



Stephen Tanzer's
INTERNATIONAL WINE CELLAR

November-December 2009

NV Ayala Zero Dosage Brut Nature

90

(\$45; L0906A0B01; disgorged October, 2008) Light yellow with a strong bead. An expansive, highly perfumed bouquet displays lemon zest, orange and green apple, plus a subtle undertone of fresh bread. Gently sweet on entry, then nervy and taut in the middle palate, offering pure citrus flavors and a hint of succulent herbs. Nicely precise Champagne with strong finishing cut and spicy persistence.

1999 Ayala Brut Vintage

89

(\$65) Vivid yellow with tiny bubbles. Gently smoky aromas of yellow apple, pear and white peach, with complicating notes of sweet butter and lemon zest. A spicy, energetic midweight that plays deep orchard fruit flavors off nervier citrus and mineral qualities. Finishes with good cut and a slow-building candied nut element. (Cognac One, New York, NY)

2000 Ayala Blanc de Blancs Vintage

88

(\$70) Bright gold with a frothy mousse. Gently toasty citrus and pear aromas are deepened by notes of nougat and floral honey. Pliant, subtly spicy lemon and poached pear flavors are firmed by a note of talc and turn faintly bitter on the back end. Finishes on a tangy, dry mineral note, with strong citric snap. Very well focused but slightly austere today. Will a few years of bottle aging allow it to unwind and flesh out?

NV Ayala Brut Majeur

88

(\$60; L083A1B01; disgorged April, 2008) Bright yellow-gold. Pungent aromas of baked apple, pear skin, toasted nuts and brown spices. Rich and fleshy, offering palate-coating orchard fruit flavors and notes of allspice, herbs and toasty lees. Nicely blends sweetness and spiciness but finishes a bit abruptly, with an echo of dusty minerals.

NV Ayala Rose Majeur

87

(\$60; L0813A4B01; disgorged January, 2008) Light peach skin-tinged pink. Musky aromas of cherry, berry skin and lees, with a hint of tarragon. Chewy, slightly bitter red fruit flavors are underscored by notes of pepper and herbs, with a hint of heat on the back end. Packs solid punch and finishes with good grip, but I find this a tad rustic for a higher score. (Cognac One, New York, NY)