

Champagne notebook

This Champagne notebook is the first in a series which will guide Champagne lovers through the singular universe of Champagne wines.

With their sensations, emotions, flavours, images and expressions, Champagnes have a poetry all of their own.

With this notebook, the Champenois hope to share their experience, their knowledge, their emotions and their passion. *“This Champagne notebook is for all the wine lovers who want to broaden their understanding of Champagnes”*, says André Enders, Director of the Champagne Trade Association (Comité Interprofessionnel du Vin de Champagne) based in Epernay, France.

“It is an invitation to explore the diverse and fascinating world of the Champenois”.



Champagne notebook



Body

2

Look at the brilliant clarity of this wine as the tiny bubbles rise. Is it gold? Or straw yellow? Or pink perhaps? A Champagne's colour can tell you much about the wine even before you sip it: about its sparkle, its bouquet, its taste. But colour is just one of the ways in which the many Champagnes show their distinct style.

Born out of the chalky soil and chilly climate of the rolling hills of **La Champagne**, France, every bottle of Champagne is an act of creation. Starting as a gift of nature, it ends as a unique piece of man's handiwork with specific characteristics and style. This is why **there is not one Champagne but many.**

To describe this diversity of wines, the skilled Champenois producers have organised their knowledge into a distinct vocabulary all of their own.

This vocabulary captures the four basic ways in which we respond to the world,

Soul



Spirit

3

the four natural realms of human perception: Body, Heart, Spirit and Soul. Each of them encompasses certain sensations, characteristics, and styles.

For example, if a Champagne is strongly built, vinous, powerful, you might call it a Champagne with **Body**.

If it appears soft, gentle, and harmonious, it may be described as a Champagne with **Heart**.

If it is lively, fresh, light and refreshing, let us think of it as a Champagne with **Spirit**.

Finally, some are so exceptional, so carefully crafted, that they transcend the ordinary. These are nothing less than Champagnes with **Soul**.

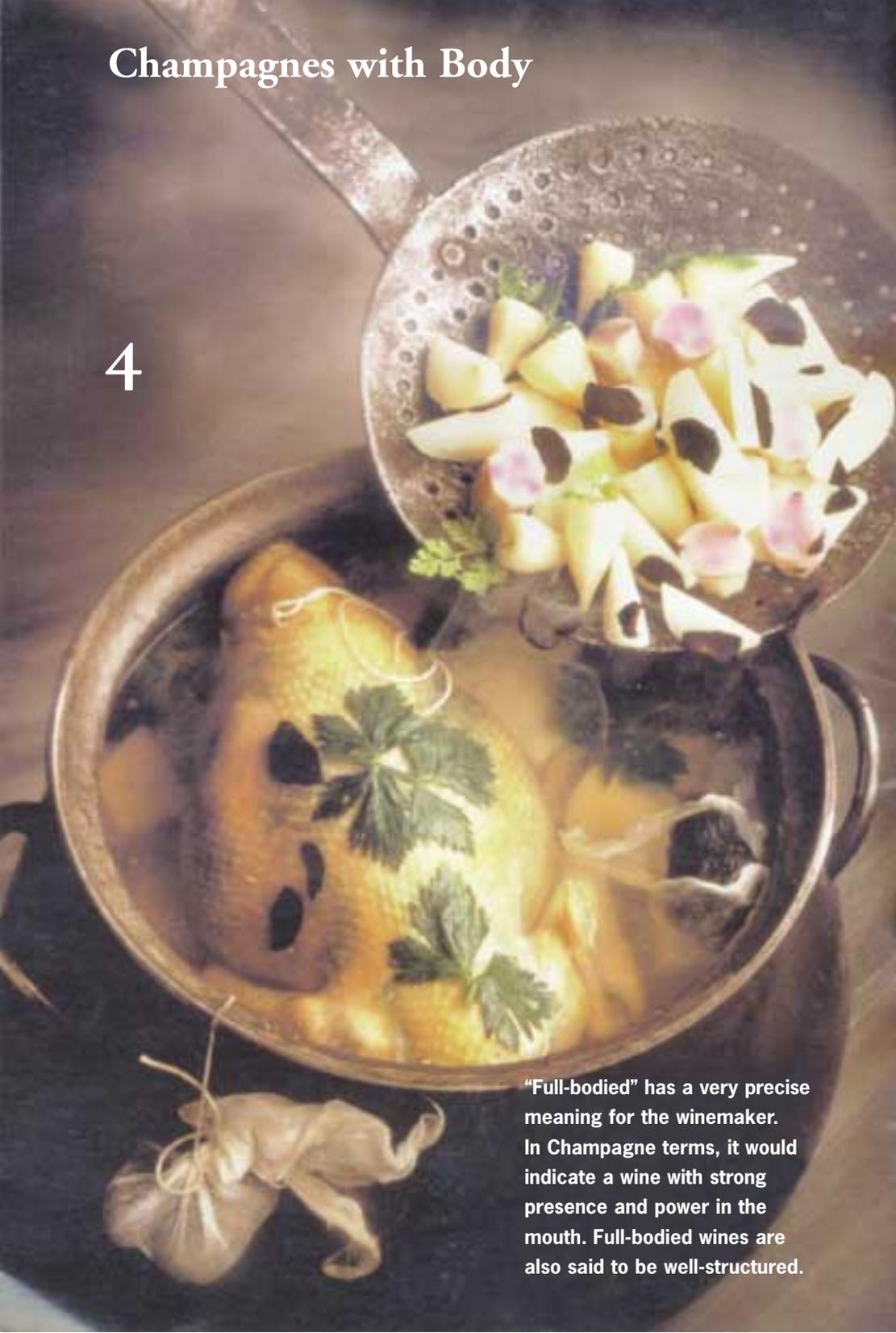
In the following pages, the Champenois would like to share their intimate knowledge of Champagne wines with you, and guide you through these four realms of sensations. With them, you will explore the delicate nuances of the fabulous many-faceted universe of Champagnes.

Heart



Champagnes with Body

4



“Full-bodied” has a very precise meaning for the winemaker. In Champagne terms, it would indicate a wine with strong presence and power in the mouth. Full-bodied wines are also said to be well-structured.

What makes up a Champagne with Body?

This is the term for all those Champagnes whose key word is power - the power of the earth itself, the wine's source. Such Champagnes, be they young, mature or even vintage, are usually made with a predominance of Pinot noir and Pinot meunier, two grape varieties which create distinctive aromas and give the wine depth, vinosity and vigour. These are muscular Champagnes, enjoyable for their scents of violets, spices, truffles, fresh butter, Virginia tobacco, ripe wheat and biscuit pastry. Not least, they are appreciated for their opulence and length of flavour.



Partners at table

Full-bodied Champagnes naturally go well with full-flavoured, characterful dishes. Imagine them with pot-au-feu, charcuterie, game, quails in aspic, or foie gras on toasted country bread. They are the perfect companions on a tour of the world's bold cuisines, and can be partnered with the tapas of Spain, the osso bucco of Italy, the stuffed turkey of America, the beef and Yorkshire pudding of Great-Britain... or the universal roast chicken.



Navarin of chicken and tiger prawns (for 4)

4 chicken breasts, 4 scallops, 4 gambas; 12 blanched asparagus, 100g pre-cooked shitaki mushrooms, 2 sticks lemon grass, 50 g lemon balm, 50 g basil, 20 g chervil, 20 g single cream, salt and pepper. Poach the breasts in a seasoned court bouillon, cover with a lid and remove from heat just at boiling point. Take a ladle-full of stock and reduce in a separate pan. Add the cream. Boil with the peeled lemon grass sticks, add the scallops and gambas for 2 minutes. Just before serving, add the chicken, asparagus, shitaki mushrooms and herbs. Season to taste.



*Jean-Christophe Novelli,
Four Seasons Restaurant
Four Seasons Hotel,
London W1*



5

Champagnes with **Body**



Rich and robust

Many people think of Champagne as dainty and delicate, but Champagnes with Body challenge you to give them the attention they deserve. Their intense flavours and aromas win you over immediately. Champagnes with Body are forceful, robust and full-flavoured wines. These are Champagnes whose distinctive richness remains on the tongue long after your last sip. They may even startle you with their structure, complexity and power.

Sensations

Full-bodied Champagnes derive their character from the high proportion of Pinot noir and Pinot meunier in their blend. Hence their sustained bouquet and sturdy structure. The sensations they offer vary enormously from one Champagne to another. Some can be powerful, with smoky, woody or earthy aromas.



Some can be concentrated, with a beautiful amber hue and a hint of tobacco or leather in their bouquet. Others may be spicier, with the smell of oakwood.

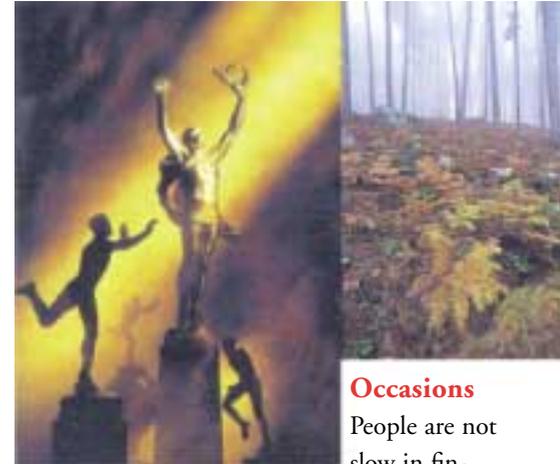
Illustrious Champagne lovers

Many famous people have admitted to a passion for Champagne. From great historical figures such as Thomas

Jefferson, the Tsars of Russia and Winston Churchill, to esteemed artists such as Marcel Proust, Marlene Dietrich and Colette, the list is as long as it is impressive.



7



Occasions

People are not slow in finding occasions to get together over a glass of Champagne.

From official functions to picnics in the park, from business lunches to informal tasting parties at home, from lunch at the club to sporting events, the list is long and varied. Whether you are beginning a new project or celebrating its completion, Champagnes have no equal among wines.



Champagnes with **Heart**



8



A wine cannot truly be said to have a heart but... in the case of Champagne some might make an exception. It is a wine inextricably linked to the greatest, the happiest moments of our lives.



Ah, the charm of romance! Without heart, there would be no romance at all, no moments of tender intimacy and deep desire. It is the heart which creates attractions and gives us friendship and love. And what would life be without great passions?



Which are the Champagnes with **Heart**?

Mature, Brut, often vintage, these wines are fleshy, smooth and always well-balanced. With the emphasis on Pinot noir, they may include Rosé Champagnes and certain 'Demi-secs'. On the nose, rose petals, honey, peaches, pears in cinnamon, candied oranges and gingerbread may come to mind.

What to serve with them?

These are refined, subtle Champagnes, to be served with desserts or at tea-time. They are perfect with fruit tarts, soufflés, frothy sabayons, sweet biscuits, delicate creams or almond cakes. Champagnes with Heart need not be confined to the dessert course, though. Try them with slightly unusual dishes: a chicken cooked with honey, or pigeon with ceps, perhaps.



9



Champagnes with Heart



A change of Heart
Champagnes with Heart evoke tenderness, togetherness, happiness and harmony. They make special occasions sparkle with gaiety and laughter, lightness and wit. People have described the various aromas and flavours of Champagnes with Heart as delicate and serene as rose petals, or as smooth and warm as melting honey. Exquisite and festive, these Champagnes are perfect for many romantic and family celebrations.

IO



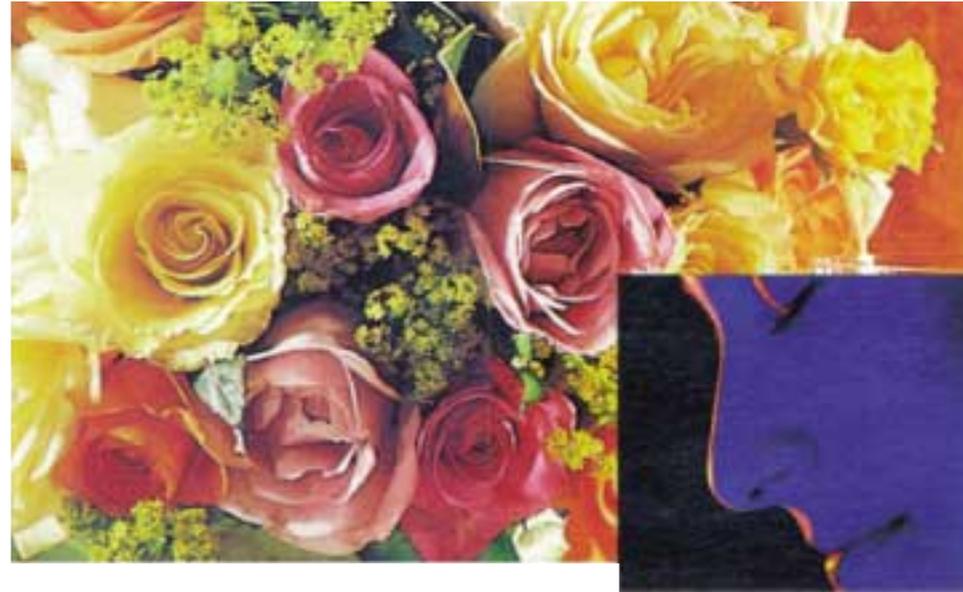
Happy times

From a birth to an anniversary, from the fond farewell to the welcome home, from Valentine's Day to New Year's Eve, Champagnes with Heart have a way of making the heart beat faster. That clear, pale colour, those warm, toasty honeyed aromas make such a Champagne a welcome guest whenever people have



something to celebrate. And naturally, Champagnes with Heart are the first choice for weddings and family occasions.

*"Come, thou monarch of the vine,
Plumpy Bacchus with pink eye!"*
William Shakespeare



rapid and more careful, producing wines which were 'whiter', culminating in the much sought-after clarity of today's Champagnes.



Rose or rosé

Historically all Champagnes were once a rose-red colour, as the slow, manual pressing prolonged the wine's contact with colorants in the skin of the grape. As techniques evolved, pressing became more

Rosé Champagnes delight the mind as much as the eye. Their colours speak of gentleness and romance, while the memory calls up celebrations past. In terms of taste, some rosés are full-bodied and passionate wines with powerful flavours.

The rarity of pink Champagnes

The beautiful colour of pink Champagnes gives them a special magic whenever they are served. These rare wines make splendid aperitifs, better beyond measure than a Champagne masked by the taste of this or that liqueur.



II



Body

Spirit

charm

intelligence

romanticism

enthusiasm

passion

union

mysticism

tenderness

Heart



Straw yellow, fresh butter, biscuity, honest, fruity, generous



Virile, amber, profound, light tobacco, rustic, rural, lively, foam



Red fruits, frivolous, graceful bubbles, pale pink, bewitching



Frisky, new oak, wood shavings, spicy, amber-green



Fern, delicate, yellow-green, light bubbles, briarwood, subtle



Luminous, fresh fruit, witty, minty, grapefruit yellow, cheeky, verberna



Iridescent, tea leaves, sharp, lively bubbles, fresh almonds, lime, freshness



Rounded, ruby, truffled, powerful, smooth



Well built, ripe wheat, brushwood, leather, musky, smoky, woody, deep



Silky, heady, tuberose, carnation, hyacinth, glistening, scented, dappled



Coppery, supple, nutty, cocoa, vanilla, lasting finish, dashing bubbles, dried fruit, antique gold



Polished wood, complex, stewed prunes, flamboyant, intense, toasty



Pink, enchanting, salmon coloured, mellifluous, meadow flowers



Fresh citrus, bracing, clear lemon colour, gleaming, shimmering, youthful



Newly-cut grass, a necklace of pearls, sharp, pale gold, fresh hay, sprightly



Golden yellow, licorice, fair, rich, full, aniseed



Gifted, incense, grey-gold, blooming, fine bubbles at the rim



Crystal clear, perfect, peach almond, tiny delicate bubbles, meditative



Smooth, ripe figs, oat straw, gingerbread, mincemeat, jam



Fine, water-clear, pippin, tumbling bubbles, ripe peaches, light

rapture



Barley straw, heavenly, orange blossom



Pearly, velvety, dreamlike, everlasting, ash grey, sublime



Deep pink, balanced, peach, harmonious, yellow gold, fruity



Coral colour, serene, nectarines, pink gold, well defined



Sand coloured, brilliant, delicious, smooth honey, toffee, glittering, marmalade



Lace, apricots, mellow, stewed peaches, cinnamon, gracious, rose petals.



Honeyed, soft pink, warm brioche, pears, tender, abundant bubbles

Soul

Champagnes with Spirit

The freshness, the liveliness, the originality of some Champagnes can be a challenge to the intellect. How can one begin to describe them, or analyse them? Fortunately they speak for themselves, affirming their own

brilliance and personality, eager to be noticed and admired. However, their character can come as a surprise, a shock even, since there are extremists among them in particular the extra bruts.

14

spirited



Which are the Champagnes with Spirit?

Invariably they are Brut or Blanc de Blancs Champagnes. These have a preponderance of Chardonnay which displays a certain raciness as the wine reaches maturity and its optimum development. Champagnes with Spirit are lively, brilliant, clear-cut, often with a grey-yellow colour. Their bubbles are light, quick to form, with a lovely delicate appearance.

Nourishment of the mind

Lively, inspiring wines such as these should be partnered by light delicate foods: fish, shellfish, lobster, crab, caviar or artichoke hearts. These could be followed by fresh desserts, such as sorbets, ices or fruit salads. Then listen as the conversation quickens, and discussion takes a deeper, more philosophical turn...

15

enchantment

One thinks of fresh fruit, in particular of citrus or exotic fruits, of mint, of fresh almond. The colour is pale green gold, beneath a jewel-like collar of fine bubbles.



"The effervescence of this fresh wine reveals the true brilliance of the French people".

Voltaire

lively



allegro
16
vivace

A musical allegory

If you can't find words to describe a Champagne, close your eyes and listen to the music. Each Champagne expresses itself just as music does, from its opening through to the finale. It's like a Mozart aria - frothy, light, effervescent. There is an overture of soaring aromas, then the first clear and lively notes, swelling to a rich, rounded fullness. Next comes a stately allegro vivace, an intense, complex movement which affirms the wine's fundamental theme. Then that delicate lightness returns, before slowly dying away.

Champagne is a wine that sings. And as we listen, we can watch the dance of the bubbles, forming lines and soaring upwards in the glass, before they finally burst on the surface. Fortissimo to piano, allegro to adagio.



iridescent



glittering
pearls

volutes



17

- If you think like an **architect** you will see **spiralling volutes**, you will appreciate the **framework**, you will detect the **structure** - all features of these extraordinarily fine wines, which can soar like the **spire** of a cathedral.
- If you think in terms of **painting**, look at the colour of each Champagne... **luminous**, shimmering, **glittering**, gleaming.
- If you think as a **goldsmith** would, consider the **pearl necklace** that encircles each glass's brim, and compare the pure, gemlike brilliance of one precious Champagne with another.

shimmering



- If you are a follower of **fashion**, think in terms of beautiful fabrics, so **delicate** and velvety, so iridescent and silky. Each Champagne has its own indescribable **allure**, with all the richness and opulence of **lace**.

silky



Champagnes with Soul

18

The history of the region is bound with the history of France, from the defeat of Attila to the moment when Joan of Arc was summoned to crown the King of France in Reims cathedral.

The region which gave birth to Champagne has a long, brave history, and the pages of history can never be written without an excess of Soul. Some Champagnes, similarly, go beyond time, into the realms of eternity.

“The priest has just baptised you a Christian with water, and I baptise you a Frenchman, darling child, with a dewdrop of Champagne on your lips”.
Paul Claudel

Which are the Champagnes with Soul?

The great, indeed, the greatest Champagnes. The rarest, most collectible, fullest flavoured vintages, and the special cuvées. Inevitably these are mature wines, often from exceptional years. They inspire in many drinkers an almost religious awe, the respect of a true connoisseur and collector, a feeling that one should be taking note of a thrilling experience.

The colour, taste and aroma

The wine's white colour is tinged with the faintest grey-pink. The bubbles are no longer pearly but a grey-gold, like crystal, and bright as the stars. The taster is soon lost in the complexity of the wine's aromas, with their scents of precious, delicate spices.

When?

These Champagnes deserve to be enjoyed for their own sake, for their rarity, for the sheer extravagance of it. Serve them as evidence of your generosity, on an exceptionally important

“There are only two occasions when I drink Champagne, and these are: when I have game for dinner and when I haven't”. S.D. Churchill



19

occasion, or at a dinner where every detail must be perfect. Such wines should accompany a salad of fresh truffles, a feuilleté of crab, or lightly seared scallops. Or, at Christmas, why not a roast capon?



Travel to Champagne



20

How to get there

By car from Paris: take the A4, or the new A5. It only takes an hour and a half.

By train from the gare de l'Est in Paris.

From London

Take the A20 to the Channel tunnel, then the A26 to Reims.

The Champagne region stands at the cross-roads of several important trans-European routes.



There are so many reasons for visiting La Champagne. The architecture is vibrant with history, with cathedrals as beautiful as any in France, the 'angel of Reims' always wears a smile. Like the sky, the face of nature changes constantly. Here and only here can one discover the rich variety of Champagnes.

The Champagne region is divided into four areas

The Montagne de Reims, the Marne Valley, the Côte des Blancs and the Côte des Bar: each has its own geographical identity. By car or even on foot, you can see the orientation of the slopes where the vines grow, the soil and the sub-soil, the three permitted grape varieties, and the sites where they thrive. All these factors lead to differences in flavour, and give the wines of each village their own specific character.

La Champagne comprises more than 300 different crus, areas named after the microclimate and soil of a particular site or village.



21

Their subtle complexities can only be appreciated on the spot, but happily the people of La Champagne are always delighted to help you understand their wines and the love they have for them.

The Champagne houses

Whether situated in the larger towns or set among the vineyards, the Champagne houses are magical places. They tell the story of Champagne from the day they were built to the present, and one learns just how much these companies have contributed over the years to the worldwide presence of Champagne. Each house has been an ambassador of Champagne to commoners as well as Kings, in France and throughout the world.

This explains the pride shown in their traditions, and their pleasure in conducting visitors around the cool chalk cellars. They will explain in detail how their wines are made, and after such a visit, one understands better what distinguishes one wine from another, even if the true secrets are still shared only by the proprietors and cellar masters.

Tourist offices

Château-Thierry

11, rue Vallée
Tel. (33) 23 83 51 14

Épernay

7, av. de Champagne
Tel. (33) 26 55 33 00

Reims

2, rue Guillaume de Machault
Tel. (33) 26 47 25 69

Troyes

16, Bd Carnot
Tel. (33) 25 73 00 36





22

A certain savoir-vivre is conferred on anyone who enters this enchanting prestigious world, willing to learn about its exceptional wines.

The Champagne growers

Just follow the region's country lanes and byways, or join the trail signposted as **La Route**

Touristique du Champagne.

You'll soon fall under the spell of the church spires in each village, the rolling hills, and the wide, varied landscapes. But you really should stop from time to time, and get to know the Champagne growers better. First, for the warmth of their welcome, as they invite you to look around their cellars, taste their wines, and share their enthusiasm. But also for the insight into Champagne which they will offer. It's a unique understanding, growing out of the soil and the vines, which the growers know better than anyone.

This understanding is present in the wines themselves, the result

of all the Champagne growers' talent and character.

The wines have character, too, which the winemakers love to discuss. They'll explain the nuances between each vineyard and each year, using the words of men who live close to the vines, and have done for generations.

The diversity of wines

The diversity of wines is immense, so you have every opportunity to become an oenophile. Summon up your senses, then taste, and compare. Each Brut, Rosé or vintage Champagne will fall into place on the map of your sensations, with its four points of the sensory compass. Take your time - imagine the occasions you would serve these Champagnes, and what food you would serve them with. You will find that there is no single wine that you can call Champagne, but instead a wide spectrum of wines, so many that Champagne is a journey of endless discovery.



The three varieties of Champagne grapes

Only three grape varieties are grown in La Champagne: **Pinot noir** are richly coloured and intense. They impart power and structure to Champagne cuvées.

Pinot meunier, a cousin of Pinot noir, add fruitiness and spice to Champagnes.

Chardonnay are white grapes. Crisp and light, they lend elegance and finesse to Champagne wines and balance the richness of Pinot noir.

The right glass

To appreciate all the finesse of a Champagne, you have to serve it in the glass it deserves. The capacity and height should provide the bubbles with enough space to form and rise to the surface, while keeping the temperature of the wine as steady as possible. The ideal glass is tulip-shaped; shallow-bowled glasses are to be avoided because a wide surface area allows the aromas to disperse too quickly.

How to wash the glass

Rinse the glasses in hot water without any trace of washing-up liquid, let them drain until dry, then store them upright, or hang them sheltered from dust. The residues of washing and rinsing can soon diminish the sparkle in the wine.

The right temperature

Champagne is best drunk well-chilled but never iced. The younger and livelier the Champagne, the cooler it should be served down to a minimum of 6°C/44°F. A mature or vintage Champagne will be perfect at 10°C/50°F. Overchilling Champagne inhibits the perception of aromas and flavours.

How to cool Champagne

In a Champagne bucket: a bottle from your cellar plunged into a mixture of water and ice should reach the right temperature in 20 to 30 minutes. In the refrigerator: lie the bottle down in the bottom of the refrigerator three or four hours before

servicing it; you can leave it there even longer, provided that the temperature remains constant; then you can always have a ready chilled bottle to hand. The freezer should never be used.

How to open the bottle

Remove the foil, undo the wire muzzle and incline the bottle by 45°, grasping the cork firmly with your hand. Then turn the bottle itself by holding it at the base, while allowing the cork to gradually rotate out of the bottle's neck. Fill the glasses no more than two-thirds full.

How to keep an open bottle

You may have heard that an opened bottle of Champagne could be kept in good condition by placing a silver spoon upside down in its bottleneck. However delightful this story may be, we suggest that you use a special Champagne stopper instead.

23



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