
Australia  
**Phone** (8) 8388 1250  
**Fax** (8) 8388 7233  
<80>

**Starvedog Lane 1998 Sparkling Chardonnay Pinot Noir Pinot Meunier**

When first shipped this was quite young and raw, but soon developed into a lovely big mouthful of fruit with toasty potential, although it would have been even better with more time on lees.  
Drink now-2005.

**Stempfel**

4 rue principale  
68420 Obermorschwihr  
France

**Phone** (389) 49.31.95

**Fax** (389) 49.26.88

<75>

**Stempfel NV Crémant d'Alsace Brut**

The 1999-based cuvée is well structured classic brut fizz with a good dash of Muscat.

Drink upon purchase.

**Stoffel**

Antoine Stoffel

21 rue de Colmar

68420 Eguisheim

France

**Phone** (389) 41.32.03

**Fax** (389) 24.92.07

<79>

**Stoffel NV Crémant d'Alsace Brut**

A very fruity fizz that will go toasty.

Drink upon purchase.

**Taittinger**

Champagne Taittinger

9 Place Saint-Nicaise

51061 Reims

France

**Phone** (326) 85.45.35

**Fax** (326) 85.84.65

Taittinger and its subsidiaries (including Bouvet-Ladubay, the Envergnure and Concorde hotel groups, Baccarat crystal-ware and Annick Goutal perfumes) are now jointly owned by Compagnie Nationale à Portefeuille, a financial holding company controlled by the Belgian baron Albert Frère, and by the Taittinger family, who were previously the sole owners. Albert Frère also happens to be on the board of LVMH!

<89>

**Taittinger 1995 Brut Millésimé**

Good ready-to-drink vintage fizz.

Drink upon purchase.

<95>

**Taittinger Comtes de Champagne 1995 Blanc de Blancs Brut**

Previous disgorgements were ready to drink immediately, but this year's release requires at least one year's extra cellarage. Lovely creamy fruit. Pure class.

Drink now-2010.

<90>

**Taittinger 1996 Brut Millésime**

Rich, sherbety fruit supported by a fluffy, breezy mousse.

Drink now-2009.

<89>

**Taittinger Comtes de Champagne 1996 Rosé Brut**

Although high-scoring, this vintage is three points down on the last edition (92 points) and I should really reserve my opinion, not least because both were pre-release samples. The forwardness remarked in the last edition has evolved into delicate toasty aromas this year, but floral-Pinot aromas are building and could overwhelm the toastiness, so it could well get younger before it gets older. The fruit, which was so deep and intense in the last edition, has almost disappeared and what remains is a tight ball on the finish. With such contradictory evolution, anything could happen!

Drink now-2006.

<81>

### **Taittinger NV Brut Réserve**

This was solid stuff with a sweet finish at the 2002 Annual Champagne Tasting, rather than Taittinger at its elegant best and exactly the same at my own blind tastings later in the year. Drink upon purchase.

### **Tarlant**

Champagne Tarlant

51480 Oeuilly

France

**Phone** (326) 58.30.60

**Fax** (326) 58.37.31

<87>

### **Tarlant 1995 Brut**

Frothy-fruity with finesse.

Drink now-2006.

<85>

### **Tarlant NV Brut Réserve**

Fresh, crisp, and clean with excellent acidity.

Drink now-2005.

<86>

### **Tarlant NV Pinot Meunier**

An innovative *barrique*-fermented Meunier of excellent richness.

Drink now-2005.

<85>

### **Tarlant NV Cuvée Louis**

This *barrique*-fermented Champagne is rich and tasty with noticeable oak, but it's not too blatant and the finish is dominated by freshness, not oak.

Drink now-2005.

### **Tatachilla**

151 Main Road

McLaren Vale

SA 5171

Australia

**Phone** (8) 8323 8656

**Fax** (8) 8323 9096

<80>

**Tatachilla NV Sparkling Malbec**

Oxidatively-creamy-rich cherries and plums.  
Drink now-2004.

**Telmont**

Champagne J. de Telmont  
1 avenue de Champagne  
51480 Damery  
France

**Phone** (326) 58.40.33

**Fax** (326) 58.63.93

<85>

**J. de Telmont 1995 Cuvée Grand Couronnement, Blanc de Blancs Brut**

The immediate appeal of rich, tasty fruit gives way to a hint of pepperiness, followed by increased flavour, hinting at a biscuity rather than toasty destiny.

Drink now-2006.

<82>

**J. de Telmont NV Grande Réserve Brut**

Good fruit, if somewhat simple and straightforward.

Drink upon purchase.

**Test Valley Vineyard**

Fonthill Glebe Wines  
The Winery  
Teffont Magna  
Salisbury  
Wiltshire  
SP3 5RG  
Great Britain

**Phone** (1722) 716770

**Fax** (1722) 716698

<71>

**Test Valley Vineyard NV Seyval Blanc, Premium Reserve Brut**

Sweet and sour, green and creamy fruit, which tastes better than it sounds.

Drink upon purchase.

**Thienot**

Champagne Alain Thienot  
14 rue des Moissons  
51100 Reims  
France

**Phone** (326) 77.50.10

**Fax** (326) 77.50.19

<85>

**Alain Thienot 1995 Brut Millésimé**

Perfumed fruit, but needs some aging to bring finesse.

Drink 2004-2007.

<85>

**Alain Thienot 1995 Grande Cuvée, Brut**

Not much to choose between this and Thienot's Brut at the 2002 Annual Champagne Tasting, where both scored 84 points, but this was on stunning form at *Decanter* magazine's 1995/1996 Champagne tasting, where its mature, deliciously smooth, violet-vanilla fruit utterly beguiled this taster at least (90 points). The sample submitted to my blind tasting was closer to the *Decanter* version. Different disgorgements?

Drink now-2006.

<88>

**Alain Thienot 1995 Cuvée Stanislas, Blanc de Blancs Brut**

Succulent, rich fruit, velvety. Seems to rise above its class deluxe cuvée of small grower perhaps?

Drink now-2008.

<85>

**Alain Thienot 1996 Brut Rosé**

Very intense fruit, needs time.

Drink 2004-2007.

<83>

**Alain Thienot NV Brut**

Thienot Brut seemed to be the pouring Champagne everywhere I went in London this year. It served this purpose well enough and was of a similar quality at the Annual Champagne.

Drink upon purchase.

**Torre Oria**

Ctra. Pontón-Utiel

46390 Derramador-Requena

Spain

**Phone** (96) 2320289

**Fax** (96) 2320311

<75>

**Torre Oria 1998 Cava Brut Nature**

Very fruity entry level Cava.

Drink upon purchase.

**Torreblanca**

Finca Masía Torreblanca s/n

08734 Sant Miquel d'Olerdola

Spain

**Phone** (93) 8915066

**Fax** (93) 8900102

<77>

**Masblanc NV Cava Extra Brut**

Elevated fruit. Great ready drinking, but don't keep.

Drink upon purchase.

**Torelló**

Augusti Torelló SA  
La Serra s/n  
08770 Sant Sadurní d'Anoia  
Spain  
**Phone** (93) 8911173  
**Fax** (93) 8912616  
<78>

**Kripta Gran Reserva 1997 Cava Brut Nature**

Best yet!  
Drink upon purchase.

**Tribaut, G.**

Champagne G. Tribaut  
88 rue d'Eguisheim - BP5  
51160 Hautvillers  
France  
**Phone** (326) 59.40.57  
**Fax** (326) 59.43.74  
<87>

**Tribaut 1996 Brut**

Absolutely bags of fruit.  
Drink now-2008.

**Trier**

Staatliche Weinbaudomäne Trier  
Deworastrasse 1  
54290 Trier  
Germany  
**Phone** (6519) 75980  
**Fax** (6514) 1993  
<76>

**Staatliche Weinbaudomäne Trier 2000 Domäne Avelsbach Riesling Brut**

Good Riesling fruit, should age nicely.  
Drink now-2005.

**Turckheim**

CV de Turckheim  
16 rue des Tuilerie BP 6  
68230 Turckheim  
France  
**Phone** (389) 30.23.60  
**Fax** (389) 27.35.33  
<77>

**Mayerling NV Crémant d'Alsace Brut**

Rich fruit, not lifted. Nicely structured, good acidity.

Drink upon purchase.

**Turm**

Sektkellerei Am Turm  
Weinstrasse 5  
67146 Deidesheim  
Germany

**Phone** (6326) 96640

**Fax** (6326) 966446

<76>

**Sektkellerei Am Turm 2000 Turm Carat Brut**

Intense Pinot flavour.

Drink upon purchase.

<75>

**Sektkellerei Am Turm NV Turm Rubin Spätburgunder Trocken**

Pure strawberries on the palate.

Drink upon purchase.

**Union Champagne**

7 rue Pasteur  
51190 Avize  
France

**Phone** (326) 57.94.22

**Fax** (326) 57.57.98

<89>

**De Saint Gall 1995 Brut**

Deliciously tangy fruit, with sherbety finish and a fluffy mousse.

Drink now-2006.

<88>

**Pierre Vaudon 1995 Premier Cru Brut**

I have tasted two seemingly different versions of this vintage, although both equivalent in quality. One was very floral and elegant, with a vanilla-pod finish, while the other was much richer and more concentrated.

Drink now-2006.

**Valley Vineyards**

Stanlake Park  
Twyford  
Reading  
Berkshire  
RG10 0BN  
Great Britain

**Phone** (118) 9340176

**Fax** (118) 9320914

<?>

**Clocktower NV Gamay**

I have not recommended this *cuvée* for a while because it has lacked the freshness, finesse and zip of earlier showings. The same still applies, but I include it in this edition because I have discovered that it is and always has been the same 1992-based wine. It is remarkable for an English fizz of this age. The crying shame is that Valley Vineyards did not sell all of this years ago, so that I could now be recommending more recent vintages of what would by now be one of England's finest.

Wait and see.

**Vallformosa**

Vilafranca del Penedès  
08735 Vilobí del Penedès

Spain

**Phone** (93) 897 82 86

**Fax** (93) 897 83 55

<78>

**Vallformosa 1999 Cava Brut Nature**

Fruity frothy, has some elegance. Clean.

Drink upon purchase.

<78>

**Vallformosa 2000 Cava Brut Rosé**

Easy drinking.

Drink upon purchase.

<78>

**Vallformosa NV Cava Brut**

Excellent fresh fruit and acidity. Clean. Crisp.

Drink upon purchase.

**Varichon & Clerc**

Château "Les Séchallets"

BP 25 01420 Seyssel

France

**Phone** (450) 59.23.15

**Fax** (450) 59.05.35

<74>

**Varichon & Clerc 1997 Royal Seyssel, Brut**

A touch of sweetness for a brut and some pepperiness in the fruit that reminds me more of Jura than Savoy, albeit pure Savoyard Altesse. Characterful.

Drink upon purchase.

**Velut**

Champagne Jean Velut

9 rue du Moulin

10300 Montgueux

France

**Phone** (325) 74.83.31

**Fax** (325) 74.17.25

<84>

**Jean Velut NV Brut**

Very fresh and fruity.

Drink upon purchase.

**Venoge**

Champagne de Venoge

46 avenue de Champagne

51204 Epernay

France

**Phone** (326) 53.34.34

**Fax** (326) 53.34.35

<88>

**De Venoge 1992 Grand Vin des Princes Brut**

Losing fruit for complexity, but very rich. Atypical for year.

Drink now-2004.

<85>

**De Venoge 1993 Grand Vin des Princes Brut**

Down two points on the last edition, essentially because of the nose lacking in the last edition's finer points. Fruit on the palate, acidity and mousse all the same, although no sign of the 'coconutty oakiness' noticed in the 2002 edition.

Drink now-2005.

<88>

**De Venoge 1995 Brut Millésimé**

Creamy-biscuity richness.

Drink now-2006.

<84>

**De Venoge NV Brut Sélect, Cordon Bleu**

Merely fresh, easy-going and nameless at the 2002 Annual Champagne Tasting, this cuvée was, however, distinctly oxidative on the nose only a few months later. This would not normally enamour me, but the fruit was very fresh and had some intensity.

Drink now-2004.

**Vereinigte Hospitien**

Güterverwaltung

Krahnenufer 19

54290 Trier

Germany

**Phone** (6519) 450

**Fax** (9452) 060

<74>

**Vereinigte Hospitien 1999 Riesling Brut**

Fresh, clean, crisp Riesling.

Drink upon purchase.

**Vesselle**

Champagne Georges Vesselle

16 rue des Postes

51150 Bouzy

France

**Phone** (326) 57.00.15

**Fax** (326) 57.09.20

<83>

**Georges Vesselle 1997 Brut Zero Millésime, Bouzy Grand Cru**

Creamy-biscuity-malo aroma supported by creamy-crisp fruit.

Drink now-2005.

<?>

**Georges Vesselle NV Brut, Bouzy Grand Cru**

This was fresh, rich, fruity and very satisfying at WINE magazine's Champagne tasting, but did not impress at my blind tasting in June. Probably a different blend, definitely a different disgorgement.

Wait and see.

<84>

**Georges Vesselle NV Brut Rosé, Bouzy Grand Cru**

Sweet, talcum-powder perfumed fruit.

Wait and see.

**Vesselle**

Champagne Maurice Vesselle

2 rue Yvonnet

51150 Bouzy

France

**Phone** (326) 57.00.81

**Fax** (326) 57.83.08

<85>

**Maurice Vesselle 1976 Brut Millésime, Bouzy Grand Cru**

Frankly, if I am to drink a Champagne that is over a quarter of a century old, I expect better than 85 points, but I am spoiled and this is wonderfully evocative of the 1976 vintage. It is big and rich, with coconut and toffee building on the finish, and an impressively firm mousse. Not too many Champagne producers offer such a mature vintage.

Drink upon purchase.

<87>

**Maurice Vesselle 1995 Brut Millésime, Bouzy Grand Cru**

Very fresh, clean, vibrant fruit. Will get better over the next year or two, but drinking nicely enough now.

Drink now-2005.

**Veuve Amiot**

19 Rue Ackerman

St-Hilaire-St-Florent

49426 Saumur

France

**Phone** (241) 50.25.24

**Fax** (241) 50.17.66

<75>

**Veuve Amiot 1995 Cuvée Elisabeth, Saumur Brut**

Toasty-rich; clean, focused fruit.

Drink upon purchase.

<70>

**Veuve Amiot NV Crémant de Loire Brut**

Fruity entry-level Crémant de Loire.

Drink upon purchase.

<76>

**Veuve Amiot NV Demi-Sec Saumur**

Fresh, clean and correct, with fine fruit and mousse. None of the unclean smells closely associated with most Loire Demi-Sec and well-balanced sweetness and acidity on the finish.

Drink upon purchase.

<75>

**Veuve Amiot NV Rouge Demi-Sec, Vin Mousseux**

Very sweet indeed.

Drink upon purchase.

**Veuve Clicquot**

Champagne Veuve Clicquot-Ponsardin

12 rue du Temple

51100 Reims

France

**Phone** (326) 40.25.42

**Fax** (326) 40.60.17

<91>

**Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin 1993 La Grande Dame, Brut**

Creamy-caramel aroma, which will go biscuity. Meanwhile the fresh, crisp fruit on the palate is already in biscuity heaven

Drink now-2009.

<95>

**Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin 1995 La Grande Dame, Brut**

Rich and biscuity, which is unusual, as Grande Dame usually goes toasty, while it's the straight vintage that goes biscuity.

Drink now-2006.

<90>

**Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin 1990 La Grande Dame Rosé, Brut**

Down two points on the last edition, due probably to the cherry fruits developing a pepperiness.

The nose is going toasty, as Grande Dame of any colour tends to do (whereas the non-vintage and straight vintages tend to go biscuity). Excellent acidity.

Drink now-2006.

<88>

**Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin 1995 Rich Réserve**

An extra year has melded the mellow, creamy aromas to the fruit. Truly classy finish (at this point I upped the score one point). Keep this at least two years in a good cellar if you want to treat yourself.

Drink now-2008.

<87>

**Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin 1995 Brut Vintage Réserve**

Definitely one for lovers of the creamy-caramel malo-dominated style. Sometimes this is so exaggerated that it becomes distinctly butterscotch, which I love in a thick ice-cream milkshake, but not so happy with in Champagne. I begin to wonder whether the Clicquot style is becoming too malo-dominated for my appreciation, although it can take it with such excellent acidity, and this vintage showed very well at WINE magazine's Champagne tasting. Needs a couple of years for biscuity complexity to overwhelm the caramel aromas.

Drink now-2008.

<86>

**Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin 1995 Brut Rosé Réserve**

This has a very similar creamy-caramel character to the 1995 Vintage Reserve, except that the red wine component seems to make the finish smoother. The creamy-caramel needs to develop typical Clicquot biscuitiness before this wine can climb any further up the scoreboard.

Drink now-2006.

<88>

**Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin NV Brut**

Rich, smooth and tasty with plenty of finesse and no heaviness.

Drink now-2007.

**Vigne Regali**

Via Vittorio Veneto 22

15019 Strevi Al

Italy

**Phone** 144363485

**Fax** 144363777

<87>

**Vigne Regali NV Asti, Spumante Dolce**

Wonderfully fresh acidity and the creamiest mousse.

Drink upon purchase.

**Vilarnau**

Castell de Vilarnau

Vilarnau 34-36

08770 Sant Sadurní d'Anoia

Spain

**Phone** (93) 8912361

**Fax** (93) 8912913

<77>

**Castell de Vilarnau 2000 Cava Chardonnay Brut Nature**

Due to be released December 2002 and should be just right. Good fruit and structure.

Drink now-2004.

<78>

**Castell de Vilarnau NV Cava Brut**

Bags of elegant fruit. White peaches.

Drink now-2004.

**Villa**

Villa di A. Bianchi

Via Villa

12 - 25040 Monticelli Brusati

Italy

**Phone** (30) 652329

**Fax** (30) 6852305

<83>

**Villa 1999 Franciacorta Satèn Brut**

The pre-release sample of this wine had seriously structured fruit and was the best Villa Franciacorta tasted this year.

Drink now-2004.

**Vilmart**

Champagne Vilmart & Cie

4 rue de la République

51500 Rilly-la-Montagne

France

**Phone** (326) 03.40.01

**Fax** (326) 03.46.57

<89>

**Vilmart 1990 Grand Cellier d'Or, Brut**

In a recent taste-off between various old disgorged Vilmart vintages, this lovely fresh Grand Cellier d'Or outclassed the Coeur de Cuvée 1990 and Cuvée Création IIIe Millénaire 1990, both of which had aged and darkened prematurely.

Drink now-2006.

<93>

**Vilmart 1992 Coeur de Cuvée, Brut Premier Cru (*magnum*)**

Wickedly rich despite the oak, with brilliant acid-fired fruit dominating the finish.

Drink now-2007.

<98>

**Vilmart 1996 Coeur de Cuvée, Brut Premier Cru**

Just so impressive!

Drink now-2012.

<91>

**Vilmart 1996 Cuvée Création, Brut Premier Cru**

Very rich and decidedly oaky, but not so much that it interferes with the crisp, clean finish.

Drink now-2012.

<85>

**Vilmart 1997 Grand Cellier d'Or, Brut 1er Cru**

Not too oaky, but oak does dominate the nose, which brings back into question whether Vilmart has turned the corner as far as over-oaking its Champagnes goes. Certainly the intensity of 1996 could have forced itself over the oak in the Coeur de Cuvée from that year, but equally the less intense 1997 fruit might have been too easily overwhelmed by the oak in this wine. Only time will tell.

Drink now-2005.

<86>

**Vilmart NV Grande Réserve, Brut Premier Cru**

It is great to see this cuvée back on form with lovely rich fruit and fine acidity.

Drink now-2004.

**Volk**

Weingut Volk

Koblenzer Strasse 6

56322 Spay-am-Rhein

Germany

**Phone** (2628) 8290

**Fax** (2628) 987416

<74>

**Weingut Volk 1999 Steuermann Riesling Brut**

Richer and sweeter than most at this level.

Drink upon purchase.

**Vollereaux**

Champagne Vollereaux

48 rue Léon-Bourgeois

51200 Pierry

France

**Phone** (326) 54.03.05

**Fax** (326) 55.06.37

<84>

**Vollereaux 1995 Cuvée Marguerite, Brut**

Herbal.

Drink upon purchase.

**Vollrads**

Schloss Vollrads

65375 Oestrich-Winkel

Germany

**Phone** (6723) 5270

**Fax** (6723) 6666

<76>

**Schloss Vollrads 1999 Riesling Brut**

Creamy-rich Riesling fruit, touch VA-lifted, but fine for immediate drinking.

Drink upon purchase.

**Vouvray**

Caves des Producteurs de Vouvray

BP 6 "La Vallée Coquette"

37210 Vouvray

France

**Phone** (247) 52.75.03

**Fax** (247) 52.66.41

<79>

**Caves des Producteurs de Vouvray NV Tête de Cuvée Brut**

Lovely fresh, non-greenage, expression of Chenin.

Drink upon purchase.

<72>

**Caves des Producteurs de Vouvray NV Extra Réserve Brut**

Golden-mature curiosity. Ripe-sweet fruit. Clean, but not what most sparkling wine drinkers would expect from a non-vintage, whatever the appellation or origin.

Drink upon purchase.

**Vranken-Pommery**

42 avenue de Champagne

51200 Epernay

France

**Phone** (326) 53.33.20

**Fax** (326) 51.87.07

<87>

**Demoiselle NV Tête de Cuvée Brut, Vranken**

Fine, floral aromas of some finesse followed by rich fruit and brilliant acidity.

Drink now-2005.

<86>

**Demoiselle NV Rosé, Brut Grande Cuvée**

As fresh as a daisy, with crisp, clean, red-fruit flavours.

Drink now-2004.

<84>

**Demoiselle 1995 Brut**

Concentrated.

Drink now-2007.

<84>

**Charles Lafitte NV Tête de Cuvée, Brut**

Sweet, yeast-complexed fruit. Very fresh, will go biscuity.

Drink now-2004.

<83>

**Charles Lafitte NV Grande Cuvée Rosé, Brut**

More pink than most Champagne rosés, with plenty of rich, youthful fruit and good acidity, but there is an underlying feeling that the aftertaste will not improve with time and could possibly go metallic.

Drink upon purchase.

**Walsham**

Champagne Olivier Walsham

3 rue de Rilly

51500 Chigny-les-Roses

France

**Phone** (326) 03.46.34

**Fax** (326) 03.45.61

<83>

**Olivier Walsham 1995 Le Bel Amour, Brut Cuvée Spéciale**

Good, clean fruit, supported by good acidity and likely to go biscuity.

Drink now-2005.

**Warden Vineyard**

Warden Abbey

Southill Park

Biggleswade

Beds SG18 9LJ

Great Britain

**Phone** (1462) 816226

**Fax** (1462) 812235

<70>

**Warden Vineyard 1996 Extra Brut**

This vintage was wonderfully fresh two editions ago, when it was full of Moscato-like fruit (although there is no Muscat, just Bacchus, Regner and Reichensteiner). It was a bit like a dry Asti, but the intervening years have not done it any favours. The terpenes have become overblown, giving the fruit a strong, tinned lychee character, which although not unpleasant, is merely a shadow of its former self.

Drink upon purchase.

**Weber**

Domaine Odile et Danielle Weber

68420 Eguisheim

France

**Phone** (389) 41.35.56

<74>

**Odile et Danielle Weber NV Crémant d'Alsace Brut**

A soft, fruity 1999-based cuvée with fresh aromas front to back.

Drink upon purchase.

**Welty**

Jean Michel Welty

22-24 Grand Rue

68500 Orschwihr

France

**Fax** (389) 76.09.03

**Fax** (389) 76.16.80

<75>

**Welty NV Brut Rosé, Crémant d'Alsace**

Soft, elegant, strawberry fruit.

Drink upon purchase.

**Wingara Wine Group**

PO Box 1333

South Melbourne

Vic. 3205

Australia

**Phone** (3) 9682 5000

**Fax** (3) 9682 5200

<76>

**Wingara 2000 Select Sparkling Shiraz**

Creamy American oak and bags of fruit.

Drink upon purchase.

**Winzersekt**

Winzersekt Sprendlingen

Michel-Mort-Strasse

55576 Sprendlingen

Germany

**Phone** (6701) 93200

**Fax** (6701) 932050

<76>

**Erzeugergemeinschaft Winzersekt 2000 Spätburgunder Extra Trocken Weissherbst**

Nice, rich, tasty.

Drink upon purchase.

**Wolfberger**

CV de Eguisheim

Grand'Rue

68420 Eguisheim

France

**Phone** (389) 22.20.20

**Fax** (389) 23.47.09

<80>

**Wolfberger NV Cuvée de l'An 2000, Crémant d'Alsace Brut (*magnum*)**

The 2000 prominently displayed on this gold-coated magnum is not the vintage, although anyone would be forgiven for thinking so. This is in fact a 1997-based cuvée and a very young, exotically fruity one it is too.

Drink now-2004.

<77>

**Wolfberger NV Cuvée Prestige, Crémant d'Alsace Brut**

One of Wolfberger's earliest and most successful cuvées, this is a very fruity blend of Pinot Blanc, Pinot Noir and Riesling. Touch exotic, very soft, yet paradoxically good acidity. Hint of

early-harvested fruit in the background, which will go toasty, but suggest drinking it while still in fruit-driven mode.

Drink upon purchase.

**Yellowglen**

Whites Road

Smythesdale

Vic. 3351

**Phone** (35342) 8617

**Fax** (35333) 7102

<72>

**Yellowglen 1998 Vintage**

Barrique contribution too obvious.

Drink upon purchase.

<74>

**Yellowglen NV Pinot Noir Chardonnay Grande Cuvée**

Okay, but not the same cuvée as the medals on the label!

Drink now-2004.

**Yering Station**

PO Box 390

Yarra Glen

Victoria 3775

**Phone** (3) 9730 1107

**Fax** (3) 9739 0135

<87>

**Yarrabank 1994 Thibaut & Gillet Cuvée, Brut**

This vintage almost as impressive as it was a couple of years ago (88 points), although the then lemony-biscuity fruit has become decidedly toasty. Held together by exceptional extract and high acidity. At Yering Station itself, they favour the 1993, but although that is much lighter in colour and thus looks much younger, which is usually a sign of intrinsically higher quality, the fruit is much simpler and the acidity far less exciting.

Drink upon purchase.

<80>

**Yarrabank 1997 Thibaut & Gillet Cuvée, Brut**

Almost as toasty as the 1994, but like that vintage it has good extract, if not quite as exceptional, and nicely high acids.

Drink now-2005.

<80>

**Yarrabank 1997 Cuvée Pinot Noir Chardonnay**

Very fresh and flowery, very soft, creamy mousse.

Drink upon purchase.

<80>

**Yarrabank 1997 Sparkling**

Very fresh, crisp and lively, with plenty of elegance and length.

Drink now-2004.

<85>

**Yarrabank 1998 Thibaut & Gillet Cuvée, Brut**

Lovely, fresh fruit aromas following onto the palate, where the fruit is rich, and highlighted by excellent acidity.

Drink now-2004.

**Zwölberich**

Weingut im Zwölberich

Schützenstrasse 14

55445 Langenlonsheim

Germany

**Phone** (6704) 9200

**Fax** (6704) 92040

<74>

**Weingut im Zwölberich 1998 Zwölberich Royal Brut**

Fresh, peachy fruit. (R.D. is a trademark belonging to Bollinger!)

Drink upon purchase.

## Glossary

(Fr.) French (Ger.) German (It.) Italian (Port.) Portuguese (Sp.) Spanish

**Abboccato** (It.) *See* Demi-Sec

**Accessible** Easy to drink.

**Acetic acid** The most important volatile acid found in wine (apart from carbonic acid), small amounts of acetic acid contribute positively to the attractive flavour of a wine, but too much gives an artificially high fruitiness that will eventually smell like vinegar.

**Acidic** Some people confuse this term with bitter. Think of lemon juice as acidic, lemon peel as bitter. A relatively high level of ripe acidity is vital for sparkling wine.

**Aftertaste** The flavour and aroma left in the mouth after the wine has been swallowed.

**Ages gracefully** A wine that retains finesse as it matures.

**Aggressive** The opposite of soft and smooth.

**Agrafe** (Fr.) An inverted U-shaped metal clip once used to secure the first corks during *prise de mousse*, but it is rarely encountered since the advent of crown caps has seen the demise of bottles bearing *bague carré*.

**Amino acids** Proteins formed by a combination of fruit esters, amino acids are formed during autolysis and are essential precursors to the complexity and finesse of a sparkling wine. *See* Autolysis, Autolytic, Reaction Maillard

**Amylic** The peardrop, banana or bubble-gum aromas of amyl or isoamyl acetate, excessive amounts of which can be produced if the first fermentation is conducted at a temperature that is too low. An amylic preponderance is not ideal for classic sparkling wine as it overshadows the subtle aromas of autolysis, and may prevent the development of post-disgorgement bottle-aromas. *See* Autolysis, Bottle-aromas

**AOC** (Fr.) Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée, the top rung of the French wine quality system. Champagne is unique in that it does not have to indicate that it is an AOC wine on the label: the name Champagne is considered sufficient guarantee.

**Aperitif** Originally a beverage taken as a laxative, aperitif now refers to any drink before a meal. It refers to a relatively light, fresh, easy-drinking style of Champagne.

**Appellation** Literally a "name", this usually refers to an official geographically-based designation for a wine.

**Aroma** Some people use the word aroma for grape-derived fragrance, and bouquet for more winery odours, especially when developed in bottle; however the two are synonymous in this book.

**Aromatic grape varieties** Grapes such as Gewürztraminer, Muscat, and Riesling overwhelm the subtle effects of autolysis, and are thus too aromatic for classic brut sparkling wines, yet this character often makes them ideal for sweet styles of sparkling wine.

**Assemblage** (Fr.) Blend of base wines that creates the final *cuvée*.

**Asti** (It.) A town in Northern Italy that gives its name to the world's finest sweet sparkling wine.

**Atmosphere** A measurement of atmospheric pressure, one atmosphere is 15lbs per square inch (psi), which is the pressure our bodies are subjected to at sea-level. A sparkling wine can be anything up to six atmospheres, which is 90lbs psi - the equivalent to the pressure of a double-decker bus tyre. The actual pressure at serving temperature, however, is much lower, so although care must always be taken when opening a bottle, it is not like pulling the plug from a bus tyre. A fully sparkling wine of six atmospheres will, for example, be just 2.5 atmospheres at 6°C.

**Austere** A wine that lacks fruit or has insufficient dosage.

**Autolysis** The breakdown of yeast cells after the second fermentation. It is the amino acids created by autolysis that are the precursors to the complex aromas we call the inimitable "champagne" character. In my experience, it is the amount of autolysis found in a young sparkling wine that is directly responsible for the degree of finesse that builds with age.

**Autolytic** The smell of a freshly disgorged brut-style sparkling wine, which is not "yeasty" at all, but has an acacia-like flowery freshness.

**Baguette Carré** (Fr.) A squared-off glass rim around the neck of a Champagne bottle onto which the *agrafe* is fixed.

**Baguette Couronne** (Fr.) An exaggerated lip on the neck of a Champagne bottle is necessary if a crown-cap is to be used for the *prise de mousse*.

**Balance** Refers to the harmonious and therefore pleasing relationship between acids, alcohol, fruit, tannin (not often found in fizz, except for sparkling Shiraz) and other natural elements.

**Balthazar** Large bottle equivalent to 16 normal-sized 75cl bottles.

**Barrel-fermented** A few Champagnes like Krug still ferment in oak barrels that traditionally are well-used (averaging 40 years old) and do not contribute overt oakiness, although the oakiness does stand out against other Champagnes under blind conditions. However, an increasing number of producers are following the lead set by growers such as Selsosse and Vilmart, who deliberately use new oak, and this fashion has been picked up by many New World producers.

**Barrique** (Fr.) Literally means barrel, but generically used in English-speaking countries for any small oak cask and often denotes the use of new oak. *See Pièce*

**Base wines** The fully-fermented dry wines that when blended together form the basis of a sparkling wine *cuvée*.

**Biscuity** A desirable aspect of bouquet found in some sparkling wines, particularly a well-matured Pinot Noir dominated Champagne. Some top-quality Chardonnay dominated Champagnes can slowly acquire a creamy-biscuitiness.

**Bitterness** Can be good or bad: [1] An unpleasant aspect of a poorly made wine. [2] An expected characteristic of an as yet undeveloped concentration of flavours that should, with maturity, become rich and delicious. *See* acidic

**Blanc de Blancs** (Fr.) A white wine made from white grapes.

**Blanc de Noirs** (Fr.) A white wine made from black grapes. In Champagne and throughout the rest of France, the art of the winemaker is to produce as colourless a wine as possible from black-skinned grapes, whereas in the New World a certain copper tinge is expected and there is often no difference between a genuine rosé and *blanc de noirs*.

**Blind, blind tasting** An objective tasting where the identity of wines is unknown to the taster until after he or she has made notes and given scores. All competitive tastings are blind.

**Blowzy** An overblown and exaggerated.

**Blush wine** Synonymous with rosé.

**BOB** An acronym for "Buyer's Own Brand", under which numerous retailers and restaurants sell wine.

**Body** The extract of fruit and alcoholic strength together give an impression of weight in the mouth.

**Bottle-age** The length of time a wine spends in bottle before it is consumed. A wine that has good bottle-age is one that has sufficient time to mature properly. Bottle-ageing has a mellowing effect.

**Bottle-aromas** Mellowing aromas created after disgorgement.

**Bottle-fermented** I use this without discrimination for any sparkling wine that has undergone a second fermentation in bottle, but when seen on a label, it invariably means the wine has been made by transfer method.

**Bottle sizes** *See* Large-format bottles

**Bouquet** *See* Aroma

**Breed** The finesse of a wine that is due to the intrinsic quality of grape and terroir combined with the irrefutable skill and experience of a great winemaker.

**Brut** (Fr.) Literally means raw or bone dry, but in practice there is always some sweetness and so can at the most only be termed dry. Technically relates to wines with between 0 and 15 grams per litre of residual sugar.

**Brut de Brut** (Fr.) Synonymous with Brut Natural.

**Brut Intégral** (Fr.) Synonymous with Brut Natural.

**Brut Natur** (Sp.) *See* Brut Natural

**Brut Nature** (Fr. & Sp.) Relatively recent category at the very driest end of the sweetness scale, between 0 and 3 grams per litre of residual sugar, thus infers no dosage whatsoever. Such wines do not age well after disgorgement, therefore if it is not ready for drinking, don't buy it.

**Brut Non-Dosé** (Fr.) Synonymous with Brut Natural.

**Brut Sauvage** (Fr.) Synonymous with Brut Natural.

**Brut Zéro** (Fr.) Synonymous with Brut Natural.

**Bruto** (Port. & Sp.) *See* Brut

**Buttery** Normally caused by diacetyl, which is a natural by-product of malolactic. The food industry uses diacetyl to make margarine taste like more like butter. Although a certain butteriness is fine in still Chardonnay, the slightest hint detracts from the finesse of a sparkling wines. This is why the Champagne producers use a special cocktail malolactic bacteria designed to create the least amount of diacetyl as possible.

**Cap Classique** South African equivalent of Spain's Cava appellation.

**Caramel** An extreme version of buttery.

**Cava** (Sp.) The generic appellation for *méthode champenoise* wines produced in various delimited areas of Spain.

**Cave, caves** (Fr.) Literally cellar, cellars.

**Champagne** (Fr.) Specifically a sparkling wine produced in a delimited area of northern France, the Champagne appellation is protected within the EU, and elsewhere. It is, however, abused by certain other countries, especially in the USA, where it is perfectly legal to sell domestically-produced "champagne". Even worse, the Champagne appellation is exploited in South America by the champenois themselves.

**Champaña** (Sp.) The appellation for sparkling wine made in Champagne is protected within the EU, whatever language it is translated into, but is sometimes used loosely elsewhere, especially in the USA, where it is legal to sell domestically produced "Champagne". It has also been exploited shamelessly by the champenois themselves, who have marketed their South American fizz as Champaña for more than 30 years.

**Champenois** (Fr.) The people of Champagne.

**Chaptalisation** (Fr.) Sugar added to grape *must* to raise a wine's alcoholic potential. Named after Jean-Antoine Chaptal, a brilliant chemist and technocrat who served Napoleon as minister of the interior and instructed *vignerons* on the advantages of adding sugar to grape juice.

**Chardonnay** One of the two greatest sparkling wine grapes for the classic brut style.

**Charmat** (Fr.) *See* Cuve close

**Chef de caves** (Fr.) Literally the "cellar manager", but also the winemaker, to a lesser or greater extent according to the traditions of the house.

**Chocolaty** Chocolate in Champagne is part of the complexity of a well-aged Chardonnay *cuvée*.

**Citrus** Citrussy indicates aromas and flavours of far greater complexity than mere lemony can suggest. Usually confined in Champagne to a *blanc de blancs*.

**CIVC** (Fr.) *See* Comité Interprofessionnel du Vin de Champagne.

**Classic, classy** Both subjective words to convey an obvious impression of quality. These terms are applied to wines that not only portray the correct characteristics for their type and origin, but possess the *finesse* and *style* indicative of only the most top-quality wines.

**Clean** A straightforward term applied to any wine devoid of any unwanted or unnatural undertones of aroma and flavour.

**Clos** (Fr.) A plot of land that was once enclosed by walls. However, only those that still are enclosed by walls are considered true clos, since it is the physical effect of these walls that cut off the vines from the surrounding area, creating its own, superior *terroir*.

**Closed** Refers to the nose or palate of a wine that fails to open or show much character. It also implies that the wine has some qualities, even if they are 'hidden' - these should open up as the wine develops in bottle.

**Cloying** Applies to the sickly and sticky character of a poor sweet wine, where the finish is heavy and often unclean.

**Coarse** A term that can be applied to a "rough and ready" wine, which may not necessarily unpleasant, but is certainly not fine. In still wines it is more often than not associated with younger product, but in Champagne it occurs more often than not in more mature examples. Champagnes with too little dosage or none at all have a tendency to go coarse as they age.

**Cold Duck** A cheap, sweet, carbonated wine first made by the Bronte Winery in Detroit from the "foxy" Concord, Cold Duck enjoyed an extraordinary vogue in the USA throughout the 1960s.

The name comes from "Kalte Ente" (Cold Duck), a fizzy concoction made on the fly by German bar staff from the dregs of red and white wine, which they livened up with Sekt.

**Comité Interprofessionnel du Vin de Champagne** or **CIVC** (Fr.) The semi-governmental interprofessional body that regulates the Champagne industry.

**Commercial** A diplomatic way for experts to say 'I don't like this, but I expect the masses will', a commercial wine is blended to a widely acceptable formula, which at worst may be bland and inoffensive.

**Complete** Refers to a wine has everything (fruit, tannin, acidity, depth, length, etc) and thus feels satisfying in the mouth.

**Complexity** An overworked word that refers to many different nuances of smell or taste. Great wines in their youth may have a certain complexity, but it is only with maturity in bottle that a wine will eventually achieve full potential in terms of complexity.

**Cool-fermented** An obviously cool-fermented wine is very fresh, with simple aromas of apples, pears and bananas, at best, but could be blighted by more oppressive aromas of peardrops, bubblegum or nail-varnish. *See* Amylic

**Corked** Nothing inherently wrong with the wine, the term corked applies to a penicillin infection inside the cork, which gives an unpleasant musty character, spoiling an otherwise good wine. Not too long ago it was highly improbable to have two consecutive corked bottles of the same wine, but every day scientists are discovering 'corky' smelling compounds that have nothing to do with the cork, so it is quite possible for entire batches of wine to smell or taste corked. Furthermore, the most common of these (*see* TCA) affects casks as much as cork, and the spores are highly volatile, thus one affected cork sitting in a plastic bag with thousands of other can infect the entire batch. However, no wine buyer should purchase such wines, let alone put them on the shelf.

**Correct** All the correct characteristics for its type and origin, but not necessarily an exciting wine.

**Courtier en vins** (Fr.) A wine broker who acts as the go between growers and producers.

**Crayères** (Fr.) Chalk-pits dug out in Gallo-Roman times.

**Creamy** Dr Tony Jordan believes that creaminess in a sparkling wine is probably a combination of the finesse of the mousse (created by the most minuscule of bubbles and their slow release) and an understated malolactic influence, the combined effect of which is picked up at the back of the throat on the finish of the wine, and this is most apparent in Chardonnay-based wines.

**Creamy-biscuity** *See* Biscuity

**Creamy-caramel malo** A lesser, more acceptable version of caramel.

**Crémant** (Fr.) Originally a Champagne with a gentler mousse than normal, this term is now reserved in the EU for various sparkling wine appellations, such as Crémant d'Alsace, Crémant de Loire etc.

**Crisp** A clean sparkling wine with good acidity backing up the effervescence on the finish.

**Cross** A vine that has been propagated by crossing two or more varieties within the same species (*Vitis vinifera* for example), while a hybrid is a cross between two or more varieties from more than one species.

**Crown-cap** The common beer-bottle cap now widely used as the temporary closure while a sparkling wine undergoes its second fermentation.

**Cru** (Fr.) Literally a growth, a *cru* normally refers to a vineyard site, although in Champagne it is used for an entire village. *See* Premier Cru, Grand Cru

**Cushiony** A beautifully soft, ultra-fine sensation caused by the minuscule bubbles of a first rate mousse.

**Cuve close** (Fr.) A method invented by Eugène Charmat of producing sparkling wine through a second fermentation in a sealed vat or tank. Synonymous with Charmat method or tank method.

**Cuvée** (Fr.) Originally the wine of one *cuve* or vat, this now refers to a precise blend or specific product that could well be blended from several vats.

**CV** (Fr.) Abbreviation for Caves Vinicole and variations on this theme.

**Débourbage** (Fr.) The settling process that removes bits of skin, pips and other flotsam and jetsam from the freshly pressed grape juice.

**Definition** A wine with good definition is one that is not just clean with a correct balance, but also has a positive expression of its grape variety and/or origin.

**Dégorgement** (Fr.) *See* Disgorgement

**Delicate** Describes the quieter characteristics of quality that give a wine charm.

**Demi-Sec** (Fr.) Literally semi-dry, but semi-sweet for all practical purposes, a Demi-Sec may contain between 35 and 50 grams per litre of residual sugar.

**Depth** Refers first to a wine's depth of flavour and secondly to its depth of interest.

**Deutscher Qualitätsschaumwein** (Ger.) Same as *Deutscher Sekt*.

**Deutscher Qualitätsschaumwein BA** (Ger.) Same as *Deutscher Sekt BA*.

**Deutscher Qualitätsschaumwein Bestimmter Anbaugebiete** (Ger.) Same as *Deutscher Sekt BA*.

**Deutscher Sekt** (Ger.) A sparkling wine made by any method (though probably *cuve close*), exclusively comprising of wine from German-grown grapes. It may indicate a maximum of two grape names and should be at least 10 months old when sold.

**Deutscher Sekt BA** (Ger.) A sparkling wine made by any method (though probably *cuve close*), exclusively comprising of wine made from grapes grown in one of Germany's 13 specified regions, although it may indicate an even smaller denomination if 85 per cent of the grapes come from the named area.

**Deutscher Sekt Bestimmter Anbaugebiete** (Ger.) Same as *Deutscher Sekt BA*.

**Disgorgement** The removal of sediment after the second fermentation.

**Distinctive** A wine with a positive character. All fine wines are distinctive to one degree or another, but not all distinctive wines are necessarily fine.

**DOC/DOCG** (It.) Denominazione di Origine Controllata/e Garantita. Italian wine quality system based on grape variety and origin. "Garantita" denotes an extra rung of quality.

**Doce** (Port.) *See* Doux

**Dolce** (It.) *See* Doux

**Dosage** (Fr.) The amount of sugar solution added to a sparkling wine after disgorgement.

**Doux** (Fr.) Sweet. In excess of 50 grams per litre of residual sugar.

**Dry straw** *See* Straw

**Dulce** (Sp.) *See* Doux

**Easy-drinking** Probably not a complex wine, but it slips down easily.

**Echelle des Crus** (Fr.) All the wine-producing of Champagne are classified on a percentage basis known as the *échelle des crus*. Those considered to be *grands crus* receive the maximum *échelle* of 100%, whereas those at the bottom of the scale are classified at the minimum of 80%. Villages with vineyards rated between 90 and 99% inclusive are considered to be *premiers crus*. At one time the minimum *échelle* was just 22.55%, but due to various ad hoc re-classifications this has gradually increased over the years and many villages have been 'promoted' in the

process. There used to be 12 *grands crus* and 32 *premiers crus* - now there are 17 and 43 respectively.

**Elegant** A subjective term applied to wines that may be described as stylish and possessing some finesse.

**Elevated fruit** Synonymous with VA fruitiness.

**English aroma** A very fresh herbaceous character.

**Esters, Estery** A prickly, ethereal-minerally impression. Esters are essential components of any wine and contribute to its fruitiness, but when estery aromas dominate a wine it is unready and has probably been disgorged too soon.

**Expansive** A wine that is big, but open and accessible.

**Expressive** A wine that is expressive is true to its grape variety and area of origin.

**Extract** The term covers everything all the solid in a wine and literally gives the wine its body.

**Explosive** A sparkling wine can be explosive in the bottle, which is to say it can gush all over the place even when chilled and opened skilfully. This will either be due to a poor quality inner-surface of the bottle, where deformities in the glass act as nuclei for the release of gas before the wine gets out of the bottle, or to microscopic elements acting as nuclei in the wine in itself.

Sparkling wine can also be explosive in the mouth, which can also be the result of nuclei in the wine, but may also be due to an excess of carbonic gas that is free (ie., not bound to the wine).

The subject of free and bound carbonic gas is far less researched and understood than that of free and sulphur, but it is known that the longer a sparkling wine is kept at cooler temperatures, the more carbonic gas that is bound. We also know that free carbonic gas is the first to be released in the glass, while it is the bound carbonic that keeps a sparkling wine fizzy in the long-term.

**Extra-Brut** In theory between 0 and 6 grams per litre of residual sugar, thus drier than most bruts. Possibly no dosage, but probably a very light one only, since wines without dosage can now utilise the Brut Nature designation.

**Extra Herb** (Ger.) *See* Extra-Brut

**Extra-Sec** (Fr.) Literally "extra-dry", but merely dry in most cases, since such wines may contain between 12 and 20 grams per litre of residual sugar.

**Extra Trocken** (Ger.) *See* Extra-Sec

**Fat** A wine full in body and extract. It is good for any wine to have some fat, but fat in an unqualified sense can be derogatory and no wine should be too fat, as it will be flabby or too blowzy.

**Feminine** Subjective term used to describe a wine with a preponderance of delicately attractive qualities, rather than weight or strength. A wine of striking beauty, grace and finesse with a silky texture and exquisite style.

**Fermentation** The biochemical process by which enzymes secreted by yeast cells convert sugar molecules into almost equal parts of alcohol and carbonic gas.

**Fermentación en botella** (Sp.) Literally 'bottle-fermented', thus actually transfer method.

**Fermentazione naturale** (It.) Literally 'naturally fermented', which should apply to every wine ever made - even a carbonated fizz must have been naturally fermented in the first place. What it is supposed to infer, however, is that a wine has been rendered sparkling by natural refermentation in a tank or bottle (usually the former).

**Finesse** That elusive, indescribable quality that separates a fine wine from those of lesser quality.

**Fixed sulphur** Added to wine primarily to prevent oxidation, which it does by fixing itself to the oxygen on a molecular basis. Once a molecule of sulphur is fixed, it stays fixed. It continues to do its job, keeping the oxygen prisoner, but it is no longer free to protect the wine against other

molecules of oxygen: only free sulphur can do that. Sulphur can fix to all sorts of molecules in a wine, mostly harmless, but a few things are potentially hazardous in a smelly way. When sulphur fixes with hydrogen, for example, hydrogen sulphide (stink bombs, bad eggs) is formed. These are called fixed-sulphur faults. On the other hand, we are just beginning to understand that the toasty bottle-aroma most Champagne aficionados adores is in fact a fixed-sulphur fault!

**Flaschengärung nach dem Traditionellen Verfahren** (Ger.) *See* méthode champenoise

**Fleshy** Refers to a wine with plenty of fruit and extract and infers a certain underlying firmness.

**Flowery, Floral** aromas are found in young sparkling wines, and are the precursors to fuller, deeper, fruitier aromas of maturity. Specific acacia aromas are found in recently disgorged wines of any age.

**Foamy** A less acute degree of explosive.

**Foudre** (Fr.) A large wooden cask or vat.

**Foxy** The very distinctive, highly perfumed character of certain indigenous American grape varieties that can be sickly sweet and cloying to unconditioned European and Antipodean palates.

**Free Sulphur** The acrid odour of sulphur in a wine should, if detected, be akin to the smell of a recently extinguished match, and will go away with time in bottle, or a swirl of the glass.

**Frizzante** (It.) Semi-sparkling or slightly fizzy, the equivalent of *pétillant*.

**Frizzantino** (It.) Very lightly sparkling, the equivalent of *perlant*.

**Fruity** Although wine is made from grapes, it will not have a fruity flavour unless the grapes used have the correct combination of ripeness and acidity.

**Full** Usually refers to body, eg., full-bodied. But a wine can be light in body yet full in flavour.

**Fully fermented** A wine that is allowed to complete its natural course of fermentation and so yield a totally dry wine.

**Fully sparkling** A wine with a pressure of 5-6 atmospheres.

**Fut** (Fr.) An empty *pièce*.

**Gasificado** (Sp.) Artificially carbonated wine.

**Generic** A wine, usually blended, of a general appellation.

**Generous** A generous wine gives its fruit freely on the palate, while an ungenerous wine is likely to have little or no fruit and, probably, an excess of tannin. All wines should have some degree of generosity.

**Gluggy** Easy to guzzle.

**Goût américain** (Fr.) From the 19th century through to the 1920s, there was not an established regime of *dosage* for Champagne as there is today. Instead of *brut, sec, demi-sec* etc., the different market determined the *dosage* of Champagne. The American market was the third sweetest, and we know from the observation of Henry Vizetelly that in 1882 Champagnes labelled *gout américain* contained between 110 and 165 grams per litre of residual sugar.

**Goût anglais** (Fr.) Although the English market was demanded the driest Champagne, and the first Champagnes ever to be labelled *brut* were shipped to London sometime after 1876, at 10-30 grams per litre of residual sugar, the concept of *brut* was obviously relative to its times. Vizetelly recorded that the *gout anglais* varied between 22 and 66 grams, which was considered dry in its day, but would now be though very sweet indeed.

**Goût français** (Fr.) In the late-19th century, *goût français*, a style that was popular in both France and Germany, carried a *dosage* of between 165 and 200 grams, making it second only in sweetness to Champagnes destined for Russian market (which did not have a designated "*goût*",

but according to Vizetelly contained between 200 and 300 grams, which is two to three times as sweet as Château d'Yquem).

**Grand cru** (Fr.) Literally "great growth", in regions such as Burgundy, where its use is strictly controlled, this term has real meaning, but in other winemaking areas where no controls exist, it will mean very little. Between these two extremes is Champagne, where the *grands crus* are strictly controlled on the one hand (there are only 17), but applicable to entire villages - rather than specific, superior vineyards - on the other, thus encompasses vineyards of varying intrinsic quality. *See* Echelle des Crus

**Grande marque** (Fr.) Literally a 'great brand' or 'famous brand', in the world of wine the term *grande marque* is specific to Champagne and until 1997 applied to members of a 'club' called the Syndicat de Grandes Marques, but this was disbanded when they could not agree on quality criteria for continued membership. The term will continue to be used, particularly in English-speaking countries, for the most famous brands.

**Granvas** (Sp.) Same as *cuve close*.

**Grapey** Can be applied to an aroma or flavour that is reminiscent of grapes rather than wine, a particular characteristic of German wines and wines made from various Muscat or Muscat-like grapes.

**Green** Young and tart, as in Vinho Verde. It can be either a derogatory term, or simply an indication of youthful wine that might well improve.

**Halbsüss** (Austrian) *See* Demi-Sec

**Halbtrocken** (Ger.) *See* Demi-Sec

**Handgerüttelt** (Ger.) Hand-riddled (manual *remuage*), thus the wine has been bottle-fermented and not transferred, therefore this term can be taken to mean *méthode champenoise*.

**Harsh** A more derogatory form of coarse.

**Herb** (Ger.) *See* Brut

**Herbaceous** A green-leaf or white-currant characteristic that is usually associated with under-ripeness, particularly with aromatic grape varieties.

**High-tone** A term used in this book to describe aromas of bouquet that aspire to elegance, but that can become too exaggerated and be slightly reminiscent of vermouth.

**Hollow** A wine that appears to lack any real flavour in the mouth compared to the promise shown on the nose. Usually due to a lack of body, fruit or acidity.

**Honeyed** Many Champagnes develop a honeyed character through bottle-age, as indeed can Riesling Sekte.

**Horizontal tasting** This is a tasting of different wines of the same style or vintage, as opposed to a vertical tasting, which consists of different vintages of the same wine.

**Jahrgangssekt** (Ger.) Literally 'vintage Sekt', this merely means a sparkling wine from a single year and does not infer any special connotation of quality.

**Jammy** Commonly used to describe a fat and eminently drinkable red wine rich in fruit, if perhaps a bit contrived and lacking a certain elegance.

**Jeroboam** Large bottle equivalent to four normal-sized 75cl bottles.

**Kabinett** The first rung of predication in Germany's QmP range, one below Spätlese and often drier than a QbA.

**Klassische Flaschengärung** (Ger.) *See* *méthode champenoise*

**Lactic acid** The acid that develops in sour milk, which is also created in wine during the malolactic fermentation.

**Large-format bottles** Large-format bottles are confusingly different according to the region. The most famous oversized bottles are found in Champagne and Bordeaux. However, a Jeroboam in Champagne is the equivalent of four normal-sized 75cl bottles, whereas in Bordeaux it is six bottles. Furthermore, there is no such thing as a Rehoboam in Bordeaux, where this size is known as an Imperiale. An Imperiale is in fact the largest Bordeaux bottle, whereas in Champagne the Salmanazar, Balthazar and Nebuchadnezzar are all very much larger formats. The full list of classic large-format Champagne bottles is as follows:

NOTE TO MATT> PLEASE INDENT THE FOLLOWING UNDER Bottle sizes,  
VERTICALLY ALIGN THE "=" SIGN AND DECIMALLY ALIGN THE NUMBER OF  
BOTTLES IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING IT:

- Magnum** = 2 normal-sized 75cl bottles
- Jeroboam** = 4 normal-sized 75cl bottles
- Rehoboam** = 6 normal-sized 75cl bottles
- Methuselah** = 8 normal-sized 75cl bottles
- Salmanazar** = 12 normal-sized 75cl bottles
- Balthazar** = 16 normal-sized 75cl bottles
- Nebuchadnezzar** = 20 normal-sized 75cl bottles

The larger the bottle, the longer the wine should last, but this theory cannot be applied with any certainty in Champagne for sizes larger than a Jeroboam. Larger formats are theoretically superior for ageing because the air-space differs insignificantly compared to the increased volume of wine, thus the rate of oxidation should be reduced. However, it is legally permitted fill sizes larger than the Jeroboam with finished Champagne (*see* Transvasage) and most houses that market these party-sized bottles do just that.

**L.D.** A sparkling wine term that stands for "late disgorged" and paradoxically means the same as "recently disgorged". The use of L.D. infers that the wine in question is of a mature vintage that has been kept on its yeast deposit for an extended period. *See* R.D.

**Lees** The sediment that accumulates in a vat or bottle during the fermentation of a wine.

**Length** A wine that has length indicates that the flavour lingers in the mouth a long time after swallowing. If two wines taste the same, yet you definitely prefer one, but do not understand why, it is probably because the one you prefer has a greater length.

**Lie** (Fr.) The French for lees. *Sur lie* refers to a wine kept in contact with its lees.

**Lieu-dit** (Fr.) A named site within a vineyard.

**Light** A qualification of body.

**Lime** This is the classic character of Sémillon and Riesling when grown in many areas of Australia, which explains why Sémillon from the Hunter Valley used to be sold as Hunter Riesling.

**Linalool** Found in some grapes, particularly Muscat and Riesling varieties. It contributes to the peachy-flowery fragrance that is the varietal characteristic of wines made from Muscat grapes.

**Lingering** Normally applied to the finish of a wine - an aftertaste that literally lingers.

**Liqueur d'expédition** (Fr.) Solution of sugar and wine added to a sparkling wine after disgorgement.

**Liqueur de tirage** (Fr.) The bottling liqueur: wine, yeast and sugar added to still Champagne to induce the mousse.

**Maceration** A term that is usually applied to the period during the vinification process when the fermenting juice is in contact with its skins.

**Maderised** The terms maderised and oxidised are sometimes erroneously believed to be synonymous, but Madeira is reductive, while Sherry is oxidative. All Madeiras are maderised by slowly heating the wines in specially constructed ovens, then slowly cooling them. Apart from Madeira itself, this maderised character is undesirable in all but certain Mediterranean wines that are deliberately made in a *rancio* style (the French tend to use *rancio* in preference to *maderisé*, which they all too often confuse with oxidise).

**Magnum** Large bottle equivalent to two normal-sized 75cl bottles, the ideal volume for ageing Champagne.

**Malic** A tasting term that describes the green apple aroma and flavour found in some young wines, due to the presence of malic acid, the dominant acid found in apples.

**Malic acid** Although this very harsh-tasting (green apple on mild steel) acid diminishes during the ripening process, a significant quantity still persists in ripe grapes and, although reduced by fermentation, in the wine too.

**Malolactic, Malo** A biochemical process that transforms the hard malic acid of unripe grapes into soft lactic acid and carbonic gas.

**Marque** A brand or make.

**Mean** An extreme qualification of ungenerous.

**Meio-Seco** (Port.) *See* Demi-Sec

**Mellow** A wine that is round and nearing its peak of maturity.

**Méthode champenoise** (Fr.) The process that converts a fully-fermented still wine into a sparkling wine by a second fermentation in the same bottle in which it is sold. In the EU this term is forbidden on the label of any wine other than Champagne, which of course never uses it.

**Méthode Classique** (Fr.) Synonymous with *méthode champenoise*.

**Méthode Traditionnelle** (Fr.) Synonymous with *méthode champenoise*.

**Methuselah** Large bottle equivalent to eight normal-sized 75cl bottles.

**Metodo Classico** (It.) *See* méthode champenoise

**Metodo Tradizionale** (It.) *See* méthode champenoise

**Microclimate** Due to a combination of shelter, exposure, proximity to mountains, water mass and other topographical features unique to a given area, a vineyard can enjoy (or be prone to) a specific microclimate.

**Mid-palate** [1] The centre-top of your tongue. [2] A subjective term to describe the middle of the taste sensation when taking a mouthful of wine. Could be hollow, if the wine is thin and lacking, or full, if rich and satisfying.

**Mild** (Ger.) *See* Doux

**Mineral** This is normally a positive term indicating a certain complexity and finesse, but some wines can have a minerally aftertaste that can sometimes be unpleasant.

**Mono-cru** Champagne made from a single *cru* or village.

**Monopole** (Fr.) Single ownership of one vineyard.

**Mousse** The foam produced by thousands of bubbles in a sparkling wine.

**Mousseux** *See* Vin Mousseux

**Mouthfill** Good mouthfill infers a certain satisfaction or completeness, and is the opposite of hollow.

**Mushroom** Not a mustiness, but the attractive aroma of freshly peeled mushroom. This is quite common in old vintages of Champagne and, curiously, for some wines it affects just a few bottles in a batch, yet not others, while for other wines this characteristic can pervade every single bottle. For the moment, no one knows its origin. At one time it was thought to be a

characteristic of over-mature Meunier, but the instances where it affects only some bottles in a batch would seem to rule this out. One suggestion has been that it is a yeast-derived characteristic, the rationale being that yeasts are a form of mushroom, but this explanation strikes many oenologist as being a bit too logical. The latest idea is that it could be a reaction between the yeast and the cork, when a little wine is trapped between the lip of the bottle and the top of the cork at bottling. Although not conclusive, since hearing this explanation, I have observed an unusually large deposit of dried wine on the lip of those bottles that have a fresh mushroom aroma.

**Nebuchadnezzar** Large bottle equivalent to 20 normal-sized 75cl bottles.

**Négociant** (Fr.) Commonly used to describe larger wine producing companies, the term is derived from the traditional practice of negotiating with growers to buy grapes and wholesalers or other customers to sell the wine produced.

**Négoce** (Fr.) Collective form of *négociant*.

**Neutral grape varieties** The opposite of aromatic grapes, these include virtually all the minor, nondescript varieties that produce bland tasting, low-quality wines, but also encompass better known varieties such as the Melon de Bourgogne, Aligoté, Pinot Blanc, Pinot Meunier and even classics like Chardonnay and Sémillon. Neutral varieties are for fine sparkling wines of the *brut* style because their characteristics are enhanced by the subtle effects of autolysis and mellowing bottle-aromas, whereas aromatic grapes fight against these processes.

**Non-dosage** (Fr.) Synonymous with Brut Natural.

**Non-vintage** In theory a blend of at least two different years, but many producers, particularly growers in Champagne, grade their *cuvées* on selection, often selling a pure vintage *sans année* (without year).

**Nose** The smell or odour of a wine, encompassing both aroma and bouquet.

**Oaky** The aromatic qualities picked up from new oak, which usually consists of the creamy-vanilla aroma of *vanillin*, a natural oak aldehyde that also happens to be the principal aromatic component in vanilla pods.

**Oenologist, oenology** Pronounced 'enologist' and 'enology'(and spelt this way in the USA), oenology is the scientific study of wine, which is a branch of chemistry, and most winemakers today are qualified oenologists with practical, hands-on production experience and an understanding of viticulture.

**Off vintage or year** A year in which many poor wines are produced due to adverse climatic conditions, such as very little sunshine during the summer, which can result in unripe grapes, or rain at the harvest, which can result in rot. Generally a vintage to be avoided, but approach any opportunity to taste the wines with an open mind because there are always good wines made in every vintage.

**Opulent** Suggestive of a rather luxurious varietal aroma, very rich, but not quite blowzy.

**Organic** A generic term covering wines that are produced using the minimum amount of SO<sub>2</sub>, from grapes that have been grown without chemical fertilizers, pesticides or herbicides.

**Over-oxidative** Verges on oxidised, and infers aldehydic aromas such as the sherry-like acetaldehyde.

**Overtone** A dominating element of nose and palate and often one that is not directly attributable to the grape or wine.

**Oxidation, oxidised** From the moment grapes are pressed or crushed, oxidation sets in and the juice or wine will be oxidized to a certain and increasing extent. Oxidation is an unavoidable part of fermentation and an essential to the maturation process, but in order not to mislead, it is best

to speak of a mature or, at the extreme, an oxidative wine because when oxidized is used, even amongst experts, it will invariably be in an extremely derogatory manner.

**Oxidative** A wine that openly demonstrates the character of maturation on the nose or palate, thus the longer it takes to appear in a wine, the more finesse it will have. *See* Acetaldehyde

**Palate** The flavour or taste of a wine.

**Peak** The so-called peak in the maturity of a wine is subject to the consumer's point of appreciation. Those liking fresher, crisper wines will perceive an earlier peak in the same wine than 'golden oldy' drinkers. A rule of thumb that applies to both extremes of taste is that a wine will remain at its peak for as long as it took to reach it.

**Peardrop** *See* Amylic.

**Peppery** A somewhat incongruous character in a sparkling wine, I have managed to track it down to Chardonnay, but not Chardonnay of great class, probably planted on less than suitable soil, and possibly young. If detected as just a flicker in a blend, it will eventually be subsumed by the other wines, and can even add to the future complexity of a *cuvée*, but be wary where it is the solitary or dominant character.

**Perlant** (Fr.) Lightly sparkling.

**Perlwein** (Ger.) Cheap, semi-sparkling wine made by carbonating a still wine.

**Pétillance, pétillant** (Fr.) A wine with enough carbonic gas to create a light sparkle.

**Petrol, petrolly** With some bottle-age, the finest Rieslings have a vivid and zesty bouquet that some refer to as petrolly. The petrolly character has an affinity with various zesty and citrusy odours, but many lemony, citrusy, zesty smells are totally different from one another and the Riesling's petrolly character is both singular and unmistakable. As great Riesling matures, so it also develops a honeyed character, bringing a classic, honeyed-petrol richness to the wine.

**Pièce** (Fr.) A standard Champagne cask measure of 205 litres, the term *pièce* is used only when the barrel is full of wine. When it is empty it is called simply a *fut*.

**Pinot Noir** (Fr.) Black grape variety used in Champagne.

**Post-disgorgement ageing** The period between disgorgement and when the wine is consumed. With the sudden exposure to air after an extended period of ageing under anaerobic conditions, the development of a sparkling wine after disgorgement is very different from that before.

**Pressure** The pressure inside a bottle of sparkling wine is affected by temperature and altitude. Pressure increases as the temperature rises, but decreases as the altitude climbs. To be uniform when comparing the pressure of different sparkling wines, oenologists around the world refer to pressures at 20°C and sea-level.

**QbA** (Ger.) Germany's *Qualitätswein bestimmter Anbaugebiete* is theoretically the equivalent of the French AOC.

**Quaffing** An unpretentious wine that is easy and enjoyable to drink.

**Qualitätsschaumwein** (Ger.) A so-called 'quality sparkling wine', this can be produced by any member state of the EU, but the term should be qualified by the country of origin (of the wine), thus only Deutscher Qualitätsschaumwein will necessarily be from Germany.

**R.D.** A sparkling wine term that stands for "recently disgorged", the initials R.D. are the trademark of Champagne Bollinger (which often comes as something of a surprise to sparkling wine producers in other countries). *See* L.D.

**Reaction Maillard** An interaction between amino acids created during autolysis and residual sugar added by dosage, Reaction Maillard is responsible for many of the mellow, complex post-disgorgement aromas adored by drinkers of mature Champagne.

**Récoltant-manipulant** (Fr.) A grower who produces Champagne exclusively from his or her own vineyards.

**Reductive** The less exposure it has to air, the more reductive a wine will be. Different as they are in basic character, Champagne, Muscadet *sur lie* and Beaujolais Nouveau are all examples of a reductive, rather than oxidative, style. From the vividly autolytic Champagne, through Muscadet *sur lie* with its barest hint of autolytic character, to the amylic aroma of Beaujolais Nouveau.

**Rehoboam** Large bottle equivalent to six normal-sized 75cl bottles.

**Remuage** (Fr.) The process whereby the sediment is encouraged down to the neck of the bottle in preparation for disgorgement.

**Reserve wines** Older wines added to a non-vintage blend.

**Reticent** Suggests that the wine is holding back on its nose or palate, perhaps through youth, and may well develop with a little more maturity.

**Reverse saignée** In Champagne this involves a majority of Pinot Noir, commonly as much as 90%, which has undergone a light *saignée*, and is then blended with a small amount of Chardonnay for freshness.

**Rich, richness** A balanced wealth of fruit and depth on the palate and finish.

**Riche** (Fr.) Synonymous with Demi-Sec.

**Ripe** Grapes ripen, wines mature, although some of the constituents of a wine, such as fruit and even acidity, can be referred to as ripe. Tasters should however beware of mistaking a certain residual sweetness for ripeness.

**Rooty** Usually refers to a certain rooty richness found in Pinot Noir. Not vegetal, which is a negative term.

**Rosado** (Sp.) Pink.

**Rosé** (Fr.) Pink.

**Saignée** (Fr.) The process of drawing off surplus liquid from the press or vat in order to produce a rosé wine from the free-run juice. In cooler wine regions, the remaining mass of grape pulp may be used to make a darker red wine than would normally be possible because of a greater ratio of solids to liquid.

**Salmanazar** Large bottle equivalent to 12 normal-sized 75cl bottles.

**Sassy** Used to describe fruit in a wine that is lively, jaunty, breezy etc.

**Satèn** (It.) Literally meaning satin, this term has been coined by Franciacorta producers for a softer, *crémant* style of sparkling wines. The best Franciacorta Satèn are often *barrique*-fermented.

**Schaumwein** (Ger.) Literally 'sparkling wine' and with no further qualification (such as Qualitätsschaumwein), this is merely the same as *Sekt*.

**Sboccatura** (It.) Disgorged.

**Sec** (Fr.) Literally dry, but effectively medium to medium-sweet. A Sec may contain between 17 and 35 grams per litre of residual sugar.

**Secco** (It.) *See Sec*

**Seco** (Port. & Sp.) *See Sec*

**Second fermentation, secondary fermentation** Strictly speaking this is the fermentation that occurs in bottle during the *méthode champenoise*, but the malolactic is sometimes erroneously referred to as the second fermentation.

**Sekt** (Ger.) Sparkling wine, usually *cuve close*.

**Semi-Dulce** (Sp.) *See Demi-Sec*

**Short** Refers to a wine that may have a good aroma and initial flavour, but falls short on the finish, its taste quickly disappearing after the wine has been swallowed.

**Sin Cosecha** (Sp.) Non-vintage.

**Smooth** The opposite of aggressive and more extreme than round.

**Soft** An attractive smoothness caused when fruit has the upper-hand over acidity. This is very desirable, but a wine that is too soft will lack acidity.

**Solera** (Sp.) A system of continually refreshing an established blend with a small amount of new wine (equivalent in proportion to the amount extracted from the *solera*) to effect a wine of consistent quality and character. A few Champagne producers use this method for keeping their reserve wines, although it reduces the number of building blocks at the winemaker's disposal when blending a *cuvée*.

**Sous marque** (Fr.) Second brand. An ancillary label under which second quality wines are sold, although the standard need not necessarily inferior in any general sense.

**Spätlese** (Ger.) A QmP wine that is one step above Kabinett, but one below Auslese. It is fairly sweet and made from late-picked grapes.

**Sprightly fruitiness** I have deliberately used this expression instead of VA fruitiness because even though the latter is not a truly derogatory term, it has negative connotations, and would be taken the wrong way more times than not. Sprightly fruitiness is not even referred to under VA fruitiness, making the full explanation available only to readers curious enough to browse this far through the glossary. Hopefully those who do penetrate this triple-layered definition will appreciate that a preponderance of negative elements can sometimes create a positive effect.

**Spritz, spritzig** (Ger.) Synonymous with *pétillant*.

**Spumante** (It.) Literally just sparkling, but in practice *spumante* normally refers to a fully sparkling wine. *See* Fully sparkling

**Straw** Strawlike aromas often blight sparkling wines. Sometimes dry-straw, other times wet-straw, and others still are just strawlike. Producers say it is part of the complexity, but it strikes me as a very dull, ill-defined sort of complexity and one that is not completely clean. Perhaps it comes from the yeast, or maybe rotten grapes, or even the reaction of yeast-contact to wine made from a certain percentage of rotten grapes. In any case, this is not a positive attribute, although where it appears in this book the wines obviously have sufficient going for them to overcome these strawlike aromas, otherwise they would not be recommended.

**Structure** The structure of a wine is literally composed of its solids (tannin, acidity, sugar, and extract or density of fruit flavour) in balance with the alcohol, and how positively the form and feel in the mouth. It is interesting to speculate how much of Champagne's classic lean structure is the result of chaptalisation. Virtually all non-vintage Champagnes are chaptalised, as indeed are the majority of vintage Champagnes, and this obviously increases the amount of alcohol for the weight of fruit. *See* Chaptalisation

**Stylish** Wines possessing all the subjective qualities of charm, elegance and finesse. A wine might have the 'style' of a certain region or type, but a wine is either stylish or it is not. It defies definition.

**Subtle** Although this should mean a significant yet understated characteristic, it is often employed by wine snobs and frauds who taste a wine with a famous label and know that it should be special, but cannot detect anything exceptional and need an ambiguous word to talk their way out of the hole they have dug for themselves. The most honest use of subtle in this book refers to the effect of autolysis.

**Sulphur, SO<sub>2</sub>** A preservative used primarily to prevent oxidation. *See* Free Sulphur and Fixed sulphur

**Supple** Indicates a wine that is easy to drink, not necessarily soft, but a more graceful form of ease than the word round can manage.

**Sur lie** (Fr.) Refers to wines, usually Muscadets, that have been kept on the lees and have not been racked or filtered prior to bottling. Although this increases the possibility of bacterial infection, the risk is worth taking for wines made from neutral grape varieties. It also avoids aeration and retains more of the carbonic gas created during fermentation imparting a certain liveliness and freshness. In the case of sparkling wines, it is better to keep reserve wines *sur lie* than to rack and filter them because it reduces the production of terpenes and helps to retain the nitrogenous matter that makes the wines more susceptible to autolysis.

**Sweetness designations** Many countries use the French terminology and adhere to the EU technical requirements for residual sugar: Brut Nature (0-3g/l), Extra-Brut (0-6g/l), Brut (0-15g/l), Extra-Sec (12-20g/l), Sec (17-35g/l), Demi-Sec (35-50g/l) and Doux (50g/l-plus).

**Talento** (It.) Since March 1996, producers of Italian *méthode champenoise* wines may utilise the new term of "Talento", which has been registered as a trademark by the Instituto Talento Metodo Classico (formerly the Instituto Spumante Classico Italiano). Talento is almost synonymous with the Spanish term Cava, although to be fully compatible it would have to assume the mantle of a DOC.

**Tank method** Same as *cuve close*.

**Tartaric acid** The ripe acid of grapes that increases slightly when the grapes increase in sugar during the *véraison*.

**Tartrates, tartrate crystals** Tartaric acid deposits look like sugar crystals at the bottom of a bottle and this may have been precipitated when a wine has experienced low temperatures. It can also happen naturally deposited through the process of time, although seldom in a still or sparkling wine that has spent several months in contact with its lees, as this produces a mannoprotein called MP32, which prevents precipitation of tartrates. A fine deposit of glittering crystals can also be deposited on the base of a cork if it has been soaked in a sterilizing solution of metabisulphite prior to bottling. Both are harmless.

**TCA** Short for trichloroanisole, the prime but by no means only culprit responsible for corked wines, TCA is found in oak staves as well as cork. *See* Corked

**Terpene** Various terpenes and terpene alcohols are responsible for some of the most aromatic characteristics in wine, ranging from the floral aromas of Muscat to the petrol or kerosene character of a wonderfully mature Riesling. In sparkling wine a terpene character may indicate Riesling in the blend, but is more likely to be due to part or all the base wine being kept unduly long in tank prior to second fermentation.

**Terroir** (Fr.) Literally 'soil', but in a viticultural sense *terroir* refers to the complete growing environment, which also includes altitude, aspect, climate and any other factors that may affect the life of a vine, and the quality of the grapes it produces.

**Tête de cuvée** (Fr.) The first flow of juice during the pressing, the cream of the cuvée. It is the easiest to extract and the highest in quality with the best balance of acids, sugars and minerals.

**Thin** A wine lacking in body, fruit and other properties.

**Tight** A firm wine of good extract that gives the impression of being under tension, as if a wound spring waiting to uncoil, and thus has more obvious potential than either a reticent or a closed wine.

**Toast** [1] A slow-developing bottle-induced aroma commonly associated with the Chardonnay, but can develop in wines made from other grapes, including red wines. Toasty bottle-aromas are initially noticeable on the aftertaste, often with no indication on the nose. [2] A fast-developing oak-induced aroma. [3] Barrels are toasted during their construction to one of three grades: light or low, medium, and heavy or high.

**Traditionelle Klassische** (Ger.) See Méthode champenoise.

**Transfer method** Decanting under pressure from one size bottle to another, not the ideal of méthode champenoise.

**Transvasage** (Fr.) See Transfer method

**Trocken** (Ger.) See Sec

**Typical** An over-used and less than honest form of honest.

**Typicity** A wine that shows good typicity is one that accurately reflects its grape and soil.

**UC Davis** Short for the University of California's enology department at Davis.

**Ullage** (Fr.) [1] The space between the top of the wine and the head of the bottle or cask. An old bottle of wine with an ullage beneath the shoulder of the bottle is unlikely to be any good. [2] The practice of topping up wine in a barrel to keep it full and thereby prevent excessive oxidation.

**Undertone** Subtle and supporting, not dominating like an overtone. In a fine wine a strong and simple overtone of youth can evolve into a delicate undertone with maturity, adding to a vast array of other nuances that give it complexity.

**Ungenerous** A wine that lacks generosity has little or no fruit and possibly far too much acidity for a correct and harmonious balance.

**Unripe acid** Malic acid, as opposed to tartaric, which is ripe acid.

**Up-front** Suggests an attractive, simple quality immediately recognised, which says it all. The wine may initially be interesting, but there would be no further development and the last glass would say nothing more than the first.

**VA** Abbreviation of volatile acidity.

**VA fruitiness** An ultra-fruitiness accentuated by volatile acidity, this can be a positive factor in the description of a wine, but the term VA (for volatile acidity) has such negative connotations that I have used "sprightly fruitiness" so that the casual reader is not put off perfectly acceptable wines.

**Value-for-money** The difference between penny-saving and penny-pinching. In theory true value-for-money exists at any price-point, whether five or five-hundred (pounds, dollars, deutschmarks or whatever), and the decision to buy will depend on how deep your pocket is.

**Vanilla** See oaky

**Vanillin** The aldehyde that gives vanilla pods their characteristic aroma, vanillin is also found naturally in oak, albeit on a smaller scale.

**Varietal** The character of a single grape variety as expressed in the wine it produces.

**Vendemia** (Sp.) Harvest, often used to indicate vintage.

**Vertical tasting** This is a tasting of different vintages of the same wine, as opposed to an horizontal tasting, which consists of different wines of the same style or vintage.

**Vignerons** (Fr.) Vineyard worker.

**Vignoble** (Fr.) Vineyard.

**Vin de cuvée** (Fr.) Wine made from the first (and best) pressing only.

**Vin de garde** (Fr.) Wine that is capable of great improvement if left to age.

**Vinifera** Species covering all varieties of vines providing classic wine-making grapes.

**Vinification** Far more than simply fermentation, this involves the entire process of making wine, from the moment the grapes are picked to the point it is bottled.

**Vin Mousseux** (Fr.) Literally means sparkling wine without any connotation of quality one way or the other, but because all fine sparkling wines in France utilise other terms, for all practical purposes it infers a cheap, low quality product.

**Vino de aguja** (Sp.) A young, slightly sparkling or *perlant* wine.

**Vinous** Winey, characteristic of wine. When used to describe a wine, it infers basic qualities only.

**Vintage** The harvest or wine of a single year.

**Vivid** The fruit in some wines can be so fresh, ripe, clean-cut and expressive that it quickly gives a vivid impression of complete character in the mouth.

**Volatile acidity** This has a sweet vinegary aroma, and if clearly detectable is usually deemed a fault, but a certain amount of volatile acidity (or VA for short) is essential to the fruitiness of every wine, and occasionally even high levels can be a positive factor. *See* VA fruitiness

**Weissherbst** (Ger.) A single-variety rosé wine produced from black grapes only. *See* earlier.

**Wet straw** *See* Straw.

**Wg.** (Ger.) Abbreviation of Winzergenossenschaft.

**Winzersekt** (Ger.,) Literally a 'grower Sekt', this can either be the product of a single grower or a cooperative of growers, but must be a Sekt bA.

**Yeast** A kind of fungus vital in all winemaking. Yeast cells excrete a number of enzymes, some 22 of which are necessary to complete the chain reaction known as fermentation.

**Yeast enzymes** Each enzyme acts as a catalyst for one activity and is specific for that task and no other in the fermentation process.

**Yeasty** Not a complimentary term for most wines, but a yeasty bouquet can be desirable in a good-quality sparkling wine, especially when young.

**Yield** There are two forms of yield: [1] the quantity of grapes produced from a given area of land, [2] how much juice is pressed from it. Wine people in Europe use hl/ha or hectolitres per hectare, which is a combination of both, literally referring to how much juice has been extracted from the grapes harvested from an area of land. This is fine when the amount of juice that can be pressed from grapes is controlled by European-type appellation systems, but in the New World, where this seldom happens, they tend to talk in tons per acre.

**Zesty** A lively characteristic that suggests a zippy tactile impression combined, maybe, with a hint of citrusy aroma.

**Zing, zingy, zip, zippy** Terms all indicative of something refreshing, lively and vital, resulting from a high balance of ripe fruit acidity.

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