



# TORONTO VINTNERS CLUB Inc.

www.torontovintners.org



## "TASTING STARS" - VINTAGE CHAMPAGNE FOR VALENTINES

Tuesday, February 14, 2006 6:15 P.M.

The Ontario Club, 5th Floor, Commerce Court South  
(Northeast Corner of Bay & Wellington Streets)  
Toronto, Ontario Tel: (416) 862-1270

Upon his first sip of champagne, Dom Perignon reportedly said, "Come quickly! I am tasting stars!" There are more memorable quotes for champagne than any other wine. So don't remorse like John Maynard Keynes did: "My only regret in life is that I did not drink more Champagne." Celebrate Valentines Day at Toronto Vintners and sip some stars! We present eight gorgeous champagnes, seven of them vintage wines (see the Back Page for list of wines and tasting notes). This is an unbelievable opportunity to taste an array of high caliber Champagne in one sitting that most of us will never experience again.

There are a few excellent Champagne websites (<http://www.champagne.fr> and <http://www.champagnemagic.com/>) to help you learn more about this goddess of wines. And if you check the Toronto Vintners website, you'll be able to download a comprehensive tome called, "Tom Stevenson's Champagne and Sparking Guide". You'll learn of the terroir-chalky soil, severe weather to overcome in this region 90 miles N.E. of Paris, the ordeals of the vine which is in a region that gets just enough heat to ripen the grapes to the correct sugar and acidity levels before autumn arrives. Champagne owes part of its delight to its refreshing acidity. Too much heat would ruin that. The grapes used are Chardonnay for delicacy and elegance (26%), Pinot Meunier for roundness and bouquet (37%), Pinot Noir giving red berry fruit aroma, body and strength.

The Official Website for Champagne Wines (<http://www.champagne.fr>) introduces the four families of Champagne wines: *Those with body* - think of power, structure and intensity- usually made with a preponderance of the red wine grapes. Enjoy these for their scent of violets, spices, truffles, fresh butter, ripe wheat and biscuit pastry.

*Those with heart* - think of generosity, warmth and softness. Fresh, smooth and always well balanced. Dominated by the red Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier. Nose of red petals, honey, peaches, pears in cinnamon and gingerbread may come to mind.

*Those with spirit* - the key words here are light, vivacious and delicate. Wines with a preponderance of Chardonnay. We are reminded of fresh fruit, citrus and exotic fruit, mint and fresh almonds.

*Those with soul* - think of maturity, complexity and richness. The rarest vintages, special cuvees from exceptional years. The extremely fine bubbles, the gold, even amber like appearance inspires an almost religious awe in many.

An interesting bit of information on the labels. Look for the often almost invisible little letters and some numbers on the bottle. These are required by regulation and identify the bottler. The common ones are: NM - negociant-manipulant- champagne maker who buys in grapes. Bollinger is an NM, as would be the other great houses. RM - recoltant-manipulant - a grower who makes his own wine. Paul Bara Brut Reserve is an RM from Bouzy. CM - cooperative de manipulation - wine from a co-op. Beaumont des Crayeres is an example at our local LCBO.

**NOTE: 100 places. Membership must be renewed for 2006 to attend at members' rates. First come basis; members have preference; no telephone or e-mail reservations. Deadline for reservations/cancellations without penalty is February 10, 2006. To cancel, call 416-209-1442 or email [events@torontovintners.org](mailto:events@torontovintners.org). Cheques payable to Toronto Vintners Club.**

Names:		
Address (only for unaccompanied guests or for membership info change).		
Bus Tel:	Home Tel:	
Email:		
_____ Member's assessment	\$59.00 pp	\$
_____ Guest / non-member assessment	\$68.00 pp	\$
TOTAL		\$

**Feb./06  
Champagne**

**Mail to:**  
Toronto Vintners Club  
c/o S. Dorosh  
PO Box 1023  
TDC Postal Station  
77 King St. West,  
Toronto, ON  
M5K 1P2

I understand and accept my personal safety responsibilities when attending a Toronto Vintners Club event.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# THE BACK PAGE

## CHAMPAGNE NOTES

- 1. 1996 Gosset, Grande Millésimes, Brut** \$99  
Cool, youthful aromas of wet stone, cinnamon bread, lime, tangerine and menthol. Deep, chewy and rich, with bright acids throwing the spicy cinnamon toast and mineral flavors into sharp relief. Impressively oily, ripe and full, but still painfully young, with truly three-dimensional texture and superb thrust. This should evolve in bottle for years. Score - 93(+?). (Stephen Tanzer, International Wine Cellar, Nov./Dec. 2001)
- 2. 1995 Nicolas Feuillatte, Cuvée Spéciale, Brut** \$58  
Extremely rich and biscuity, backed by vivid acidity that keeps the red berry, citrus and wheat notes focused and persistent. Fine harmony and depth, with a firm yet long, cinnamon-tinged finish. Drink now through 2008. Score - 92. (Bruce Sanderson, [www.winespectator.com](http://www.winespectator.com), Nov. 30, 2003)
- 3. 1995 Henriot, Brut** \$69  
Delicious. Full, rich and exuding toasted brioche, vanilla and honey notes, this suave Champagne feels like velvet, ending with a lingering aftertaste of coffee. Drink now through 2005. Score - 92. (Bruce Sanderson, [www.winespectator.com](http://www.winespectator.com), Dec. 15, 2002)
- 4. 1996 Laurent-Perrier, Brut** \$65  
Pale color. Concentrated, somewhat exotic nose offers strong soil tones: minerals, flint, oyster liquor and mint. Then brisk and creamy in the mouth, with the strong acids of the vintage giving the concentrated lemon, mineral and spice flavors terrific penetration. Quite incisive but not hard or lean. Finishes long, lemony and brisk. Score - 91. (Stephen Tanzer, International Wine Cellar, Nov./Dec. 2004)
- 5. 1998 Pierre Peters, Cuvée Spéciale, Grand Cru** \$76  
"Also tasted a 1998 Pierre Peters Cuvée Spéciale Blanc de Blancs...and was very impressed. Don't know anything about the producer, but this was an impeccable Champagne with loads of character."  
-Recent post by **Robert Parker** on Mark Squires Bulletin Board.  
Richard Juhlin considers Pierre Peters the best grower in Mesnil after Salon. And he's about a quarter the cost or so!  
Terry Thiese wrote the following: "This wine hails from a single parcel in Mesnil called Chétilions. The vines are 72 years old. It is consistently in the pantheon of the greatest Blanc de Blancs. Side-by-side at the same age it's as good as Clos du Mesnil at about 25% of the price; the '98 has an amazing fragrance, like an eau-de-cologne of sandalwood; I mean even the damn nose has grip. Cloves, leather; the palate is less White-Burgundy than the '97, more pure Champagne; the length has length! It has some young sinew to outgrow but will age superbly. A nearly minty spice. Potential masterpiece. A year later and there's substantially more middle now, but this vintage isn't precocious as were '97 and '95, but rather encased, as were '91, '94 and '96. There's a coiled steely intensity, a roasted-salt minerality and a determination not to show its cards till it's ready. In fact it's less open than it was a year ago."
- 6. 1998 Pol Roger Rose, Extra Cuvée de Reservé** \$80  
Pol Roger is one of the few Champagne houses that go to the trouble of making a separate red wine before blending it with the white wine prior to secondary fermentation in bottle. Most houses make their rosé sparklers using a short maceration of red grapes and then bleed off the liquid (often referred to as saignée)  
Vivid medium pink color raspberry, strawberry preserves and a subtle blood orange quality on the nose, along with fresh bay and earthy sassafras. A medium-bodied rose with nicely concentrated red berry, cherry and Asian spice flavors. Finishes silky and long, with the raspberry tone joined by a note of sweet cocoa. Really suave, sexy and lush Champagne, showing both power and balance. Score - 92. (Josh Reynolds, International Wine Cellar, Nov./Dec. 2005)
- 7. 1997 Bollinger, La Grande Année** \$130  
Light gold color. Deep, rich and toasty on the nose, with suggestions of earthy truffle, cocoa and candied apple. This is really classic Bollinger in style. Rich, broad and thick, with weighty poached pear and buttered toast flavors that linger on the finish with real authority. Fans of the house style will adore this. Score - 92. (Josh Reynolds, International Wine Cellar, Nov./Dec. 2005)  
Fine depth and complexity in both aromas and flavors. Citrus, ginger, vanilla, wholegrain bread and nut elements combine for a harmonious presentation. Full-bodied, yet sophisticated and lively. A long, luxurious finish. Drink now through 2015. Score - 93. (Bruce Sanderson, [www.winespectator.com](http://www.winespectator.com))
- 8. NV Louis Roederer, Premier, Brut** \$57  
A memorable, full-bodied brut with assertive, complex flavors and a lingering finish. Aromas of fresh bread and toasted walnut are backed up by crisp, full-bore fruit flavors. Score - 91. (Bruce Sanderson, [www.winespectator.com](http://www.winespectator.com))

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## Toronto Vintners' Upcoming Events:

April 11 - 1997 Barbaresco or Barolo  
May 9 - 2002 Cal/Aussie/Ontario Chardonnay  
June 13 - 1996 Bordeaux

## Other Events

Feb. 8: BRAVO ESPAÑA! Discover the wines from Spain with Vintages. Arcadian Court, Simpson Tower, Toronto. \$65 pp. For tickets, call 416-365-5767. <http://www.vintages.com/events.html> - [spanishwinestasting](http://spanishwinestasting.com)  
Feb. 19-21 The Canadian/International Food & Beverage Show (International Centre, 6900 Airport Road, Mississauga; Featuring 670 booths showcasing food and beverage products for the hospitality industry). Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association, 416/923-8416, [www.crfca.ca](http://www.crfca.ca)  
Mar. 3 - 5 Canadian Women's Expo (International Centre, 6900 Airport Road, Mississauga; Featuring 300+ exhibitors, including a wine, spirit and beer pavilion) -- 416/781-0909, 1-800/787-9328, [www.canadianwomensexpo.com](http://www.canadianwomensexpo.com)  
March 7: South African Wine Tasting (Trade and Consumer elements; Toronto; Hart House, 7 Hart House Circle, Toronto) -- Laurel Keenan, Wines of South Africa, 416/698-8112, [keenan@propellerpr.com](mailto:keenan@propellerpr.com)

*"I drink it when I am happy and when I am sad. Sometimes I drink when I'm alone. When I have company I consider it obligatory. I trifle with it when I'm not hungry and drink it when I am. Otherwise I never touch it - unless I'm thirsty."*

*Madame Jacques Bollinger - Daily Mail October, 1961*