



## ***Grand Marque and Grower Producer Champagne Contrasting the Two Faces of Champagne***

**A Special Event Co-Hosted by The Toronto Vintners Club and Winetasters of Toronto**



Wednesday, September 20, 2023  
Registration 6:30 PM, Tasting 6:45 PM  
St. Paul's Anglican Church  
227 Bloor Street East  
**Members' Fee: \$145;**  
**Guests'/Non-Members' Fee: \$195**  
(includes HST)

For most of history, champagne had a single face. If it wasn't for household names such as Moët, Bollinger, Laurent Perrier, and a dozen or so more houses, champagne as we know it would not exist. The great houses, or grand marques, of this magical wine region, created a global brand of quality. Practically everyone associates champagne with times of joy and celebration. This is the face of champagne that everyone knows and loves.

Perhaps without realizing it, the grand marque houses also laid a foundation for another face of champagne to flourish. The grower-producer (or *récoltant-manipulant*) movement began in earnest in the 1970s. These producers typically share a common story. Their families historically grew grapes that were sold to the grand marques and a new generation decided to make changes; they wanted to make their own wines that exhibited their vigneron philosophy and terroir. The wine-making philosophy of Burgundy and Spain influenced their thinking and they began making and marketing their own wines. The early years were difficult, but these artisan producers persevered and their efforts were rewarded. Their wines, showcasing a new style, tapped into the rich market created by the grand marques.

It took decades for champagne's second face to develop and eventually thrive. While their market share is tiny, their influence is enormous. The grower-producers inspired and refreshed wine-making in the region. Grand marque houses took notice and the outcome of this attention is increased quality and diversity across the board. For wine lovers, no other time in history has produced more interesting champagnes. Choice and quality have never been greater or more exciting.

**Toronto Vintners Club** and **Winetasters of Toronto** have joined forces to provide members and their guests with an event at **St. Paul's Anglican Church** (near the Bloor/Yonge Subway) that demonstrates the merits of these two important faces of champagne. Come and experience a fun and educational evening exploring champagne styles that appeal to you.

Your evening will include a selection of hors d'oeuvres to pair with 11 exquisite champagnes. Member price is \$145, including HST. Guest price is \$195. Our value proposal includes about 500 ML of wine at our acquisition cost plus food, service and event space. By contrast, a similar event at a Toronto restaurant would charge at least \$260 for the wine alone.

**REGISTER/BUY TICKETS** online at [Champagne September 20, 2023](#) and pay by e-transfer, credit card (via PayPal) or cheque. E-transfers and PayPal payments must be made **within 48 hours** to secure your booking. Cheques must be received by Wednesday, September 13. Email confirmations are sent automatically by our registration system, **Jotform**. Please check your Junk/Spam email folder, in case it was sent there. If you have not received a confirmation please contact [Winetastings@torontovintners.org](mailto:Winetastings@torontovintners.org) before trying to register again.



## Reception Wine

### **Vilmart et Cie Grande Réserve 1er Cru Champagne**

In this bright and harmonious champagne, the fine and energetic streams of bubbles effortlessly carry flavors that range from crisp Asian pear and tangerine to slivered almonds lifted with a hint of chopped ginger and elderflower. Long and creamy finish. Disgorged October 2019. Drink now: 2025. Score - 92 (*Alison Napjus, winespectator.com, Oct. 15, 2021*) \$74

## Blanc de Blancs Comparison

### **Charles Heidsieck Blanc de Blancs**

Inaugurated in May 2018, this new cuvée is inspired by the first blanc de blancs produced by the house in 1947, long before the style was in vogue. Made mainly from the 2012 vintage, with 20% reserve wine dating from 2005, this wine is not a reduced version of the Blanc des Millénaires, but rather an aperitif-style cuvée. A fresh, pure and elegant wine with aromas of white-fleshed peach and grapefruit embellished with a few floral notes. The deliciously saline palate is supported by acidity that blends throughout, leaving a chalky, creamy feel on the finish. Drinking period: 2020 to 2023. Score - 94. (*Christelle Guibert*) (*Although the bottle we will be tasting from is not from the same lot as above, the wine will be similar in quality and style.*) \$82, regularly \$100

### **Diebolt-Valois Brut Blanc de Blancs**

The Diebolt and Vallois families have serious history in the Côte des Blancs. The Vallois family has been growing vines in Cuis since the 15th century; the grandfather of current proprietor Jacques Diebolt began making estate bottled champagne at the beginning of the 20th century. Champagne Diebolt-Vallois was created in 1960, when Jacques married Nadia Vallois and merged the estate. This Blanc de Blancs blends Cramant, Chouilly, and Le Mesnil sur Oger, all fermented in stainless, then moved to large oak foudres until final cepage is determined. The reserve wines were also kept in large oak foudres. The wine spent three years on lees prior to disgorgement with 9 g/l. Ample patisserie, nougat, green apple, lemon are held in by a brace of citrus acidity that circles the growing expansive middle, finishing with a riffing citrus pith that lingers long and filagreeed. This has a fine touch that reels the density in deftly, allowing for a highly drinkable rich champagne. (*Vendor website*) \$102

## Traditional Blend Comparison #1

### **Laurent Perrier La Cuvée Brut Champagne**

A pale gold robe. Very fine bubbles feed a very persistent bead of foam. A delicate nose with aromas of fresh citrus fruits and white flowers. The complexity of the wine is expressed in successive notes such as vine peach and white fruits. A perfect balance between freshness and finesse with very present fruity flavors at the end of the tasting. (*Producer's website*) \$76

### **Bereche et Fils Brut Réserve**

The Bêrèche wines are firm in structure with ample body. They are amongst the most sought after and coveted growers, rightfully considered to be one of the elite producers in Champagne. The Brut Réserve is equal parts Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Meunier. The wine displays lots of stone fruit, orange citrus and a strong stony minerality. Elegant, powerful and balanced, this is a stunning Champagne. (*Vendor website*) \$128

## Traditional Blend Comparison #2

### **Moët & Chandon Brut Imperial**

Pale straw in colour with a fine mousse; defined aromas of roasted nuts, rye bread toast and grapefruit; the palate is extra-dry with just-shy-of-medium body and lovely replay of flavours from the nose with a mineral note on a clean finish. (*LCBO website*) \$81

### **Marc Hebrart Mes Favorites Vieilles Vignes Brut**

This is a new cuvée for Hébrart that is well worth seeking out, derived from superior, south-facing sites in Mareuil-sur-Ay that also inform his Special Club bottling. The inaugural released, based on the 2014 vintage, is showing very well, wafting from the glass with aromas of apples, pears, tangerine, white flowers, spice and pastry cream. On the palate, it is medium to full-bodied, concentrated and nicely structured, with good cut and dry extract, as well as all the charm that defines the house style. 93 Points (*Robert Parker's Wine Advocate*) \$80



## Rosé Comparison

### **Pommery Rosé**

This prestigious Brut Rosé is overflowing with strawberry and raspberry fruit aromas and an elegant brioche note. Flattering, with raspberry fruit on the palate, exhibiting plenty of finesse and a very long finish. Excellent choice with hors d'oeuvres, shellfish, or with berry desserts. Score - 95 *Decanter* \$80

### **R.H. Coutier Grand Cru Brut Rosé Champagne**

This is a blend of 85% Chardonnay and 15% Pinot Noir. 60% comes from the 2016 vintage with 40% from a reserve. It was finished with a dosage of 7 grams per liter. The nose shows cream and a bit of strawberry with a light citrus lift. The palate is moderate in weight for a rosé with flavors of cream, strawberries and a blood orange lift on the finish. (*Vendor website*) \$110 (Estimate)

## Pinot Noir Dominant Comparison

### **Bollinger Special Cuvée Brut Champagne**

A graceful Champagne, with flavors of black cherry, Asian pear, toast point and salted almond dancing across the palate. Bright and buoyant, with a fine, lacy mousse and delicate notes of lime blossom, ground coffee and exotic spices playing on the finish. Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Pinot Meunier. Drink now. Highly Recommended. Score - 93. (*Alison Napjus, winespectator.com, Nov. 30, 2022*) \$91

### **Savart Overture Champagne**

Disgorged in October 2018 with 4.5 grams per liter dosage the latest rendition of Savart's NV Brut Premier Cru L'Ouverture is a blend of the 2014 2015 and 2016 vintages produced entirely from Pinot Noir, some 30% of which is purchased as grapes. Offering up a classy bouquet of minty yellow orchard fruit, white flowers fresh peach and warm pastry it is medium to full-bodied fine-boned and elegant with a pinpoint mousse ripe but racy acids and a long finish. Pristinely balanced its understated delicacy is typical both of the site and Savart's style. Fred Savart's Champagnes from Pinot Noir and Chardonnay grown in the villages of Écueil and Villers-aux-Noeuds have rapidly become some of the most sought after, and thanks to their production, hard to find wines in the region. His vins clairs ferment in tanks barrels and demi-muids spending some ten months sur lies with or without malolactic fermentation before triage under natural cork with neither filtration fining nor sulfites. Dosage is minimal. These are delicate incisive and quietly intense: contemplative Champagnes that reward attention though they are dangerously drinkable too. While it is hardly necessary to fan the flames of already insatiable worldwide demand all these releases come warmly recommended. (*Wine Advocate: 93 Points*) \$149