



December 2014

# Grapevine

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## Champagnes & Sparkling Wines to Celebrate the December Holidays!

Champagne and sparkling wines are an enchanting, festive presence at holiday dinner tables and cocktail parties; though, we'll continue to insist that bubbly doesn't have to be held in wait and can and should be enjoyed anytime. For the purposes of the December holidays, however, let us woo you to its pleasures.

Big brother Champagnes are the big Champagne houses that also produce sparkling wine in other parts of the world in a similar style but without the Champagne pedigree. They are terrific and make for an interesting bottle-to-bottle comparison with friends.

**Moët & Chandon Impérial Brut Champagne \$39.99 92 WS** comes from the Épernay appellation in Champagne, France, about 85 miles east of Paris. Assertive and vibrant, it alights with vivacious fruit and elegant mineral notes. Moët's little brother is the **Chandon California Brut Classic** from Yountville (**\$15.99 90 WE**). Founded in 1973 by Moët & Chandon, this stunner combines French heritage and new world spirit. This savvy younger sibling captivates with apple, pear and bread dough flavors, culminating in a smooth finish.

The second set of siblings is G.H. Mumm Champagne, founded in 1827, and Mumm Napa sparkling wine. **G. H. Mumm Cordon Rouge Brut** from the Reims appellation



(**\$37.99 92 WS** is exceptional, with a flavor profile of toast and dried fruit, and a satisfyingly long finish. **Mumm Napa Brut Prestige from Napa Valley (\$14.99 90 WE** "is the quintessential Napa Valley sparkling wine," marrying French winemaking and Napa Valley's esteemed Pinot Noir and Chardonnay grapes — nearly half of each — with minimal amounts of other whites. The creamy, rich mouthfeel is balanced by citrus and stone fruit flavors.

Grower's Champagnes and Sparkling wines are a special breed, as the winegrower and winemaker are one in the same. Dedication can be tasted in the first sip. It speaks of pride in the care and harvesting of the grapes and in the production of the wine. In the very fine print on a label can be found RM (Récoltant

Manipulant), meaning that the grower is also the winemaker. NM stands for Négociant Manipulant, indicating that the winemaker sources the grapes from other growers; though they are still fantastic in their own right. There are also a couple of other designations with their own particularities, relating to co-operatives and grower partnerships.

**Bohigas Brut Cava Reserva** from Spain (**\$12.99 90 WA** is a Grower's sparkler that has been delighting sparkling wine fans since 1929. Planted in limestone and clay soils, the wine spends 24 months on its lees before dégorgement. Crisp and elegant, it is refreshingly dry. The **2012 Raventos i Blanc de Nit \$20.49** from Barcelona is another Grower's Sparkling wine **90 WA**. Made in the méthode tradicional from grapes indigenous to Spain

(Macabeo, Carel lo, Parellada and Monastrell), it is pale pink with notes of dried roses, bread dough and fennel.

As for Grower's Champagnes, there are two we'd like to suggest for the holidays. **Pierre Gimmonet & Fils Sélection Belles Années Premier Cru Blanc de Blancs Brut** is made from 100% Chardonnay (**\$36.49 94 WE & 91 AG**). It is an elegant Champagne, with clean citrus notes and expressive minerality. The **Chartogne-Taillet Brut Rosé (\$50.99 91 WS** is well-balanced, with notes of red fruits and a hint of chalk in the texture.

Champagne isn't pretentious, it's a wine-lover's joy. There are so many to consider, and the holidays are the perfect time to grab a bottle or two and dazzle your husband or wife, your family and friends. Merry Christmas, Happy New Year and happy sipping. ♦

**Incredible Savings!**  
**15% off all Wine —**  
**Every Bottle,**  
**Every Day!!!**

**Did you know...** A Magnum wine bottle holds 1.5 litres, equal to 2 standard wine bottles, Jeroboam holds 3 litres, Rehoboam holds 4.5 litres, Methuselah holds 6 litres, Salmanazar holds 9 litres, Balthazar holds 12 litres and Nebuchadnezzar wine bottle holds 15 litres!

## Wine Tastings Fri, 4-7 & Sat, 2-5

**Sat 12/6, 12/13, 12/20 & 12/27: New Arrivals:**  
We'll pour a spectrum of our latest, greatest discoveries.

**Fri 12/12: Staff Picks:** Taste our December Staff Picks and let us share with you our holiday season favorites.

**Fri 12/19: 90 Points Global Wine Tasting by Karen Tellefsen:**  
Wine expert from Empire Merchants North pouring stellar wines!

**Fri 12/26: Wines from Wine Spectator's 2014 Top 100:**  
A selection of wines loved by the experts. You just have to try 'em!

**Fri 12/31: Champagnes & Sparklers for New Year's Eve:** A selection of beautiful Bubbles to ring in the New Year!

### Ricotta and Roasted Grape Crostini Adapted from *Food and Wine* magazine

1 lb seedless green and black grapes, stems discarded  
1 Tbsp aged balsamic vinegar  
2 rosemary sprigs, plus chopped fresh rosemary for garnish  
3 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil  
Flaky sea salt & black pepper  
3 tablespoons pine nuts  
Twelve 1/2-inch-thick baguette slices  
3/4 cup fresh ricotta cheese  
Honey  
Finely grated lemon zest, for serving



#### INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat oven to 400°. On a parchment paper-lined baking sheet, toss the grapes with the vinegar, rosemary sprigs and 2 Tbsp of olive oil. Season with salt and pepper and toss to coat. Roast for about 15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until softened and the skins start to pop.

Meanwhile, spread pine nuts in a pie plate and roast in oven for 6 to 8 minutes, until golden. Brush baguette slices with remaining Tbsp of oil. Arrange on a baking sheet and toast for 8 minutes, until golden and crisp.

To assemble the crostini, dollop 1 tablespoon of the ricotta onto each toast. Spoon the warm grapes on top and sprinkle with the pine nuts. Arrange on a platter and top with a drizzle of honey and some lemon zest. Sprinkle the crostini with salt and garnish with chopped rosemary.

## News & Our Latest Goings-on

### Gift Baskets for the Holidays!

The holidays are upon us, and you don't have a clue what to buy the people in the office or your cocktail party-throwing brother and sister-in-law who seem to have everything. Don't try to decorate their walls or give them a dust collector. Instead, give them something they'll really like and enjoy...a beautiful wine basket!



Whether you opt for one of our popular Rudolph's Reds or you choose wines for a custom wine basket, we'll cure your holiday headache before you can say *Advil*.

### Rum Chata Gingerbread Martini

1 1/2 oz RumChata  
3/4 oz Bacardi light rum  
3/4 oz Domaine de Canton ginger liqueur  
1/3 tsp ginger spice

Combine all ingredients in shaker with ice. Shake, strain and enjoy next to the fire.



### Sparkling Rouge 75

2 orange twists  
4 raspberries  
1 oz simple syrup  
Chopped Ice  
1 1/2 oz Tanqueray Gin  
2 oz chilled Taittinger's Domaine Carneros Sparkling wine

In a cocktail shaker, muddle 1 orange twist, the berries and the simple syrup. Add ice and the gin; shake well. Strain into a chilled martini glass. Top with the Champagne and garnish with the twist.



## December 2014 Staff Wine Picks

**Sheila: 2011 Stonestreet Bearpoint Chardonnay (Alexander Valley) \$26.49 (reg \$46.99) 92 RP** Aged for 10 months in new French oak, it exhibits floral, lemon blossom and apricot flavors. \*Pan seared scallops with butter, wine and cream.

**Ted: 2010 Taittinger Domaine Carneros Brut (Carneros) \$23.79 (reg \$27.99)** Made from organic Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, it is brimming with apples and brioche and has a racy, long finish. \*Blue point oysters and mignonette sauce.

**Joe: 2013 Andrew Murray 'Tous Les Jours' Syrah (Santa Ynez Valley) \$12.99 (reg \$14.99) 92 W&S** A dark, full-bodied explosion of blackberries, plums and peppery spice. \*Braised lamb shanks and mushrooms over creamy polenta.

**Bill: 2013 Ramsay Petite Sirah (North Coast) \$10.99 (reg \$12.99)** Opaque with a deep core of black boysenberry. Earthy with enough acidity to balance the big fruit components. \*Grilled skirt steak and chimichurri sauce.

**Ian: 2013 Joel Gott Oregon Pinot Gris (Willamette Valley) \$13.69 (reg \$15.99)** Aromatics of ripe melon, white peach and tangerine with hints of orange blossom and honeysuckle. \*Cilantro-spiked Asian slaw w/ peanuts and grilled prawns.

**Graham: 2010 Palacios Remondo La Montesa Crianza (Rioja) \$13.99 (reg \$16.99) 93 RP** A blend of Garnacha, Tempranillo and Mazuelo, it sings of cherries, herbs, flowers and spices. \*Spicy chorizo sautéed with red peppers and onions.

**Damian: 2011 Murphy-Goode Liar's Dice Zin (Sonoma) \$15.69 (reg \$18.49)** Blended with a touch of Petite Sirah, the notes of black raspberry jam are complemented by soft, round tannins. \*Cajun spice-rubbed roast turkey.