

Thursday's Tantalizing Tasting  
\$55 Per Person



February 17, 2022

Although Champagne has become a blanket description for any wine with bubbles, true Champagne must come from the Champagne region northeast of Paris. With a now irreputable reputation for some of the world's most superb wines, Champagne did not begin as such.

In the late 17<sup>th</sup> Century, wines would be left to settle over the winter with release for consumption in the spring. As a result of Champagne's cooler temperatures, the yeast used for fermenting would become paralyzed before fully turning the must into wine. Ultimately, the yeast would thaw in spring only to continue fermenting the wine, creating a sparkling effect. This highly discouraged the winemakers who were looking to surpass the great wines known to be made in Bourgogne (Burgundy). With little success, the winemakers eventually succumbed to the natural effervescence of their wines, trying instead to find ways to make their wines less cloudy and more palatable without losing the bubbles.

It wasn't until 1818, when an employee of the famous Champagne house Veuve Clicquot discovered that by placing the bottles upside down and turning them ever so slightly each day forced the spent yeast cells to fall to the neck of the bottle, where they could be frozen and removed in one clump without losing the precious bubbles. It would take many more years and changes in popular tastes to achieve the flavour profile and reputation we now associate with great Champagne Houses.

#### THE CHAMPAGNE PROCESS

1. Harvest - Only the varietals of Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, and Pinot Meunier are allowed in a champagne blend.
2. First Fermentation - The transformation of the must into still wine in steel tanks.
3. Assemblage - The blend of wine from a current vintage and wine from the reservoir. By law a house must reserve 20% of the yield each year for future blending.
4. Second Fermentation - The addition of yeast and *liqueur de tirage* (sugar and wine) to the individual bottles. This will add the necessary CO<sub>2</sub> into the bottled champagne for it to become bubbly.
5. Riddling - the twisting of upside-down bottles either mechanically or by hand to concentrate the spent yeast cells.
6. Dégorgement - placing the bottle in a brine solution to freeze the neck, allowing the spent yeast to be removed.
7. Dosage - the addition of a final mix of wine and sugar that determines the brut or sweetness level of the champagne.

## CHAMPAGNE HENRIOT SOUVERAIN

Composed of a blend of Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier. Offering a rich and diversified aromatic range that gives it a charming, beautiful complexity. Generous aromas of cake, citrus, stone fruits, red fruits and white flowers with smoke evolving into chalk. The palate is balanced, harmonious, ample, straight forward and round with a long, persistent freshness.

The Brut Souverain is the most historical cuvée of the House as it was the first cuvée produced by Apolline Henriot in 1808. According to Apolline, one year was not enough to tell the story of the terroirs, so she decided to put wines in reserve each year to incorporate them into a future blend. Therefore, she founded the House by creating a Champagne that would have blending as its fundamental principle. With this champagne, Maison Henriot tells the story of all the crus of its vineyard, making the Brut Souverain a multi-cru, multi-vintage blend (benefits from the addition of 40-50% reserve wines). These wines are aged for 3 years in the dark Henriot cellars in Reims.

## DOMAINE JEAN VESSELLE L'OEIL DE PERDRIX CHAMPAGNE

100% Pinot Noir. The 'Eye of the Partridge', this champagne is awarded its name because of its gentle amber coloring. Intense aromas of red roses, strawberries, and spices. Medium-bodied yet light on the tongue; elegant, creamy, and balanced with good acidity. Lingering aromas of red berries, stone fruits and pepper. A perfect aperitif. Its acidic balance and red-wine body make it endlessly flexible at the table.

The Estate vineyards are located in and around the village of Bouzy. Soils are the classic, chalky terroir of the Montagne de Reims. Grapes are harvested exclusively by hand, then macerated briefly (less than 24 hours) to obtain the color. Gently pressed and fermented on indigenous yeasts in temperature controlled, stainless steel tanks. Wines undergo second fermentation in bottle (Méthode Champenoise) and are aged for three years. The estate comprises 27 acres, with a total production of under 7,000 cases. Vines are cared for according to *lutte raisonnée* principles, concentrating mostly on organic practices and avoiding chemical treatments. Vineyard rows are plowed to avoid the use of herbicides. The estate also uses solar energy and recycles rainwater to reduce its energy footprint

## WARIS-LARMANDIER GRAND CRU BLANC DE BLANCS EXTRA BRUT CHAMPAGNE 'PARTICULES CRAYEUSES'

100% Chardonnay. Light yellow color with fine, persistent bubbles. Aromas of brioche, lemon, berries and peaches with mint, chalk and fresh minerality. Dry with high acidity, fresh citrus and chalky minerality. Dense bubbles that melt on the tongue and a lingering, elegant finish. Terroir-focused, understated, structured, and ultra-elegant. Organic/Biodynamic.

From vines 40+ years old. The soil in the vineyard is chalk. The grapes are hand-harvested and crushed in a traditional vertical wooden basket press; only free-run juice is used for the primary fermentation. Barrel-fermented with native yeasts in demi-muid Burgundy barrels and Avize Champagne barrels. Malolactic fermentation is spontaneous following alcoholic fermentation. The base wines are aged 6-18 months before secondary fermentation in bottle, followed by 24-36 months of lees aging, *sur lattes*. Racines de Trois is usually a two-vintage blend without the addition of solera wine to the blend. Disgorgements are done according to the lunar cycle.

Thank you for participating in our Champagne Tasting.

Next Month  
Irish Whiskey!