

Worksheet Twenty Nine

CHAMPENOIS INFLUENCE OUTSIDE CHAMPAGNE

Wherever you are reading this book, you should be able to find sparkling wine for a comparative tasting with champagne. Where the Champenois have been busy, the tasting should prove fascinating. To reduce the number of distracting variables, choose sparkling wines *made by the same process* as in Champagne, preferably with the *same grapes* as are used to make champagne. Match the wines in pairs, vintage with vintage and non-vintage with non-vintage. Tom Stevenson's book, *Christie's World Encyclopaedia of Champagne and Sparkling Wines* (updated by Essi Avellan), is a useful reference work; while not exhaustive, it is more comprehensive than this chapter claims to be. Wine information notes are also available on the brands' respective websites – plus make your own during the tasting.

If only one or two people are tasting, choose one pair of bottles, use bottle stoppers and retaste the wines next day to assess how they age over 24 hours – or find half bottles. For more than one person, serve the wines in pairs, one champagne matched with a sparkling wine made from the same grapes. To remove all prejudice, it is great fun to serve the wines masked. In that way, you can give an objective opinion.

Look for complexity, balancing acidity, creaminess, length, elegance, understatement, finesse and harmony.

UNITED KINGDOM

- » Try **Nyetimber Blanc de Blancs** paired with a champagne grower who specialises in Chardonnay, for example, **Champagne Gimonnet & Fils**. The latter's business is larger but its area under vine is much smaller than Nyetimber's.
- » Match the Chardonnay-dominated **Hambledon Vineyards Classic Cuvée** with Chardonnay-dominated **Champagne Duval-Leroy Fleur de Champagne**.
- » **Meonhill Reserve Brut Non-Vintage** with **Veuve Fourny Grande Réserve Brut Premier Cru**, both blends of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, or a grower champagne from Avize, for example, **Champagne Franck Bonville**.

UNITED STATES

- » Match **Domaine Chandon Brut Classic** with **Champagne Möet & Chandon Imperial Brut NV**.
- » **Roederer Estate**, perhaps the one labelled 'L'Ermitage', with **Champagne Louis Roederer Vintage**.
- » **Domaine Carneros Brut Rosé**, although a vintage, contains approximately the same amount of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay as **Champagne Taittinger Prestige Rosé**.

AUSTRALIA

- » Match **Daosa Vintage**, 100% Chardonnay, with a single-vineyard Blanc de Blancs, such as **Vouette & Sorbée 'Blanc d'Argile'**, the *lieu-dit* **Dehours 'Brisefer' Vintage**, or **Larmandier-Bernier 'Terre de Vertus' Vintage**. The Daosa could be tried with Pinot Noir-dominant Champagne Bollinger, but they are very different wines.
- » **Yarrabank Vintage Cuvée** could be tasted alongside **Champagne Veuve A. Devaux Grande Réserve**, which is Pinot-dominant and contains reserve wines, giving it a different profile to the Australian sparkler, or **Devaux 'D' Millésime**, which will have had much more time on lees than the Yarrabank, so the comparison is not equal, just fun to do. It should be easy to spot the difference.

» Deviation Road ‘Beltana’ Blanc de Blancs Vintage might be assessed with Agrapart ‘Vénus’, Duval-Leroy ‘Clos des Bouveries’, Jacques Lassaigne ‘Le Cotet’ or Thiénot ‘La Vigne Aux Gamins’.

New Zealanders, Italians, Spaniards and South Americans can make similar matched selections from the wineries mentioned in the chapter.

After you have completed the tasting and written your notes, unmask the bottles and write down the names of the wines, so you have a complete record.

Wine 1	
Description
.....
Appearance
.....
Aromas
.....
Palate
Finish
.....
Points out of 10	
Complexity	Balance
Creaminess	Length
Elegance	Understatement
Finesse	Harmony
Preference	Quality
TOTAL points out of 100	

Wine 2

Description	
Appearance	
Aromas	
Palate	
Finish	
Points out of 10	
Complexity	Balance
Creaminess	Length
Elegance	Understatement
Finesse	Harmony
Preference	Quality
TOTAL points out of 100	

Wine 3

Description	
Appearance	
Aromas	
Palate	
Finish	
Points out of 10	
Complexity	Balance
Creaminess	Length
Elegance	Understatement
Finesse	Harmony
Preference	Quality
TOTAL points out of 100	

Wine 4

Description	
Appearance	
Aromas	
Palate	
Finish	
Points out of 10	
Complexity	Balance
Creaminess	Length
Elegance	Understatement
Finesse	Harmony
Preference	Quality
TOTAL points out of 100	

Wine 5

Description:	
Appearance:	
Aromas:	
Palate:	
Finish:	
Points out of 10	
Complexity	Balance
Creaminess	Length
Elegance	Understatement
Finesse	Harmony
Preference	Quality
TOTAL points out of 100	

Wine 6

Description:

Appearance:

Aromas:

Palate:

Finish:

Points out of 10

Complexity Balance ;.....

Creaminess Length

Elegance Understatement

Finesse Harmony

Preference Quality

TOTAL points out of 100