

Is Champagne a true wine?

Yes, Champagne and other sparkling wines are truly a category of wine and it are typically derived from a blend of grapes such as Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, and Pinot Meunier.

What's the difference between Champagne and Sparkling Wine?

The Champagne we know and love comes exclusively from the Champagne region of France and claims the honor of being the most famous of the sparkling wines. Technically, it is the only sparkling wine that may be referred to as "Champagne." Bubbly from all other regions in the world are simply referred to as "sparkling wine." Italy, Spain, Australia, New Zealand and the U.S. give France a run for their money by producing some fantastic sparkling wines which are often less expensive.

What are typical Aromas and Flavors found in Sparkling Wine and Champagne?

Aroma – can be reminiscent of fresh applesauce, spiced apple, ripe pear and “fresh baked bread” smells, compliments of the yeast that's added during the second fermentation.

Flavor – apple, pear, citrus, strawberry, cream and vanilla (typically on the finish), yeast and nutty flavors are all common denominators in Sparkling wines and Champagnes. However, if there is more ripe tree fruit on the palate, then it is likely one of the New World sparkling wines, the more subtle creamy, yeast and nut-like flavors are more

common in Old World Champagne.

Where do the Bubbles Come from in Sparkling Wines?

The bubbles of sparkling wines are formed during a second fermentation process. For the second fermentation the winemaker takes still wine and adds a few grams of sugar and a few grams of yeast. This yeast and sugar convert to carbon dioxide (bubbles) and, of course alcohol. This conversion makes for millions of bubbles trapped in a very small space, sending the pressure soaring to about 80 psi in the typical bottle of sparkling wine. This second fermentation typically occurs in the actual bottle, but can also take place in the fermentation tank, it's up to the winemaker's preferred method.

How are Sparkling Wines Classified?

Sparkling wines and Champagnes are categorized as **Extra Brut, Brut** (pronounced "broot"), **Extra dry, Sec** and **Demi-sec** depending on their sugar levels. These classifications can be somewhat confusing, but keep in mind, that in wine terms "dry" is the opposite of "sweet."

Extra Brut - is "extra" dry

Brut – dry (most popular style and very food-friendly)

Extra dry – middle of the road dry, not as dry as Brut (great as an aperitif)

Demi-sec – pretty sweet (pair with fruit and dessert)

Champagne and sparkling wines are also categorized as "vintage" or "non-vintage" (NV on the label) meaning they either come from a single year or are a blend of several different years. The "vintage" Champagnes are typically pricier, as the non-vintage Champagne and sparkling wines make up the majority of the market.

Champagne/Sparkling Wine Suggestions Priced from \$10-30:

- Mumm Napa Brut \$24
- Segura Viudas \$12
- Freixenet \$12
- Korbel Champagne Brut
- Beringer Sparkling White Zinfandel \$10
- Jacob's Creek Sparkling Rosé \$12
- Chandon Extra Dry Riche \$12
- Blanquette de Limoux Cuvee Jean Philippe 2002 \$13
- Moscato d'Asti Bruno Ceretto \$16
- Billecart-Salmon Brut Réserve \$16
- Domaine Carneros Brut Carneros \$25
- Montaudon Brut NV \$30
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Champagne Suggestions Priced from \$30-50:

- Pol Roger
- Mumm Cuvee Napa Bubbly
- Moet & Chandon

- Pommery Champagne
- Laurent Perrier Champagne
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Champagne Suggestions Priced from \$50-100:

- Veuve Clicquot
- Laurent Perrier NV
- Bollinger Grande Annee
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Champagne Suggestions Priced from \$100+:

- Moet & Chandon, Dom Perignon
- Taittinger
- Krug
- Perrier-Jouet Bubbly