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Issue 8
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the Cellar Door

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Banville & Jones Wine Co. is a fine wine boutique in Winnipeg, Manitoba that specializes in promoting wine education and lifestyle. Opened by sisters Tina Jones and Lia Banville in 1999, it is located in a three-storey Tuscan-inspired facility that houses fine wine and accessories, an educational facility, and a private function room.



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a message from tina jones

Champagne. It might just be my favourite wine region on the planet, and possibly my favourite style of wine. For me, Champagne is a very special wine, and is summed up perfectly by Lily Bollinger:

“I drink Champagne when I’m happy and when I’m sad. Sometimes I drink it when I’m alone. When I have company, I consider it obligatory. I trifle with it if I’m not hungry and drink it when I am. Otherwise I never touch it—unless I’m thirsty.”

When I first travelled to the region of Champagne, I was enchanted. The landscape and towns are lovely, easy to navigate, and yet it was very different from other wine regions I had visited. There’s a lot of formality in the region. You are more likely to encounter a producer’s representative wearing a suit here than anywhere else! And arriving at a fine restaurant to see a dinner tasting menu paired with half a dozen different Champagnes is commonplace. At the same time, though, the formality is really a self-assured pride. The producers know that they have something very, very special to offer the world.

At home, pouring a glass of Champagne with friends is a wonderful way to celebrate a milestone, or to create an instant celebration. Champagne makes it easy to open a conversation, and it makes any food and wine pairing even easier. I know Champagne—any Champagne—is not an inexpensive wine; but I also know that few other wines make any occasion as special as Champagne does.

Welcome to this fascinating world of Champagne. In this issue, Gary Hewitt gives us a glimpse into some interesting debates in his interview with Terry Theise; Sylvia Jansen, our talented Champagne expert who has visited the region more times than I can count, takes us on tour with her; Mike Muirhead smoothes out some of the wrinkles in our knowledge; and Andrea Eby explores some alternatives to the world’s most famous sparkling wine. We hope you will enjoy your Banville & Jones exclusive tour!

Enjoy!

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ask a sommelier

What are good vintages for Champagne?

—Dave Watson

Dear Dave,

A “good vintage” truly depends on what style you prefer, and if you plan on keeping it or drinking it. A Champagne consumer can actually choose among vintage (single vintage), non-vintage, and *cuvée de prestige* (a blend of premium vintages). Vintage Champagne tends to be a good buy because the quality is noticeably better than non-vintage, and the price is much lower than that of a *cuvée de prestige* Champagne.

Before 1985, most vintage Champagne contained 60–70 per cent Pinot Noir. Today, 100 per cent Chardonnay wines like Krug’s Clos Du Mesnil (single vineyard), Billecart-Salmon’s Clos Saint Hilaire (single vineyard), and Ployez-Jacquemart’s L. D’Harbonville are showing elegance and depth, with tremendous aging potential.

If you like rich, honeyed, and chewy, you have many options. How about a Krug 1937? A great vintage that is still drinking well is from the end of WWII: 1945. The standouts: Bollinger and Roederer (the first vintage of Cristal).

If you foray into our Champagne cellar at B&J, there is a vintage for everyone: 1998 Krug; Billecart-Salmon 1998 *Cuvée Nicolas-François*; Ployez-Jacquemart’s 2002; and Louis Roederer’s 2002 Cristal.

Like other cool climate regions, Champagne has been blessed with a run of good-to-exceptional vintages.

—Darren Raeside

Does having the word “Reserve” on a label justify paying a higher price?

—Stephanie Moreau

Dear Stephanie,

You are right to be sceptical. There are many wines with the term *Reserva* /*Riserva*/Reserve on the label leading the consumer to believe that the wine is somehow superior to its peers and warrants a higher price tag. In fact, very rarely is there any legal clout behind the term.

Reserva and *Gran Reserva* wines from Spain are required by law to guarantee consumers that minimum periods of cask and bottle aging have occurred. Italy also has some wines that must meet legal requirements in order to carry the *Riserva* designation. Barbaresco, Barolo, Brunello di Montalcino, Chianti Classico, and *Vino Nobile de Montepulciano* can be labelled *Riserva* and are aged longer than their non-*Riserva* counterparts. They typically have a slightly higher alcoholic strength than non-*Riserva* wines.

Theoretically, an Italian or Spanish producer would only choose to use his or her best grapes in these wines because poorer quality grapes would not benefit from extended aging. If you know the producer adheres to this philosophy, then paying a little more for the wine will net you a more serious, structured wine, often with longer aging potential.

The rest of the wine world has very few laws governing the use of this term. Producers outside of Italy and Spain can legally use terms such as *Reserva* indiscriminately, and some do. Banville & Jones staff will steer you towards producers from around the world who truly reserve such words for their best wines.

—Andrea Eby

How do I become a better taster, and get better at understanding what is on the nose and on the palate?

—Jamie Powney

Dear Jamie,

The best advice would be **PRAC-TICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!** Your sense of smell is important. Without aromas there can be no taste. Your nose knows.

First, you need to become more familiar with different aromas in order to expand your repertoire of

wine descriptions. Explore your own spice cabinet. Go to the grocery store and smell the fruits and vegetables. Now find a way to harness these aromas and remember them. Sometimes an aroma can trigger a memory from the past: nutmeg and cinnamon in a Christmas cake, or freshly picked blueberries after a day in the woods. Whatever you smell in a wine can be as unique to you as your memories, within reason of course. There are specific aromas associated with specific grapes.

There are some simple rules you can follow in the *Essential Wine Tasting Guide* (on sale for only \$5.00). This guide outlines everything from wine colour, to aromas, to tactile descriptors. When tasting wine, you can also describe the feel of the wine.

Is the wine smooth and creamy or dry and chalky? Is the wine thin and puckering or rich and persistent? As far as tasting ability goes, we can only taste sweet, sour, or bitter. By combining the aromas and textures together you can give a fairly educated description.

Now, write it down. We cannot possibly remember everything, so this is where your wine journal comes in. Keep track of the wines you taste and look back to your notes for reference and comparison.

Further suggestions:

1. Sign up for some Banville & Jones wine education classes (see pages 48 and 49 for details).

2. Start your own Wine Club and meet on a regular basis.

3. Analyze “one grape at a time.” Try wines with only one grape variety before jumping into blends.

—Karen Nissen

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Friends of Banville & Jones (clockwise from top left): Carol and André Mahé; Karen Nissen receives her Sommelier diploma presented by Gary Hewitt and Tina Jones; John and Kate Zeke; Neil Barrington, Patrick McDonald and Brian McAughey; Brooklyn Hurst receives his Sommelier diploma, presented by Gary Hewitt and Tina Jones; Andrea Eby receives her Sommelier diploma, presented by Gary Hewitt and Tina Jones; Dovilė Cepulivičiūtė of Veyret Latour, Gildas d'Ollone of Chateau Pichon Longueville Comtesse de Lalande with Doug Reichel



(clockwise from top left): Mike Muirhead, Jill Kwiatkoski and Sylvia Jansen meet Spanish winemaker Telmo Rodriguez at a tasting in Vancouver; Photographer Carol Fletcher descends into the chalk caves at Piper-Heidsieck Champagne; Fabio Motta from Michele Satta Winery; In the tasting room at Veuve Clicquot; Sylvia Jansen tackles the impressive Champagne list at a restaurant in the region; Denis Varnier of Varnier Fanniere, Champagne

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behind the label: krug

By Saralyn Mehta, Sommelier (ISG), CSW



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What is it that makes champagne so special? Why is it the wine that ushers in Presidents, Queens and Prime Ministers? Why do we toast with it at weddings, put diamonds in it to propose marriage or raise our glasses full of it to start each year? I used to think it was a brilliant marketing ploy; and then I tasted Krug's Grande Cuvée.


Krug has historically been a family-owned and operated business that was founded by Johann-Josef Krug. Krug started his career with Jacquesson, the oldest independent Champagne house in France. He took to winemaking immediately, and, within a year, had been made partner. Soon after, he fell in love with Adolphe Jacquesson's English sister-in-law, Anne Jaunay, and married her. This union seemingly solidified his place within Jacquesson, so it came as a surprise to all when, just one year after his wedding, he left Jacquesson, and Châlon-sur-Marne (which was re-named Châlon-en-Champagne in 1998), and set out with his wife to create a new Champagne house.

The pair settled in Reims. Although Joseph's early experience had been with Jacquesson, he had also been working for a competitor, Hippolyte de Vivès. This partnership gave rise to the Krug we know today. By 1843, Krug and his wife had their own Champagne house: Krug was born. Since then, the house has been handed down from father to son. Most recently, brothers Henri and Rémi have started handing the controls over to Henri's son, Olivier, and a team of employees.

In 1999, Krug became part of the super luxury conglomerate Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy (LVMH). Although this technically means it is no longer a "family business," the Krug family and their associates have

retained a good deal of autonomy under LVMH. The historic quality of Krug remains untouched. The great example of their travails is their entry-level wine: Krug Grande Cuvée. Though the price of the Grande Cuvée matches that of other houses' prestige cuvées (the top vintage blend of a Champagne house), it is a non-vintage cuvée (made from a blend of several vintages). So how do the great minds at Krug differentiate their multi-vintage Champagne?

Many Champagne houses blend between 20 and 30 per cent of their reserve wines in their non-vintage cuvées, usually from fairly recent vintages. All of the three main Champagne grapes can play a significant role, although Chardonnay usually plays second fiddle to the two Pinots. A typical Grande Cuvée will be a blend of up to 50 wines from between 20 and 30 separate crus (specific *terroirs*). At Krug, the reserve wines make up anywhere between 35 and 50 per cent of the final blend and are sourced from a multitude of mature vintages held in stock.

All of the fruit for the wines of Krug is first fermented in 205 litre oak barrels made from Argonne wood. The use of oak barrels is distinctly Krug; in other houses, primary fermentation in oak is a rarity. The barrels must undergo meticulous preparation to prevent the new oak from dominating the wine. After they are "de-seasoned" with water, the barrels are used to store press wines (which are sold to other producers) for several vintages. Once the fermentation is done, the wines are racked twice and then stored in stainless steel vats, where they wait to be either blended or kept as a reserve wine—a key to creating the classic and memorable Krug style. All of these intricate choices make Krug Grande Cuvée legendary. 



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product review

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Celebrate like Napoleon! Following the French Revolution, Napoleon's cavalry celebrated their spoils by using fierce sabres to pop the cork off bottles of Champagne. This tradition continues today with modern-day sabrage. Though not as sharp as the French soldiers' sabres, the traditional Champagne sabre creates an epic start to a fine bottle of bubbly. In Napoleon's words, "Champagne! In victory one deserves it; in defeat one needs it." Ask Banville & Jones resident Champagne expert Sylvia Jansen for tips on how to expertly wield your new Champagne sabre.

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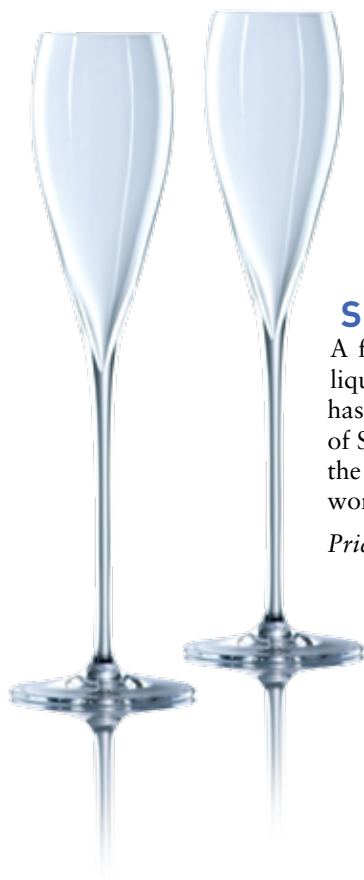
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In Champagne production, after the sparkling wine has rested on the lees, the riddling (or remuage) process begins: bottles are stored in riddling racks so that the lees and sediment in the bottle can collect near the mouth of the bottle. Over the course of a few weeks, the bottles are rotated and are angled increasingly upright, until all the sediment is collected and removed. 2-Day Designs honours this process with chic rustic wine racks that bring all the flavour of French country to your home.

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Established in 1818, Maison Billecart-Salmon has almost two centuries of tradition backing their premium Champagnes.

It is one of the oldest houses that remains family-owned and run. Billecart-Salmon is a wonderful example of blending centuries of tradition with new technology in winemaking. Their best grapes are still put through one of the last existing traditional presses in Champagne, and they continue to use their own 17th and 19th century chalk caves. The Brut Réserve is rich, balanced, and finely structured; it is full of orchard fruit notes, and laced with honey and buttered toast (and it is available in 375 and 750 ml bottles). Brut Rosé is a dry, elegant wine, with zesty aromas of red fruits, berries and citrus, a full, creamy palate of fruit and brioche, and a long, lovely finish. From the finest fruit of a single exceptional harvest, the 1998 Cuvée Nicholas-François Billecart Vintage Champagne is a symphony of balanced structure, complexity and finesse.

Price: \$32.99–\$134.99





Chalk caves at Veuve Clicquot (photo courtesy Veuve Clicquot)

all that sparkles is not CHAMPAGNE

By Mike Muirhead, Sommelier (ISG, CMS), CSW

The Champagne world is fascinating, and steeped in tradition and history. Where to begin with any great wine is always a struggle, so let's dive right into the basics. Alcoholic fermentation is the process in which yeast turns sugar into alcohol, heat and carbon dioxide. Only two things can stop fermentation: sulphur, which kills the yeast, and cold temperatures, which stop yeasts from working. It is this small detail—remaining excess sugar and dormant yeasts—that gives us sparkling wine.

Legend has it that sparkling wine was discovered accidentally—and not in Champagne as everyone thinks. In the countryside around Limoux, in the South of France around 1561, the winemakers went to the cellar to check on the previous year's vintage after

“Come quickly,
I am tasting the stars!”
—Dom Perignon, at the
moment he discovered
Champagne”

a long, bitterly cold winter. What they found was a cellar full of broken glass and spoiled wine. Just as spring awakens the spirits, warm weather awakens the yeasts. As the temperature rose, the yeasts started a second alcoholic fermentation creating carbon dioxide, which created more pressure than the weak, fire-blown bottles of the era could handle. The bottles that did survive were opened to reveal a fine bubble that, at that time, was considered a fault. It is this fine bubble we now seek in our sparkling wines. Today, bottles have become stronger and the process has been perfected.

Making sparkling wine sounds complex but is quite simple. In Champagne, still wines are made first, then blended. The blend is bottled with additional sugar

and yeast, and sealed tight with a bottle cap. A second fermentation will now occur in the bottle. After the second fermentation, remove excess dead yeast (called “lees”), sweeten to taste, and seal under a cork! Voila, *les bulles!*

The question on everyone’s lips: what makes Champagne, *Champagne* and everything else *sparkling wine*?

It always comes down to this: location, location, location! Champagne is not only a wine, but also a region in France, just east of Paris, known for popularizing sparkling wine. The winemakers in the region follow strict rules set out by the governing body of wines in France. Under these guidelines, the wines must only be made from three grapes: Chardonnay (which gives fresh fruit), Pinot Noir (which gives backbone and body), and Pinot Meunier (which gives richness). It can only come from designated vineyard sites in the region of Champagne, around the cities of Reims, Épernay, and Aÿ, whose soils are full of chalk, and famous for the kilometres of caves carved out of the porous stone. These soils produce wines of elegance and grace that have pleased royalty and wine lovers the world over.

Sparkling wine is the general term that is used to describe wine that has bubbles from any other region that has bubbles, be it Cava from Spain, Prosecco from Italy, or even Baby Duck from Canada. The difference is in the production.

Cava (Spain), Crémant (made in other regions in France), and other sparkling wines from U.S.A., Australia, and Canada can be made with the *méthode Champenois* (or

NOTES ON BUBBLES

When choosing the sweetness of your Champagne, the description on the label may not be what you expect. Here is a guide:

- Dry: Extra-Brut or Brut-Naturale
- Lightly sweet: Brut
- Medium sweet: Extra Dry or Sec
- Sweet: Demi-Sec
- Extra sweet: Doux

Bottle Sizes

Champagne is bottled in several sizes, from a single serving to the Nebuchadnezzar, which holds the equivalent of 20 bottles.

- Split (187.5ml)
- Half Bottle (375ml)
- Bottle (750ml)
- Magnum (1.5L)
- Jeroboam (3L)
- Rehoboam (4.5L)
- Methuselah (7.5L)
- Salmanazar (9L — a whole case!)
- Balthazar (12L)
- Nebuchadnezzar (15L)

Wines and their grapes:

- Champagne: Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier
- Cava: Macabeo, Parellada and Xarel-lo
- Prosecco: Glera
- Sekt: Riesling, Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris, Pinot Noir
- Crémant: Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Pinot Blanc (Bourgogne), Chardonnay Chenin Blanc (Loire)
- Blanquette de Limoux: Mauzac
- Cap Classique: Chenin Blanc and Chardonnay



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Top: Lees settle in an inverted bottle of Champagne during the second fermentation (photo by Carol Fletcher); bottom: The vineyards of Moët & Chandon (photo courtesy Moët & Chandon)

traditional method), but are produced using many technological advances and much more favourable growing conditions to bring down the price of production.

Wines such as Prosecco (Italy) and Sekt (Germany) are made in the charmat (or transfer) method, where the secondary fermentation occurs in a large tank before the wine is transferred to the final bottle.

Finally, you have Baby Duck (or Gimli Goose, or even Diet Coke), which uses the injection method. These wines are produced using carbon dioxide injection, which tends to have the least favourable impact on the quality of bubbles and wine.

In effect, all Champagne is sparkling wine, but not all sparkling wine is Champagne. If you are a novice to bubbles, start off with something easy like Prosecco or Cava, and move your way up. There is a whole world of sparkling wine out there waiting for you to discover! ☞



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gary's corner

By Gary Hewitt, Sommelier (ISG, CMS), CWE

BOOM, BUST, BOOM

The rise and fall of Champagne sales follows the ups and downs of economic fortune. In boom times we enthusiastically indulge and in bust times we despondently abstain.

Boom! Champagne's modern boom-and-bust cycle began with the onset of *La Belle Époque* in the economic heyday of the 1890s. *The Golden Age* of Champagne was born on the rising wealth of the Industrial Revolution's *nouveau riche*, a new class characterized by conspicuous consumption and demand for luxury, Art Deco, the art of Toulouse-Lautrec, the music of Offenbach and the sparkle of Champagne. By 1910, Champagne sales reached record levels.

Bust! Then came a series of unfortunate events. Poor harvests encouraged the production of fraudulent wines made outside the region. To protect Champagne producers, the French government legislated boundaries for the region. However, the inclusion of the "inferior" Aube region caused riots in the streets of Épernay; then a government flip-flop to classify the Aube vineyards as second-rate caused riots in the Aube. Battle lines were drawn, Marne producers aligned against those from the Aube; 40,000 soldiers were dispatched to avert civil war!

The downward plunge of Champagne's fortunes gained momentum when, in early September 1914, Reims and Épernay fell to the Germans, only to be retaken by the French. Again, battle lines were drawn and a 4-year siege played out among trenches surrounding the Montagne de Reims. The shelling of Reims started with the systematic destruction of the Reims cathedral and lasted more than 1,000 days. In *Vintage: The Story of Wine*, author

Hugh Johnson expounds:

"Astonishingly, the champagne industry went on, even in this beleaguered barracks. More astonishingly still, the growers continued to tend their vines even among the trenches that criss-crossed the northern slopes of the 'mountain' overlooking the city. They crawled like infantrymen through the white mud of winter to prune, and in the golden days of October they ran out to harvest with their usual songs" (p. 441).

Meanwhile, on October 17, while Champagne remained a battleground, the Russian Revolution overthrew the Czarist regime, a regime that consumed more than 10 per cent of Champagne exports, and immediately halted shipments and refused to pay outstanding bills—ouch!

Boom! The Roaring 20s: with the war over, prosperity returned, as did reasons for celebration. Despite Prohibition, bootleggers increased Champagne sales in the U.S. market. Times were good.

Bust! The market crash of 1929 and the Great Depression: by 1933 the cellars of Reims and Épernay contained 33 years of stock, and when 1934 brought a big harvest, many houses refused to purchase grapes, grape prices plunged, and growers suffered. WWII soon followed and German troops occupied Champagne from May 1940 until August 1944. The crafty *Champenois* prepared cellars for the occupation by successfully hiding many great wines behind false walls and, while under occupation, convinced

the Third Reich to establish the CIVC (Comité Interprofessionnel du Vin de Champagne) to administer the Champagne region. The CIVC exists today as one of the most powerful inter-professional wine organizations in France.

Post-WWII recovery was slow and sales rose and fell over a period of disputes and internal French crises only to be followed by the oil-crisis bust of 1974, and the surging-markets boom of 1989. Then, in 1993, Champagne dipped to an historic low. Internal bickering, restructuring of grape pricing, the Gulf War and economic hardship put 30 Champagne houses on the brink of financial ruin with another 30 reporting financial losses and record amounts owing to banks. Bleak times indeed, but salvation was on the horizon: the year 2000, the turn of the millennium—a time to celebrate.

Although millenium sales did not meet expectations and retailers needed the next year to reduce stocks, Champagne sales once again surged. Rap stars promoted sales to new consumers, certain brands' stock soared, and life was rosy.

But then...bust. The sub-prime mortgage crisis of 2008: do you get the picture?

And yes, Champagne sales are currently rising; the great houses have maintained their prices and an aura of positivity is growing. Doubtless, the *Champenois*, masters of cyclical markets, will continue to ride the ups and downs, and by all indications we will be along for the roller coaster ride, celebrating when times are good and longing for the return of good times when times are tough. ☸

“My only regret in life is that I did not drink more Champagne.”

—John Maynard Keynes

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green cork

By Brooklyn Hurst, Sommelier (ISG)

Let's talk cork. If you are into wine, likely you have an opinion on this impermeable, buoyant, elastic, and fire-resistant substance endemic to Europe and Africa. Statistics say that if you are a wine drinker, you like cork, but you probably have no problem with alternative closures, to a certain price point.

If you are a bulk wine producer, cork is a tad expensive relative to the synthetic version, which provides the ceremony that so many consumers insist upon, while allowing for better profit margins. However, if you are a Bordelais winemaker crafting a fine wine designed to age for a decade or more, then cork is probably your friend.

And if you are an environmentally conscious individual, then...what? Where should you stand when it comes to cork?

Cork is biodegradable, but does that make it more environmentally friendly than plastic stoppers or aluminum screwcaps? Consider the arguments that commercial cork farms destroy vital habitats, that the cork industry cuts down these trees, or that there is a cork shortage, which must mean over-harvesting. These are common positions taken against the cork business, but there are some misconceptions.

Far from destroying habitats, cork forests actually work to preserve them. Cork Oak forests support diverse flora and fauna and also prevent desertification, which is more than the screwcap forest can claim. And for the record, there is no worldwide shortage of cork, despite what you have heard.

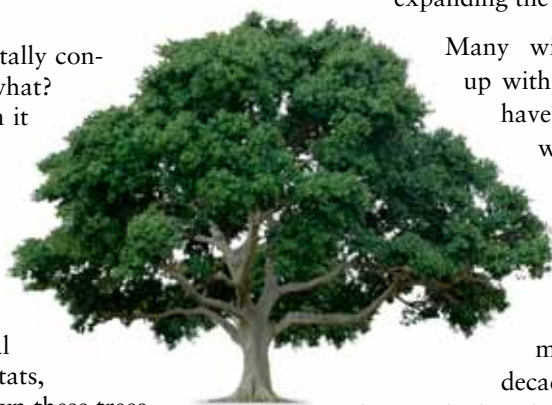
The production of cork stoppers is also environmentally sustainable, as Cork Oak trees, which can live up to 200 years, are only harvested once every nine years (by extracting the bark only). Couple this with the easy recycling of cork products and by-products, and you have what they call a "green product."

But how much "greener" are corks than alternative stoppers? A year-long study attempted to answer just

that, and concluded that plastic corks (including plastic capsules) were nine times more damaging to the environment than cork stoppers, and that aluminum screwcaps were a ghastly 22 times more harmful. The study considered seven major facets of environmental impact, and cork performed best on six of them. It should be noted that the study was funded by the cork industry, and did not consider the environmental impact of cork's famous unreliability. In comparison to plastic cork or screwcap, real cork simply ruins more wine, thereby necessitating opening more bottles and expanding the carbon footprint.

Many winemakers have become fed up with the unreliability of cork, and have embraced alternative closures, which have substantially lower rates of failure. The last ten years have seen the use of cork stoppers drop, but the cork industry has not remained idle. Much advancement has been made in the last decade to upgrade production facilities, which today claim much lower incidences of TCA (the chemical that causes cork taint).

Alternative closures have certainly challenged cork's supremacy, but the growing "green" movement, along with improvements in industry quality control, have caused somewhat of a cork renaissance. Environmentally friendly or not, however, the quality of cork as it pertains to wine will determine whether it will be around for another 300 years. As it stands, experts seem divided. Some artisanal producers remain loyal to cork, while others wish they could bottle even their most expensive flagship wines under screwcap (if only public perception would allow it). Perhaps it is just a matter of time before a "greener" closure comes along that meets or exceeds all of cork's better qualities, and replaces cork in the same way that the cork stopper replaced the oily rag that used to plug bottles in the 17th century. ☞



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Terry Theise: The Giant of Bacharach
Hahn (photo courtesy Terry Theise)

POKING THE BEAR: terry theise's champagne

Interview by Gary Hewitt, Sommelier (ISG CMS), CWE

*Terry Theise selects and manages the Champagne, German, and Austrian portfolios for Michael Skurnik Wines, a specialist importer-distributor based in New York State. Terry's outspoken passion for carefully-made wines that express a sense of place puts him in the vanguard as a crusader for "grower Champagne." Gary Hewitt caught up with the always eloquent, opinionated and controversial Mr. Theise, just returned from an extended buying trip to Europe. To read Terry's own erudite writings, visit the Michael Skurnik website and peruse the portfolios or Terry's Squawk Box (www.skurnikwines.com/msw/terry_theise.html), or pick up his new book, *Reading between the Wines*.*

GH: Terry, as an introduction, could you tell us about your background and how you ended up in the wine business?

TT: Essentially, people who get into the business in the United States are people who love wine, and are able to persuade someone they can sell it. I had to come back to the U.S. from ten years living in Germany. About halfway through those ten years, I became passionately enamoured of wine, and just knew that I wanted to be in the trade in some way.

The first thing I did was work for a wholesaler in the Washington D.C. area. As a rookie—and as an unproven commodity—I had the territory that consisted of all of the accounts that either the company had never called on or had already thrown us out. I knew what dues I had to pay. I established myself as somebody who was able to sell to a wide range of people.

I began the Champagne portfolio in the summer of 1997, having once again been told that so-called "no-name Champagne" would never sell. At that time, the U.S. market was overwhelmingly dominated by big commercial *négociants*. A number of my colleagues in the fine-wine importing business had one, in some cases two, Champagne growers in their portfolio. But that struck me as tokenism. Nobody would claim to be in the Burgundy business if they only represented one

grower. I didn't think you could be in the Champagne business by representing only one grower. For me the meta-message was: we also have Champagne. I saw some potential for Champagne to really be front and centre in this discussion. My standard line is: I wasn't the first person to do it, I was the first person to overdo it.

GH: Which is probably appropriate when you're talking about Champagne.

TT: Quite so. I began with nine growers, and that number quickly morphed into fifteen. My feeling was that if you were telling people that there are important *terroir* distinctions among different locations in Champagne, you need to be able to demonstrate it.

I wanted to re-cast the conversation about Champagne: Champagne now is like Burgundy was twenty-five years ago; Burgundy was completely controlled by *négociants*, and then Burgundy completely changed and became a region dominated by its small producers. Champagne was about to experience the same thing. I wanted to be at the vanguard of that. I wanted to help shove my shoulder into the rock, and push it up the hill.

GH: If Burgundy is a model, where is Champagne on the timeline?

TT: Champagne is and will always be overwhelmingly

dominated by the *négociants*—that is unlikely to change. We began in a period where the so-called “RM” Champagnes—the Récoltant-Manipulant Champagnes [grower Champagnes that tend to be sourced from single or closely located vineyards around a village]—comprised 0.62 per cent of the market in the U.S. That number has now grown to nearly 3.7 per cent. That’s substantial growth, but I don’t see enough good growers making enough wine to make any more of a 5 per cent dent in the market share for Champagne overall. What really has happened is the entire way we talk about Champagne has changed. The conversation is no longer under the exclusive control of the suits with spreadsheets, who are the overlords and grand poobahs of the big houses.

GH: So in a sense, this is changing our impression of Champagne?

TT: Yes, we see it through the prism of terroir and artisanality as discussed by the growers, in a conversation which is repeated and added to by me and others like me. When I started, 33 *récoltants* were being shipped to the U.S. and that number is now almost 170. So there’s more grower Champagne coming along all the time. And the assumption that if you are a serious restaurant with aspirations to Michelin Stars, the Champagne you will pour by the glass will come from one of the big houses has been completely toppled. And these people just hate it. I have talked to wine buyers at these restaurants who have told me that when they threw off the big *négociant* Champagne by-the-glass, they were subject to an almost unbelievable attempt to seduce their business back in the form of give-aways, tchotchkes, monogrammed neck-ties, polo shirts, sets of golf clubs, price concessions, sales people bludgeoning them three times a week, saying, “What will it take to get the pour back? We’ll do anything.” I remember one sommelier said to me, as he placed the first order for one of my producers to pour—and this is a direct quote: “It’s a pleasure to be dealing with wine merchants again.”

Another collateral advantage to all of this is that, because Champagne is such an interesting story now for journalists, it is really under the microscope. People are talking and many of the big houses have discovered that they can no longer get away with shrouding their operations in smoke and mirrors. The greater the transparency throughout the information matrix, from producer to merchant to ultimate consumer, the better things are for the consumer, and ultimately as well for the producer.

GH: Can you elaborate on the distinction between a grower-producer and a large *négociant*?

TT: The large *négociant*—who may or may not own some vineyards—buys some or all of his grapes from a network of small growers, some of whom are under contract, some of whom just play the spot-market each year. The grower-producer is someone who keeps the produce, makes it into Champagne, bottles it, and sells it with his or her name on the label. To the extent that more producers are doing this, it makes the *négociants* a little bit nervous, because it threatens their grape supply. And it may sound proverbial but it is certainly true: no grower sells a *négociant* the best grapes, unless the producer sells the *négociant* all of the grapes.

This destabilizes the fragile balance in the system: the *négociants* depend upon the growers for grapes; the growers depend upon the *négociants* for, in effect, building the market for Champagne as a commodity.



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Photo courtesy Terry Theise

The extent to which Champagne as an idea or a commodity is attractive internationally is because of the PR work that is done by the big houses.

If you haven't approached grower Champagnes yet for fear that they are going to be too odd, I urge you to take a stab. They may be idiosyncratic at times, and not all of them are even that, but they are by no means odd. And in most instances, when they are idiosyncratic, they are that way in a very distinctive form, but they still have the breed and the polish, the finesse and the graciousness—particularly with food at the table—that characterizes all good Champagne. The other thing I need to warn people about is that once you discover and develop a taste for grower Champagne, you will find it very hard to return to the *négociants*.

GH: The big houses obviously have enormous resources, and if we use Burgundy as an example again, we've seen a rebound in terms of quality in the *négociant* houses in Burgundy. Do you see the same sort of thing happening in Champagne?

TT: I'd like to see it. And because I'd like to see it, I may be guilty of perceiving stirrings of it when they are not in fact there. I would rather that the quality improved. I think the wine world is better if the *négociants* are making palatable Champagne. But it does not really seem to me that that is the case.

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GH: Historically there has been a stylistic difference between what the French and Europeans drink and what North Americans drink. Is that a fair statement?

TT: To put it into the crudest possible terms: the cliché is that the French tend to like their wines very young and brisk. The British, on the other hand, appreciate a patina of antique flavour in the wine. And the theory is that the Americans like the sweet stuff. Some of those perceptions are self-fulfilling prophecies. I know somebody who worked as a cellar rat at one of the big commercial houses and he told me that the blend for the British market was given a dosage consisting of Spanish brandy to give it a little of that oxidative, antique character. And he said this in very hush-hush tones because it's not legal. That strikes me as a kind of craftsmanship for the production of a product to serve a market's taste preferences, and I don't think there's anything wrong with that. It's not inherently dishonourable to make industrial products by industrial protocols. What is dishonourable is to wrap them in this specious kind of marketing romance about how this is supposedly "fine wine" and Champagne is inimitable, and all this stuff.

GH: Do you think that grower Champagnes benefit

from this image that has been created by the *négociants*? In our market, whether it comes from a grower or a *négociant*, Champagne is an expensive wine.

TT: Yes; the difference is that the grower's price is based on what it actually costs him to produce and his need to feed his family. The *négociant*'s cost of production is enormously lower, because they have economies of scale that the grower doesn't have. So what we are paying for is a *négociant*'s advertising and PR budget, including product placements in films, at sporting events and all the rest of it. The price, at least in the U.S., for a Non-Vintage Brut, between a grower and a *négociant* is roughly the same. The difference is, with the grower, you are actually paying the price for his wine. But I agree with you: Champagne, by its very nature, is not and can never be a cheap, everyday wine. One of the reasons I got into the business—apart from the overriding philosophies and so forth—was that I couldn't afford to drink Champagne as often as I felt like drinking it. This was a way I could drink Champagne more often without having to pay retail for it. It was just pure, unseemly sensual greed on my part. I just wanted to be able to drink Champagne in the style to which I hoped to become accustomed. ∞




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gluggy

By Andrea Eby, Sommelier (ISG)

“Vieni, vidi, VISA—I came, I saw, I did a little shopping.” They were grey suede with lilac trim and they winked at me from the window of the Ferragamo store in Siena. On closer inspection, the shoes were even more breathtaking, and unfortunately, so was the price. As I sat down to contemplate my predicament, I was reminded of a similar situation I often find myself in involving Champagne. Like good shoes, Champagne is finely crafted and comes with a hefty price tag. Most of us, however, cannot afford to wear designer shoes everyday, any more than we can afford to drink Champagne on a daily basis. So what’s a girl to do? Just like finding a reproduction of the latest fashion trend, savvy shopping will bring success when it comes to finding a fantastic substitute for Champagne.

Winemakers around the world strive to replicate the razor-edged balance and complexity that define Champagne. The wines that come the closest are produced using the “traditional method.” Northern Italy produces some very nice wines made by this method, one of the best being Franciacorta, a sparkling wine that echoes many of the flavours of Champagne. Another great option is to explore the many Crémants of France. These wines are made in the traditional method, but outside the boundaries of Champagne, and often make use of regional grape varieties. Spanish Cava can also be a great alternative. Usually made with indigenous Spanish grape varieties, the flavours can be different



“A cause may be inconvenient, but it’s magnificent. It’s like champagne or high heels, and one must be prepared to suffer for it.” —Arnold Bennett

than Champagne, but equally as delicious. New World producers are also coming on strong. Often their wines feature slightly riper fruit flavours, which may appeal to drinkers of predominately New World wines.

Aside from wines made in the traditional method, there is a second group of sparkling wines that deserves our attention. These wines all achieve their bubbles through a production technique known as the “charmat method.” This method sees the asecond fermentation (the one that gives you all those bubbles) done in bulk, and therefore production costs are significantly reduced. These wines tend to emphasize fruit and do not display any of that brioche flavour that Champagne is renowned for. Most are refreshing, easy-drinking, and extremely versatile. Some wines made by the charmat method, such as Prosecco, are crafted to retain a little of their natural grape sugars; if dry wines are not your thing, then a sparkling gem like Moscato d’Asti may be right up your alley. In

fact, there are several sparkling variations of the delicious Muscat grape available that combine bubbles with intense fruit to create wines that are just plain yummy.

Not only is sparkling wine perfect for celebrations but it is almost unparalleled in its food-pairing capabilities, which is one reason I am happy to report that there are many budget-friendly options available.

Don’t think for a second that I have given up Champagne. Take it from this savvy connoisseur: every once in a while you have to treat yourself to beautiful bubbles and fantastic shoes. ☺

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Passing through the gates at Moët & Chandon
(photo courtesy Moët & Chandon)

incredible, accessible CHAMPAGNE

By Sylvia Jansen, Sommelier (ISG, CMS), CSW

Long before high-speed trains and easy highways reached into its cities, Champagne was a destination. The Romans dug through its chalk subsoil for building materials. France's first king, and most of his successors, travelled here to be crowned. First World War invaders arrived and managed to blow out the windows of the cathedral. Hostile forces have overrun its vineyards and helped themselves to its wines. The myriad of chalk cellars have hidden citizens and refugees during times of conflict. It was here that the Germans surrendered to the Allied forces, ending the Second World War. And it was here that a famous wine grew up to draw people to its doors.

Within easy reach of Paris, the region of Champagne-Ardennes is ideal for a few days or a week of touring. Its heart is the Marne Department, anchored by Reims (pronounced "Rhance" by the French) and Épernay. Rent a car at Charles de Gaulle International Airport to travel the 130 kilometres from the northeastern side of the city to Reims. France's efficient trains also run from the airport to Reims, and a surface shuttle train will drop you at the centre of town. In any case, a traveller can arrive in Paris in the morning and be sipping Champagne in a cellar by noon. Its sister city and rival, Épernay, is a short half-hour drive south.

Each city is home to scores of Champagne houses, including some of the largest and oldest. Below Reims are 250 kilometres of historical chalk-hewn cellars. Épernay boasts no fewer than 100 kilometres of underground cellars. Tours of Champagne houses usually include a walk underground.

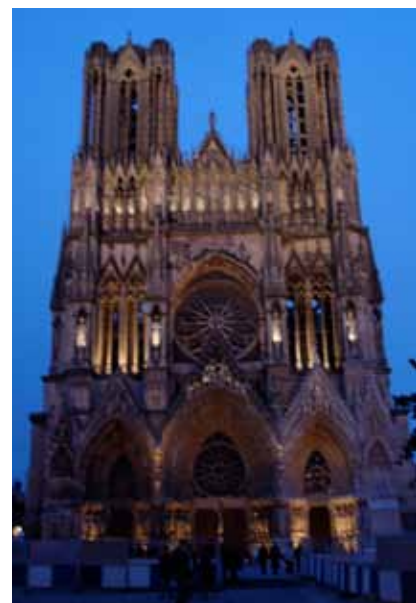
Appointments at most Champagne houses in Reims or Épernay are recommended and often required, so it is advisable to plan at least one or two visits in advance of travel. A tour price is about the same as a glass of wine in a bar, and the reward is a walking tour of underground history: caverns dug by Romans; small remnants of chapels that served those seeking refuge during the region's many conflicts; millions of bottles of Champagne resting according to regulation; and at the end of the tour, a glass of the house bubbly.

Appointments are easy to make through the website of the Champagne house; English is among the many languages available for tours.

Between the two towns, stretching out into the open countryside of vineyards, are dozens of Champagne villages. The Marne department has hospitably organized the recognizable *Route touristique du Champagne* to make an easy matter of driving alongside some of the most prized vineyards in the world. One of these routes, the D26 just outside of Reims, skirts along the northern boundary of the Montagne de Reims Park through the village of Ludes, home of Ployez-Jacquemart Champagne. This excellent small house offers a peaceful and beautiful bed and breakfast as an alternative to a city hotel. Along the southeastern edge of Montagne de Reims



Clockwise from top left: The gently rolling hills of the Champagne region; a long staircase down into the chalk caves of Veuve Clicquot (photo courtesy Veuve Clicquot); Champagne bottles resting on their lees in underground chalk cellars (photo by Carol Fletcher)



Left to right: A stained glass homage to Champagne production; the Smiling Angel; the Cathedral of Notre-Dame in Reims, France (photos by Carol Fletcher)

is the village of Ambonnay, where the well-respected Billiot et Fils craft their Champagnes. South of Épernay, the D10 winds along the Côte des Blancs, with vistas of vineyards, villages in bloom, and grower-producer Champagnes that collectively take your breath away. Appointments to visit these tasting rooms are not required, and sometimes the winemaker is there to pour in person.

Beyond the draw of the wine, Champagne is a place of rich history and landmarks. Reims boasts the home of three UNESCO World Heritage sites, including the 13th-century Cathedral of Notre-Dame. As in

many other European cities, its cathedral becomes evident to the visitor by feel rather than by sight. A shadowy glimpse from this corner, a reflection from a shop window, and then, as one rounds a corner to stand on rue Bergier, it rises from the end of the street to dominate the scene. The famed Smiling Angel statue graces the outside. Inside, stained glass windows feature work by Marc Chagall, and another set of windows offers a tribute to Champagne production. In the square outside stands an evocative statue of Joan of Arc, who reputedly brought a reluctant Charles VII to Reims to be crowned the King of France.



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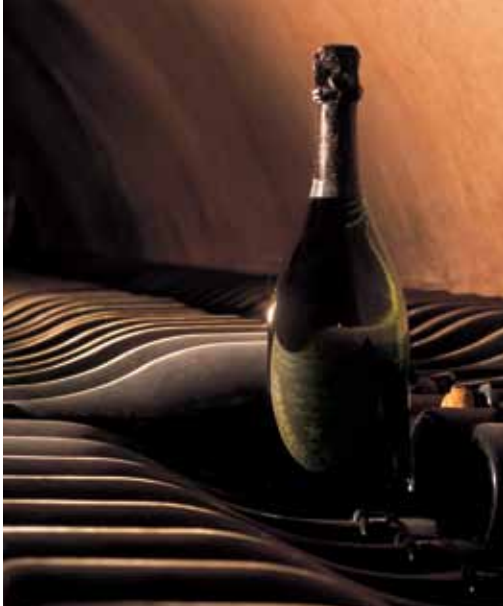
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The caves of Dom Perignon (photo courtesy Dom Perignon)


Reims is a bustling town of business people, trendy shops, and pedestrian-friendly zones. Some of the region's best dining is here, including the famed Le Parc at les Crayères. To stretch your travel budget a bit further, take a page from the locals and eat at one of the many restaurants or brasseries in town. Épernay, and in fact the entire region, also offers restaurants and hotels of various sizes, small family-run hostelleries, and bed and breakfasts. Meals can range from a casual French salad to a memorable fine dining experience, and almost every restaurant has a few Champagnes by the glass. It's easy and accessible. It's a bubble-lover's heaven. 



Photo by Carol Fletcher

A SIDE TRIP TO CHAMPAGNE INSIDE PARIS

For those visitors to Paris who do not have enough time to travel to the Champagne countryside, but do have enough time to sit down for a glass of wine, try Le Bar à Bulles at the Galleries Lafayette on blvd Haussmann. Overlooking a shopping area on the main floor, and under the magnificent stained glass Coupole of the building six stories above, the Champagne bar offers a delicious array of Champagnes by the glass. A sip of Champagne is a way to celebrate an afternoon of shopping, and the experience is all indulgence—just like a great glass of Champagne.



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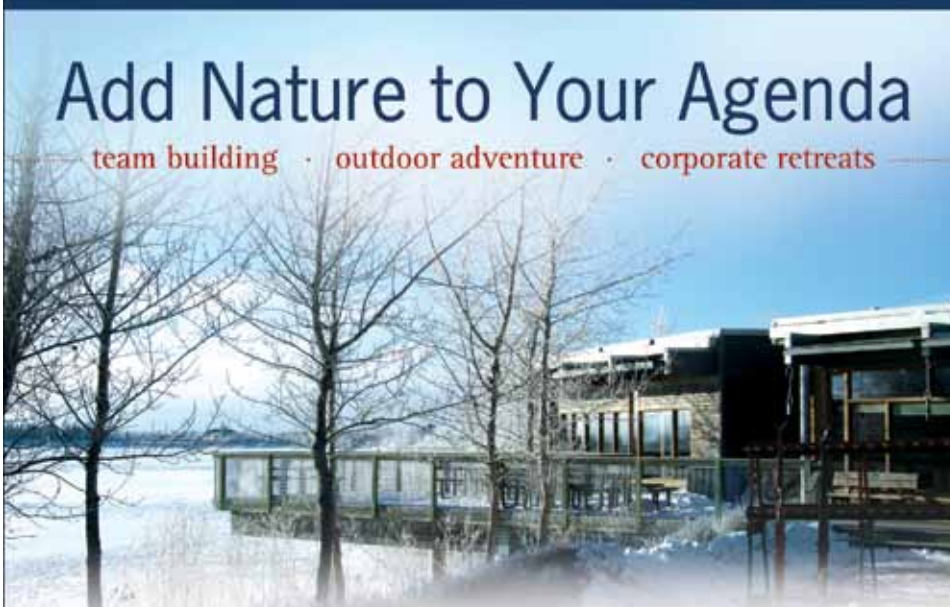



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tête de cuvée

By Karen Nissen, Sommelier (ISG)

These iconic labels represent the tête de cuvée wines of these famous Champagne houses: the very best of their sparkling offerings.



There comes a time in every woman's life when the only thing that helps is a glass of champagne.

—Bette Davis as Kit Marlowe, in the film *Old Acquaintance*

Veuve Clicquot 1998
La Grande Dame Champagne \$226.38

Nicole-Barbe (Veuve) Clicquot was such a powerful force in the male-dominated Champagne industry that she was known as *La Grande Dame de la Champagne*.



Alas, I am dying beyond my means.

—Oscar Wilde, as he sipped Champagne on his deathbed

Krug 1996 *Clos du Mesnil* Champagne \$1,499.99

Clos du Mesnil is a 1.85-hectare vineyard that dates back to 1698. Enclosed by a stone wall and nestled in the village of Mesnil-sur-Oger, this tiny parcel of land is considered one of the top vineyards in the world.



Moët et Chandon 2000
Dom Perignon Champagne \$227.51

Dom Perignon bears the name of the Benedictine monk credited with discovering Champagne. Ironically, he spent most of his life trying to get the bubbles *out* of Champagne. Sacrilege!

Why do I drink Champagne for breakfast? Doesn't everyone?

—Noel Coward



Pol Roger 1998
Winston Churchill
Prestige Cuvée
Champagne \$159.99

Churchill was such a fan of Pol Roger's Champagne, he named his winning racehorse Odette, after Pol Roger's wife.

Remember, it's not just France we are fighting for, it's Champagne!

—Winston Churchill, WWI



Champagne! In victory one deserves it; in defeat one needs it.

—Napoleon Bonaparte

Louis Roederer 2004 *Cristal* Champagne \$277.99

Cristal was created in 1876 for Tsar Alexander II of Russia, who demanded Roederer use clear bottles to expose any bombs concealed therein.

banville & jones wine institute



Banville Jones Wine Co. fields many questions regarding our wine appreciation and education programs. These are the answers to our most frequently asked questions.

FAQ

What are the differences among the Basics, ISG and the WSET programs?

Basics is a lively set of introductory classes created and delivered by Banville & Jones education specialists. This two-level program is highly informative and worry-free, as it does not include examinations.

ISG (*International Sommelier Guild*) and **WSET** (*Wine and Spirits Education Trust*) programs are designed and endorsed by highly regarded international organizations. Graduates attain **certification** upon successful completion of exams at each level. Although there is broad overlap in the material presented, particularly with regards to wine essentials, the **ISG** courses become increasingly service- and hospitality-oriented as one moves through the program, whereas the **WSET** courses become increasingly wine-trade oriented. In terms of coverage, ISG Levels 1 and 2 are similar to WSET Intermediate and Advanced, respectively. Banville & Jones is the exclusive provider for both programs in Manitoba.

What is the difference between “hospitality” and “wine trade”?

Hospitality refers to the hotel-restaurant industry and includes wine-related jobs with direct guest interaction such as waiters, sommeliers, and management positions. **Wine trade** refers to the business of wine and includes activities related to the distribution, marketing, and sales of wines, whether from producer, wholesaler, or retailer. As a simple summary, the wine trade supplies wines to the hospitality industry.

What do I need to know to start the wine programs?

Entry-level courses require no prior wine knowledge. However, all participants must be older than 18 years of age.

Where should I start?

If you simply want to learn some basics or discover if further wine study is appealing, the aptly named **Basics program** is for you. If you want to pursue wine-related work, explore wines to a greater depth, or if you thrive on the structure of a formalized program complete with examinations, then choose **ISG Level 1** or **WSET Intermediate**. If you want immediate gratification and accreditation for a first job in a restaurant or wine shop, choose **WSET Fundamentals**.

What are the advantages of certification?

Certification proves that you meet a recognized standard and may give you a foot in the door for job interviews and increase your job mobility. In addition, advancement within each program requires successful completion of the preliminary levels.

Can I do all levels of ISG and WSET at Banville & Jones?

We offer all levels of ISG, including the Sommelier Diploma Program. We offer three levels of WSET—Fundamentals, Intermediate, and Advanced.

Are credits transferrable between the ISG and WSET?

Not easily, although WSET will consider requests for registration based on other programs. ISG offers the opportunity to challenge exams, but each level must be passed in order to advance.

Is it possible to do any of the programs by correspondence/ distance learning?

WSET has excellent resource and support materials for distance study. ISG does not currently offer programs through distance learning.

How can I find out more about the wine programs at Banville & Jones?

Please visit www.banvilleandjones.com and click the “Wine Education” tab or email Garry Hewitt at gary@banvilleandjones.com.

BASICS

Wine Basics, Level 1

February 16 & 23 (Wednesdays)

March 16 & 23 (Wednesdays)

Cost: \$79.00 per person

Beyond Basics, Level 2

April 27, May 4, 11 & 18 (Wednesdays)

Cost: \$159.00 per person

Gift cards are available for Banville & Jones Basics classes.

ISG CERTIFICATION

ISG Wine Fundamentals Certificate, Level 1

Duration: three hours, once a week, for eight weeks (non-consecutive)

Starting: April 4 (Mondays) or September 13 (Tuesdays)

Cost: \$600.00, includes GST

www.banvilleandjones.com

ISG Wine Fundamentals Certificate, Level 2

Duration: three hours, once a week, for 16 weeks (non-consecutive)

Starting: September 12, 2011 (Mondays)

Cost: \$1,000.00, includes GST

ISG Sommelier Diploma Program

Duration: 23 classes, eight hours per class, presented over approximately six months

Starting: next class TBA

Current Cost: \$3,250.00, includes GST

Register for ISG programs online at

www.internationalsommelier.com

WSET® CERTIFICATION

WSET® Level 1: Foundation Certificate

Duration: One 8-hour workshop from 9 am to 5 pm Saturday, March 5

Cost: \$299.00, plus taxes

Workshops can be presented on demand for a minimum of 10 persons—ideal for restaurant staff training, or your next corporate team-building event.

WSET® Level 2: Intermediate Certificate – “looking behind the label” (no prerequisite)

Duration: four hours, once a week, for five weeks, plus a 1.5 hour exam on the sixth week (non-consecutive).

Starting: April 30 (Saturdays)

Course cost: \$600.00 plus GST

Register for WSET® courses at

Banville & Jones, 948-WINE (9463).

WINE EDUCATION PROGRAMS		
Banville & Jones Wine Institute www.banvilleandjones.com	International Sommelier Guild (ISG) www.internationalsommelier.com	Wine & Spirits Education Trust (WSET) www.wset.co.uk
	Sommelier Diploma Program	
	Wine Fundamentals Level 2	Advanced Certificate
	Wine Fundamentals Level 1	Intermediate Certificate
Wine Basics Level 2		Fundamentals Certificate
Wine Basics Level 1		



ISG Diploma Graduates 2010: (front row, l to r) Brooklyn Hurst, Karen Nissen, Domer Rafael, Tiffany Gustafson, Stephanie Mills, Kate Zeke; (back row, l to r) Gary Hewitt (instructor), Brian Byers, Richard Thurston, Andrea Eby, Kelly O'Bray, Tina Jones (principal).



Photo by Ian McCausland

banville and jones events

BANVILLE & JONES WINE EVENTS SCHEDULE: FEBRUARY THROUGH JUNE 2011

Passport to Wine

Cost: \$69.99 per person, plus taxes

Each Passport evening, Banville & Jones wine experts and local chefs take you on a journey to explore a different country's wine and food culture. *Attend three Passport events, and you will receive a complimentary Eisch Breathable wine glass.*

Sunday, February 20: Chile with Pizzeria Gusto
Saturday, February 26: The USA with Amici
Saturday, March 5: Sicily with Amici
Tuesday, March 8: Spain with Segovia
Sunday, March 20: Lyons, France with Bistro 7 ¼
Saturday, April 9: Germany with Craig Guenther
Wednesday, April 13: The World with Wasabi Sabi
Friday, May 6: Italy with Amici
Sunday, May 15: Quebec with Bistro 7 ¼
Saturday, June 4: Tuscany with Amici
Sunday, June 12: France with Peasant Cookery

Test Kitchen Encore

Cost: \$89.99 per person, plus taxes

Chef Joel Lamoureux cooks up regional fare and challenges a team of Sommeliers to find the perfect pairing.

Wednesday, March 2: Champagne
(see page 55 for the recipe)
Wednesday, June 15: Spain

Cooking and Wine Tasting Classes

Cost: \$89.99 per person, plus taxes

The evening includes exclusive wine pairings, gourmet food tasting with recipes from Winnipeg's finest chefs, and a Banville & Jones apron for you to take home.

Wednesday, April 6: Peasant Cookery
Thursday, May 26: Ben Kramer

Luxury Tasting

Cost: \$99.00 per person, plus taxes

Taste the luxury as our wine experts open the doors of our Specialties cabinets to explore some of Banville & Jones's exclusive treasures.

Friday, February 25: Champagne
Thursday, April 21: World Wonders

Wine & Cheese

Cost: \$35.99 per person, plus taxes

Wine & Cheese pairs some of our favourite wines with a selection of Bothwell cheeses.

Friday, February 18
Friday, March 18


Tasting on the Terrace

Celebrate the return of warm summer evenings with our wine tasting on the Tuscan Terrace.

Thursday, June 2

.....

To reserve a space or book a private wine tasting event, call 948-WINE.

- Tickets are non-refundable but are exchangeable 14 days prior to the event
- Events begin at 7:00pm unless otherwise noted
- Check www.banvilleandjones.com for updated information on event themes and dates. 

B&J ONLINE



Banville & Jones is expanding its online presence. Our wine experts want to share their passion for wine with the entire Manitoba wine community. Find us online and you can join the conversation!



On the Banville & Jones website, you can find current event and education scheduling and product information. You can also find online copies of *The Cellar Door* magazine and web extras. www.banvilleandjones.com



Facebook is the perfect venue for you to find breaking news in the wine industry, post photos of our travels, and let you know about new events and products in the store. Simply search for "Banville & Jones Wine Co.," and click the "LIKE" button to access us on your page. If you are linked in through your mobile device, click on "Subscribe via SMS" to have our posts at your fingertips.



We could go on and on about wine, so keeping our Tweets to a mere 140 characters is a challenge. But we accept. Follow us on Twitter for fast facts and updates about where your favourite wine experts are (and what they are drinking!).

And we're not done yet! On February 1, Brooklyn Hurst, Andrea Eby and the rest of our sommelier team will launch a wine blog at www.banvilleandjones.com called Red Rant White Whine. Log on for insights on wine and the wine industry. [↻](#)



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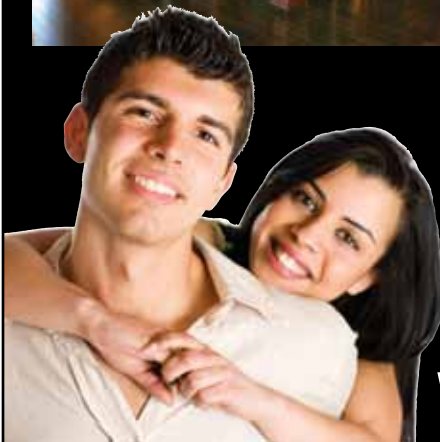
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2006 Tolaini VALDISANTI

92 points

Robert Parker's Wine Advocate

"These are the finest wines I have tasted from Tolaini... The estate's 2006 Valdisanti is 75% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Sangiovese and 5% Cabernet Franc. Here the fruit is marvelously rich and decadent, with layers of cherry preserves, roasted coffee beans, new leather and French oak all woven together in fabric of notable class. The sheer richness of the fruit should allow the Valdisanti to develop gracefully in bottle for a number of years. Dried flowers and mint linger on the long finish."

—*Robert Parker's Wine Advocate*, Issue 191, October 2010

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Photo by Ian McCausland

test KITCHEN

Champagne: who can resist this prestigious libation? The true regional culinary specialties of Champagne are staunchly rustic and hearty. Wild game, fresh water fish, wild mushrooms, and local *charcuteries* are some of the common ingredients in this region. Simple and complex is a great way of describing the cuisine of Champagne.

Chef Joel Lamoureux poaches fresh trout in this classic dish from Champagne. Common *Champenoise* ingredients celery root and leeks are displayed in a clean, rustic fashion. This classic *Champenoise* dish is complemented with sabayon and crisp wild mushrooms. These clean and simple flavours let the sparkling wine's complexities shine through.

THE MEAL

Poached Trout with Celery Root Concasse, Leeks, and Black Trumpet Mushrooms

2 lbs trout, cut into 4 fillets, bones removed, skin on (Rainbow, Brown or Steelhead are all good for poaching)

Poaching liquid:

- 1 bottle of your favorite Brut Champagne or sparkling wine
- 3 shallots, peeled and sliced
- 1 tsp black peppercorns
- 3 fresh bay leaves
- 3 tbsp dill
- 3 tbsp chervil (use the excess stems and trim)
- 1 tbsp salt

Combine all ingredients for the poaching liquid in a small shallow pot with a tight lid and simmer covered for fifteen minutes. Let stand for a minimum of 20 minutes to infuse flavours.

Season the trout with salt. After it has had a chance to infuse, bring the poaching liquid back to a gentle simmer and place fillets skin-side down in the pan. Replace the lid and cook until the skin can be removed easily.

Sabayon

- 100ml poaching liquid (strained and cooled to room temperature)
- 3 egg yolks
- Salt to taste
- Zest of ½ a Meyer lemon

Add eggs yolks to the cooled poaching liquid (otherwise, it will cook your yolks!). Over a double boiler, whisk

vigorously until the mixture has thickened slightly and leaves a visible trail when run through with a spoon. Add the zest and salt to the mixture. Tightly wrap with plastic film and keep warm.

Leeks

- 2 c. leeks, sliced and rinsed
- ½ c. sliced shallots
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- The juice of one Meyer lemon
- 1 tbsp fresh dill, chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste

On low heat, add oil, shallots, and leeks. Slowly heat the mixture without browning for about 10 minutes. Add lemon juice and continue cooking for 5 minutes until lemon juice has evaporated. Finish the dish by seasoning with salt, pepper, and chopped dill.

Celery Root Concasse

- 1 c. celery root (aka celeriac), peeled and diced (1 cm cubes)
- 2 c. milk (enough to cover)
- 2 tbsp butter
- 1 tbsp fresh chervil
- Salt and pepper to taste

Place celery root and milk in a pot and bring to a gentle simmer. Continue cooking until the celery root is tender and most of the milk has evaporated. Strain the remaining milk. Using a potato masher or wooden spoon, lightly mash the diced celery root with the butter. Season with salt and pepper and add fresh chervil leaves.

Crispy Black Trumpet Mushrooms

- 1 c. black trumpet mushrooms, julienned
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- Salt

In a large pan, heat oil on medium-high heat. Once hot, add the julienned mushrooms and quickly sauté until crisp. Season with salt and place on absorbent paper towel to remove any excess oil.

Plate leeks and celery root concassé topped with the trout and sabayon. Finish with the crispy black trumpettes.

On March 2, join Chef Joel Lamoureux as he recreates the Champagne Test Kitchen (see page 50). 



Photos by Ian McCausland

test kitchen: the wines



**VERGNES NV CARTE NOIR
BLANQUETTE DE LIMOUX
FRANCE \$14.99**

Sylvia: This sparkling wine has a crisp apple note on the nose, but citrus on the palate, with a tiny bit of sweetness. This sparkling is fine with this meal—but a bit like Switzerland. Neutral. It is a nice blend with good structure that holds up nicely to the meal.

Jill: There is a hint of pine nut and crabapple on the nose. This sparkling is a great bang for your buck, but you cannot wear a sequined top with a cotton skirt. It is not quite up to the calibre of the food. It does, however, have lovely bubbles and the freshness of the apples complements the sauce and the herbs in the dish nicely.

Karen: This sparkling wine is made by the Champagne method, and instantly bubbles up! I can feel a crispness on the side of my mouth. The crispy, earthiness of the trumpet mushrooms contrasts nicely with the citrus and apple of the wine.



**PAUL & PHILLIPE ZINCK NV
CRÉMANT D'ALSACE BRUT
ROSÉ ALSACE FRANCE \$23.99**

Sylvia: There is an aromatic of strawberry shortcake and ripe fruit. Rosé and trout were made to go side-by-side. The weight of this sparkling Rosé matches the fish well, and the bright fruit matches the leeks in the dish quite nicely.

Jill: On the nose, I get raspberry, plum and deeper red fruit; on the palate, it's fresh and dry. This wine would go equally well with fresh salad or a rich cake. The strength of the Pinot Noir stands up to the leeks, and the freshness of the Rosé brings out their summer qualities.

Karen: This Rosé has more body than I was expecting. It begs for a good food pairing. The berry in the wine is a nice contrast to the earthiness of the dish. The Pinot Noir in the blend pairs especially well with the mushrooms—and it is a great palate cleanser after every bite.



**PLOYEZ-JACQUEMART 1998
L. D'HARBONVILLE BRUT
CHAMPAGNE, FRANCE \$152.99**

Sylvia: This is intense but delicate with a gorgeous finish. There is an architectural layer to this pairing with the bubbles of the Champagne lingering with the sabayon. The earthy tone of the Champagne is exploding with the flavours of the mushrooms.

Jill: This Champagne feels like cashmere on the palate, and it has a soft and velvety honey-lemon note. When it opens up, there are tones of sandalwood and nutmeg. The trout and sabayon are a good match because of the fresh flavours and the lemon note in the sabayon.

Karen: The weight and texture of the food matches that of the wine. The bubbles aren't overpowering, yet they cut the creaminess of the sabayon. The herbaceousness of the dish is rounded out by the rich apple notes of the Champagne.

Also try: Felines Jordan 2009 *Picpoul de Pinet*, France – \$13.99 • Joseph Mellot 2007 Pinot Noir, France – \$14.99 • Oenoforos Asprolithi 2009 *Roditis* White, Greece – \$18.99 • Terlan 2007 *Montigl Reserva* Pinot Noir, Italy – \$27.99 • Dominique Comin 2007 Pouilly-Fuissé, France – \$35.99 • Lingenfelder NV *Satyr* Brut, Germany – \$41.99

culinary partners



AMICI RESTAURANT

Bronze Award, 2009 Wine List Awards of Manitoba

Executive Chef Patrick Shrupka and his team serve up contemporary Northern Italian cuisine at this elegant Winnipeg dining destination. For over 20 years, Amici has maintained its reputation for culinary excellence: pairing consistently delicious meals with selections from an impressive wine list.

326 Broadway 204.943.4997



529 WELLINGTON

Platinum Award, 2009 Wine List Awards of Manitoba

529 Wellington offers Canadian Prime beef, fresh seafood, and impeccable service in an elegantly restored 1912 mansion along the banks of the Assiniboine River. An exquisite menu and extensive wine cellar make for truly memorable food and wine experiences at 529. Just ask Brad Pitt...or Jennifer Lopez.

529 Wellington Crescent 204.487.8325



PEASANT COOKERY

Chef partner Tristan Foucault has reinvented the menu on the corner of King and Bannatyne. Overlooking Old Market Square, Peasant Cookery goes back to the land with expertly prepared dishes and top notch service. This is real food, freshly harvested, and the seasonal ingredients speak for themselves.

100-283 Bannatyne Avenue 204.989.7700



TERRACE FIFTY-FIVE FOOD AND WINE

Gold Award, 2009 Wine List Awards of Manitoba

Terrace Fifty-Five mirrors the natural beauty of Assiniboine Park. With an original menu that is representative of our culture and region, Chef Resch maintains a strong commitment to sustainable and renewable resources. Enjoy Canadian fish, produce, bison, lamb, and grains, beautifully paired with a unique wine list.

Unit B - 55 Pavilion Cr 204.938.7275



STEP'N OUT SUR LE BOULEVARD

Silver Award, 2009 Wine List Awards of Manitoba

Step'N Out Restaurant is the most uniquely intimate restaurant *sur le boulevard* in St. Boniface. The rich décor, personalized hand-written menu board, innovative cuisine, and wine list are inspiring and romantic, making loyal patrons out of most every visitor for 13 years. Step'N Out is the perfect destination for your next lunch date, or that perfect night out.

157 Provencher Boulevard 204.956.7837

Brass Lantern

Café Dario

Café Savour

Cherry Hill Estate (*Bronze Award, 2009 Wine List Awards of Manitoba*)

Earl's Restaurant and Bar

Elkhorn Resort

Horfrost

Hy's Steakhouse

Joey Kenaston (*Bronze Award, 2009 Wine List Awards of Manitoba*)

Joey Polo Park (*Bronze Award, 2009 Wine List Awards of Manitoba*)

Joey's Only Seafood

Kelsey's

Maple Tree Restaurant and Steakhouse

Olive Garden Italian Restaurant

Pizzeria Gusto (*Gold Award, 2009 Wine List Awards of Manitoba*)

Prairie ink Café

Rembrandt's Bistro (*Silver Award, 2009 Wine List Awards of Manitoba*)

Sabai Thai

Santa Lucia

Segovia

Spuntino Café (*Bronze Award, 2009 Wine List Awards of Manitoba*)

St. Charles Country Club

Step'N Out (*Silver Award, 2009 Wine List Awards of Manitoba*)

Sukhothai

The Current at Inn at the Forks (*Gold Award, 2009 Wine List Awards of Manitoba*)

The Victoria Inn

Tony Roma's

Urban Prairie Cuisine

Wasabi Sabi



sidebar

By Sylvia Jansen,
Sommelier (ISG, CMS), CSW

First the idea. Then the work and the risk. And then the reward.

When Barbe-Nicole Ponsardin Clicquot—referred to as Veuve (or the Widow) Clicquot—offered bottles of Champagne to French officers on horseback, she knew what she was doing. The officers gleefully lopped off the top of the bottles with their sabres, creating an instant celebration and a lasting tradition. A short few weeks later she did the same for Russian officers. The idea that a few free samples—or even a lot of them—would buy her both protection and a thirsty following was on Veuve Clicquot's mind.

Veuve Clicquot was among the first entrepreneurs of Champagne, and the first woman to achieve worldwide recognition for Champagne.

In its infancy, the Champagne busi-

ness was like any family business: it belonged to men. The job of most women was to keep children coming and keep dinner guests company. Out of necessity, if a woman was suddenly widowed, she might have a chance to try out for a top job.

For Barbe-Nicole Ponsardin, her marriage to François Clicquot lasted only seven years before he died in 1805. The Veuve Clicquot took over, and was ready to take big risks. After invading Russian officers had taken their samples and fallen in love with her wines, she ordered a ship to be packed and to wait, ready to set sail. The minute that peace was declared and the trade ban lifted, away sailed the Champagnes of Veuve Clicquot. Her competitors were left to the ranks of also-rans.

Clicquot was also a smart innovator. In the early 1800s, Champagne's

“Champagne is a luxury that creates an occasion out of thin air.”

main drawback was that it was a cloudy, sediment-ridden wine. It was Veuve Clicquot, in collaboration with her cellar master, who is credited with drilling her dining room table full of holes, carting it into the cellar, and creating the process called remuage, the method of turning and shaking the sediment along the side of the bottle to rest just under the cap. A quick flip and pop, and voilà, the sediment was out without waste. Clicquot's wine was the clearest and cleanest on the market for almost a decade until the secret got out. And even then everybody was running, just to catch up with her. I doubt she missed sitting at her dining table.

Following in Clicquot's footsteps, Louise Pommery took over after her own husband died in 1868. It was Pommery who launched something most people thought was sheer lunacy: a dry Champagne. Until Pommery's innovation, all Champagne was sweet—some as sweet as Ice-wine with bubbles. All lovers of Ultra Brut, or Brut Natur, have Louise to thank.

In the twentieth century, Lily Bollinger developed a special cuvée where the bottles of Champagne were left to age on the lees for several years longer than usual. This practice resulted in the signature rich, creamy style of Bollinger “RD” (Recently Disgorged).

Today, there is a new generation of women who oversee their own Champagne businesses and wine-making. Laurence Ployez of Ployez-Jacquemart studiously reserves only the highest quality juice from the best fruit of the harvest. Laetitia Billiot works with her father Henri on their 5-hectare estate to produce gems from Ambonnay. They are among the many artists of Champagne.

Champagne is a luxury that creates an occasion out of thin air. We have a lot of people—and a lot of women—to thank for this little luxury. Whenever I stand with my sabre in hand, holding a ready bottle of Champagne, wearing a big smile, I know all that risk was worth it.

So here's to you, effervescently. 🍾



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shopping list

❑ Billecart-Salmon Brut Réserve Champagne (375 ml) \$32.99	23
❑ Billecart-Salmon Brut Réserve Champagne (750 ml) \$61.99	23
❑ Billecart-Salmon Rosé Brut Champagne \$106.99	23
❑ Billecart-Salmon 1998 Cuvée Nicolas-François Vintage, Champagne \$134.99	13
❑ Bouchard Finlayson 2009 <i>Blanc De Mer</i> Western Cape, South Africa \$22.99	62
❑ Castellblanch Extra Cava Brut Penedès, Spain \$13.99	40
❑ Dominique Cornin 2007 Pouilly-Fuissé, France \$35.99	57
❑ <i>Essential Wine Tasting Guide</i> \$5.00	13
❑ ETC 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon, California \$21.99	63
❑ Falernia 2007 Carménère Reserva Elqui Valley, Chile \$16.99	57
❑ Felines Jordan 2009 <i>Picpoul de Pinet</i> , France \$13.99	57
❑ Il Faggeto Prosecco <i>Vino Frizzante</i> Veneto IGT Italy \$13.99	40
❑ Joseph Mellot 2007 Pinot Noir, France \$14.99	57
❑ Krug NV Brut Grande Cuvée Demi Champagne (375 ml) \$188.99	19
❑ Krug NV Brut Grande Cuvée Champagne (750 ml) \$359.99	19
❑ Krug 1998 Brut Vintage Champagne \$459.99	19
❑ Krug NV Brut Rosé Champagne \$624.99	19
❑ Krug 1996 <i>Clos du Mesnil</i> Champagne \$1,499.99	47
❑ Laguiole Champagne Sabre \$249.99	22
❑ Lingenfelter NV <i>Satyr</i> Brut, Germany \$41.99	57
❑ Louis Roederer 2004 <i>Cristal</i> , Champagne \$277.99	47
❑ Moët & Chandon 2000 <i>Dom Perignon</i> , Champagne \$227.51	47
❑ Oenoforos Asproolithi 2009 <i>Roditis</i> White, Greece \$18.99	57
❑ Paul & Philippe Zinck 2008 Pinot Gris Alsace, France \$19.99	62
❑ Paul & Philippe Zinck NV <i>Crémant d'Alsace</i> Brut Rosé Alsace, France \$23.99	57
❑ Ployez-Jacquemart 1998 <i>L. D'Harbonville</i> Brut Champagne \$152.99	13, 57
❑ Ployez-Jacquemart 2002 Champagne \$79.99	13
❑ Pol Roger 1998 <i>Winston Churchill</i> Prestige Cuvée, Champagne \$159.99	47
❑ Riddling Rack \$349.99	22
❑ Spiegelau Champagne Flutes \$24.99	23
❑ Tablas Creek Vineyard 2008 <i>Esprit de Beaucastel</i> , Paso Robles, CA \$57.99	62
❑ Terlan 2008 <i>Montigl Reserva</i> Pinot Noir, Italy \$27.99	57
❑ Ventozelo 2004 Vintage Port Douro, Portugal \$36.99 (375mL) / \$62.99 (750mL)	62
❑ Vergnes NV <i>Carte Noir</i> Blanquette de Limoux, France \$14.99	57
❑ Veuve Clicquot 1998 <i>La Grande Dame</i> , Champagne \$226.38	47
❑ Vineyard Pantry \$6.99–\$8.99	22

Due to the nature of the wine industry, any prices and vintages listed in this publication are subject to change and cannot be guaranteed by Banville & Jones Wine Co.

top picks



SARALYN MEHTA
Tablas Creek Vineyard
2008 *Esprit de Beau-castel*,
Paso Robles, CA \$57.99

What do you get when you bring together cuttings from one of the most famous vineyards of Châteaux Neuf Du Pape with the *terroir* of Paso Robles? Tablas Creek *Esprit de Beau-castel*. This homage to Chateaux Neuf will leave you breathless. Bold, lush fruit with brambly spice and velvety tannins are the hallmark of this blend. It is a treat to drink now and will evolve beautifully over the next 10 to 15 years.

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PAULINE LOMAX
ETC 2008 Cabernet
Sauvignon, California
\$21.99

The first sip of this Cabernet Sauvignon from California is smooth with the rich taste of black currants and blueberries. It can be enjoyed as a sipping wine or with prime rib and roasted potatoes. With a name like E T C, you might expect repetition, but not this incredible wine—each sip becomes a new adventure!



JENNIFER MOURANT
Bouchard Finlayson
2009 *Blanc De Mer* Western
Cape, South Africa \$22.99

This vintage is a winemaker's dream, with weather conditions casting a magic spell over the grapes. This unique blend consists of Riesling, Viognier, Chenin Blanc, Sauvignon Blanc, and Semillon. With each varietal displaying the true characteristics of its family, you discover quince, gooseberry, peach, and orange blossom. Take a whirl of *Blanc De Mer* and discover your own adventure of aromas.

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BETTY SETKA
Falernia 2007
Carménère Reserva Elqui
Valley, Chile \$16.99

This great Amarone-style Carménère is a wonderful complement to any red meat. Try it for your next winter BBQ—it will warm you to the bones. This wine is full bodied and fleshy, and has rich ripe tannins with a gentle mouth feel. The finish leaves you with a spicy aroma on the palate. Falernia also pairs well with aged cheeses.



SYLVIA JANSEN
Ventozelo 2004
Vintage Port Douro,
Portugal \$36.99/\$62.99

A vintage Port makes any dinner special. Ventozelo's 2004 is deep and dark, bursting with ripe blackberry and black current fruit, layered by spice, espresso notes, and a beautiful freshness to boot. Vintage Ports usually require many years of aging, but decant this one for an hour and you will see that it is amazing right now! Available in half bottles for a small celebration.

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DARREN RAESIDE
Paul & Philippe Zinck
2008 Pinot Gris Alsace,
France \$19.99

The Zinck boys (father and son) are mastering their craft, creating quality wines true to their *terroir*. Their Pinot Gris vines see altitudes between 190 and 280 metres, contributing to its acidity, making this Pinot Gris fresher than others, yet richer than the Italian version, Pinot Grigio. Welcome Alsace at your table as the perfect winter white wine!

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Scarlett Johansson



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