

## CRUASIA

## UNCORKED FLAVOURS

a monthly newsletter on WINE!



It's the season for

Bubbles

WELCOME to our newsletter for the festive season, where every moment sparkles with joy and celebration! As we approach Christmas and begin our countdown to the New Year, let's delve into the world of traditional method sparkling wines. These effervescent delights have long been synonymous with jubilation, making them the perfect companions for our holiday gatherings and cherished moments of merriment.

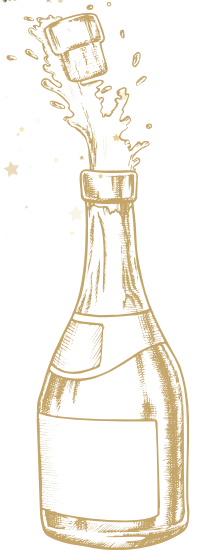


traditional  
method



WHAT is traditional method sparkling wine?

At the heart of these effervescent elixirs lies a centuries-old tradition, crafted with meticulous care and artistry. The traditional method, also known as the *méthode champenoise* or *méthode traditionnelle*, is a winemaking technique used to produce sparkling wine. This method is most famously employed in the Champagne region of France, but it is also used in other regions around the world to create high-quality sparkling wines.



So while Champagne holds an iconic position, a treasure trove of traditional method sparkling wines awaits discovery. Venture into the realms of Cava, the Spanish sparkler renowned for its affordability without compromising on taste. Travel to Italy's Lombardy region to savor the elegance of Franciacorta, a sparkling wine crafted with the same dedication as Champagne. And don't forget the various Crémants, each bearing the unique imprint of their French regions, offering a delightful alternative for your festive toasts.

## the making



*The magic begins with a base wine, followed by a secondary fermentation within the very bottle that graces your table.*

It's a labor-intensive process that infuses the wine with elegance and finesse, setting it apart from other sparkling varieties!

1. **Base Wine Production:** Once harvested, the grapes are gently pressed to extract the juice, which then undergoes primary fermentation to transform sugar into alcohol. The resulting still wine is then blended to create the base wine. This blend can include wines from different grape varieties and vintages to achieve the desired flavor profile.

2. **Bottling and Addition of Liqueur de Tirage:** The base wine is bottled, and a mixture of yeast, sugar, and still wine called the liqueur de tirage is added. This initiates the secondary fermentation within the bottle, producing carbon dioxide that becomes trapped, creating the characteristic bubbles.

3. **Aging on Lees:** The bottles are stored horizontally and aged on their lees (sediment consisting of dead yeast cells). This aging process, known as sur lie aging, imparts complexity, richness, and distinct autolytic flavors (such as brioche and nuttiness) to the wine.

4. **Riddling:** To remove the yeast sediment from the bottle, the bottles are gradually rotated and tilted in a process called riddling. Traditionally, this was done by hand, but modern methods mostly involve mechanical riddling. The sediment settles into the neck of the bottle.

5. **Disgorging:** The neck of the bottle containing the sediment is frozen, and the bottle cap is removed. The pressure in the bottle forces the frozen sediment plug out, leaving clear sparkling wine. The bottle is then topped up with a mixture of wine and sugar, known as the dosage, to achieve the desired sweetness level.

6. **Corking and Aging:** A cork is inserted into the bottle. Some higher quality wine is allowed to age further. Vintage Champagnes, for example, may spend several years in the cellar, developing complexity and finesse.

## the history

It dates back to ancient times when winemakers noticed that some bottles occasionally underwent a secondary fermentation, resulting in effervescence and bubbles. However, it was not until the 17th century in Champagne that the production of sparkling wine was deliberately pursued. Here's an overview of the key milestones in the history of creating sparkling wine:

**The BENEDICTINE MONKS:** in the 17th century, Benedictine monks in the Abbey of Hautvillers, notably Dom Pérignon, played a significant role in refining winemaking techniques. While often credited with "inventing" Champagne, Dom Pérignon's contributions were more focused on enhancing the quality of still wines by improving grape growing and blending techniques.

**Development of SECONDARY FERMENTATION:** the true innovation that led to the creation of sparkling Champagne came in the 17th century when winemakers in the Champagne region began to master the art of secondary fermentation. This process involved bottling the wine before the initial fermentation was complete, allowing carbon dioxide to be trapped in the bottle, resulting in effervescence.

**The Widow CLICQUOT:** in the 19th century, the Widow Clicquot (Barbe-Nicole Ponsardin) made significant contributions to the development of Champagne. She pioneered the riddling process (remuage) to remove sediment from the bottle, creating a clearer and more refined product. The House of Veuve Clicquot became one of the leading Champagne producers.

**GROWTH in the sparkling wine industry:** the 19th century saw the rapid growth of the Champagne industry, with the establishment of many prestigious Champagne houses, including Moët & Chandon, Pommery, and Louis Roederer. The beverage gained popularity among European royalty and aristocracy, becoming a symbol of luxury and celebration.

Traditional method sparkling wines often exhibit a more complex taste profile:

- **Acidity:** They tend to have a refreshing and vibrant acidity, a hallmark that helps in balancing the richness of the wine and contributes to their longevity.
- **Fruitiness:** A spectrum of fruit flavors can be present, from citrusy notes like lemon, lime, and grapefruit to orchard fruits like apple and pear.
- **Yeasty or Bready Notes:** Often associated with longer aging on lees (yeast), they can offer subtle to pronounced brioche, pastry, or freshly baked bread aromas, adding depth and complexity.
- **Minerality:** Influenced by the terroir and grape variety, these wines might exhibit mineral undertones, akin to chalkiness or flintiness, especially in wines from cooler climates.
- **Toastiness:** As a result of aging and fermentation in the bottle, some sparkling wines develop nuanced toasty or nutty characteristics, reminiscent of almonds or hazelnuts.
- **Creaminess:** Wines that have undergone extended aging on lees may present a creamy or silky texture on the palate, contributing to a luxurious mouthfeel.
- **Fine Bubbles:** The bubbles in traditional method sparkling wines are typically finer and more persistent, creating a lively effervescence that dances on the tongue.

FEATURING  
THIS  
MONTH



### CHAMPAGNE BOUCHÉ CUVÉE RÉSERVÉE BRUT

RM218

A very delicate classic champagne with brioche aromas. While it offers a fresh and lemony attack, the wine brings flavours of dried fruits and praline and a long and well-balanced finish in the mouth. GRAPE VARIETY: 40 % Chardonnay, 30 % Pinot Noir, 30 % Pinot Meunière



### SCHRETENBERG CUVÉE TROCKEN

RM215

A full fruit basket with hearty mousseux, fresh, playful & pleasant to drink. GRAPE VARIETY: Welschriesling, Grüner Veltliner



### LA MONTINA ROSÉ EXTRA BRUT FRANCIACORTA

RM230

It has soft and abundant sparkle; the wine is enhanced by marked hints of berries and ripe fruit. In the mouth it is full, mellow with good body. GRAPE VARIETY: 85% Pinot Nero, 15% Chardonnay

## UPCOMING at Christoph's

Champagne Dinner:  
A Sparkling Prelude to the  
Holidays  
6:30 pm, Dec 9th (sat)  
RM345 ++

## in next issue

Austrian Culture:  
Gemütlichkeit



christoph\_cruasia



+60 10 8010188



cruasia.com

Cru Asia  
UNCORK THE FLAVOURS  
EST. 2012

Christoph's  
— LIVING ROOM | RESTAURANT —