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A Champagne For Every Occasion



It's not just bubbles. Think style.

Do you want an apéritif Champagne? A Champagne to go with cheese? Or maybe a bottle to go with that plate of seafood? There's a nonvintage Champagne for every occasion. But each producer has its style, and each style has its ideal place. Here's my personal arrangement of major nonvintages by style.

Light-bodied Champagnes

These nonvintages are ideal as an apéritif, or with the very lightest of food, such as chips or nuts.

Ayala Brut Majeur. Despite the dominance of Pinot Noir, the style is light, elegant.

Deutz Brut Classic. Deutz cultivates a quality that is fine, elegant, never overstated.

Nicolas Feuillatte Blue Label Brut. Fresh and easy, this is the Champagne for fruit lovers.

Laurent-Perrier L.P. Brut. Chardonnay forms half the blend, and this gives both lightness and minerality.

Perrier-Jouët Grand Brut. Light bodied, balanced and elegant.

Piper-Heidsieck Brut. Classic apéritif; fresh, fruity, light, edging towards sweetness.

Pommery Brut Royale. Light, delicate style, a great end-of-the-working-day wine.

Ruinart Brut. Ruinart's style is Chardonnay, round and soft, crafted to age with elegance.

Medium-bodied Champagnes

Nonvintages that work as an apéritif, but can also be enjoyed throughout the meal, with seafood and light fish or other lightly flavored foods.

Billecart-Salmon Réserve Brut. Full and bone dry, with a wonderful tension between richness and elegance.

Delamotte Brut. An elegant style, but with an element of richness.

Duval-Leroy Brut. Delicious, clean, fruity style that is easy to understand and drink.

Gosset Excellence Brut. A rich yeasty style, a wine-like style of Champagne.

Joseph Perrier Cuvée Royale. Lively, lemony wine, creamy and soft.

Jacquesson Cuvée 733. The house style is full in the mouth, but with intense grace and poise.

Moët & Chandon Brut Impérial. It may not be complicated but the full, ripe ease of this wine is always impressive.

Mumm Cordon Rouge. From a nadir 15 years ago, Mumm is now an open, fruity wine, often good value.

Pol Roger Extra Cuvée de Réserve Brut. A fine, creamy wine, reveling in the fine stocks of reserve wine used in the blend.

Taittinger La Française Brut. A sweeter style of Brut; fruity, as much wine as Champagne.

Full-bodied Champagnes

These are the big guns, the ones that work so well with food, from fish to cold meat to cheese.

Bollinger Special Cuvée. Wood aging and a high proportion of reserve wines give this Champagne its richness and power.

Charles Heidsieck Brut Réserve. Dominated by Chardonnay, and with density and weight.

Henriot Souverain Brut. A Champagne with maturity and richness, both from bottle aging and reserve wines.

Krug Grande Cuvée. A mature, rich style, benefiting from wood aging and 40% of reserve wines.

Lanson Black Label Brut. This does not undergo malolactic fermentation, so the wine displays an extra burst of acidity on top of the already rich Pinot Noir.

Louis Roederer Brut Premier. Full-bodied and rich, profiting from a superb panoply of reserve wines.

Philipponnat Royale Réserve Brut A real wine-like Champagne, a style that is opulent and weighty.

Thienot Brut NV. Lively, but full-bodied, a finely structured style.