

Let's *Wine*  
About it



WINE & CHEESE PARTY

Looking to entertain in a casual, laid-back style this winter? Consider a wine-and-cheese party. No prior wine- or cheese-buying experience is necessary.

When selecting cheeses, remember that soft ones tend to be either mild or tart, while hard cheeses are often salty and more assertive in flavor. Use this guide when selecting wines. Young, fresh, and creamy cheeses are best with light, acidic whites. Apply the same thought to most aged, full-bodied cheeses and red wine.

Tips:

Red Wine

Cabernet Sauvignon - sharp Cheddar, Swiss, Asiago, aged dry Jack

Merlot - sharp Cheddar, Monterey Jack, Gouda

White Wine

Chardonnay - mild Cheddar, smoked Mozzarella

Sauvignon Blanc - blue (Gorgonzola and Roquefort), goat, Comte, Gruyère

Riesling - Brie, Camembert, Gruyère

Champagne or sparkling wine - Brie, Camembert, Fontina

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

In order to better serve our members, we need to receive any new info and changes regarding your status (i.e., change of address, new credit card number, etc.) by the 20th of each month.

PLEASE NOTIFY US BY PHONE (888) 646-5446, Ext. 13.  
OR EMAIL club@tastemonterey.com

Any information received after the 20th of each month will not take effect until the following month. Change of address updates, for the upcoming shipment, called in after the 20th, may be subject to a special handling fee.

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Mix & Match

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PRIVATE RESERVE CLUB	PRICES EXPIRE 02/28/2025	REGULAR PRICE*	12-BOTTLE DISCOUNT PRICE*	6-BOTTLE DISCOUNT PRICE*
Scratch 2020 KW Ranch Pinot Noir		\$55.00	\$41.25	\$44.00
Shale Canyon 2019 Tempranillo		\$36.00	\$27.00	\$28.80
Folktale NV Sparkling Rose'		\$42.00	\$31.50	\$33.60
DECEMBER SELECTIONS	PRICES EXPIRE 2/28/2025			
Pierce Ranch Vineyards 2019 Mal/Zin		\$30.00	\$22.50	\$24.00
Sofia NV Sofia Sparkling		\$21.00	\$15.75	\$16.80
Shale Canyon 2019 Merlot		\$30.00	\$22.50	\$24.00
Folktale Rose' 2023 Folktale Rose'		\$32.00	\$24.00	\$25.60
NOVEMBER SELECTIONS	PRICES EXPIRE 1/31/2025			
Wrath 2022 EX Pinot Noir		\$29.00	\$21.75	\$23.20
Joyce 2023 Submarine Canyon Chardonnay		\$25.00	\$18.75	\$20.00
Joyce 2021 GSM		\$25.00	\$18.75	\$20.00
Wrath 2023 EX Sauvignon Blanc		\$19.00	\$14.25	\$15.20
OCTOBER SELECTIONS	PRICES EXPIRE 12/31/2024			
Paysan 2022 San Antonio Valley Petite Sirah		\$25.00	\$18.75	\$20.00
Le Mistral 2020 Arroyo Seco Chardonnay		\$30.00	\$22.50	\$24.00
Metz Road 2021 Pinot Noir		\$36.00	\$27.00	\$28.80
Paysan 2023 Arroyo Seco Sauvignon Blanc		\$25.00	\$18.75	\$20.00

TO ORDER, CALL TOLL-FREE: 888-646-5446  
\*PRICES LISTED REFLECT PRICE PER BOTTLE. NO OTHER DISCOUNTS APPLY.

# TASTING MONTEREY

A WINE ENTHUSIAST'S MONTHLY JOURNEY THROUGH MONTEREY'S WINE COUNTRY



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## ALL ABOUT THE Bubbles

There just seems to be something special about wine with bubbles in it. Be it at a wedding, Christmas or on New Year's Eve - opening a bottle of sparkling wine marks a special occasion. Those effervescent bubbles seem to have a way of bringing out smiles, and its reputation of making one "giddy" far quicker than expected is well known (and memories of following day head-aches solidify the tender remembrances).

Perhaps we should begin by defining a few things. First off, a bottle of sparkling wine can technically only be called "champagne" if it is grown and produced in the Champagne region of France, similar to brandy from Cognac or port from Portugal. Therefore, when discussing "the bubbly", we should stick with referring to it as sparkling wine on a generalized basis (this is also a public safety announcement as French regulatory agents take this matter *extremely* seriously). Secondly, a sparkling wine is defined as a wine with significant levels of carbon dioxide within it, which provides the bubbles.

It does make one wonder though how anyone ever perceived that bubbles in wine would be a good thing...I mean can you imagine having your glass of Cabernet Sauvignon fizzing with bubbles? No, no you cannot, which is exactly what people thought centuries ago when they noticed that occasionally their wine bottles had carbonation in them.



You likely recognize the name Dom Perignon and associate him with champagne/sparkling wine. In fact, the Dom Perignon champagne label may arguably be more recognized than any other wine bottle on the planet. And although it is appropriate for Monsieur Perignon to receive credit for promoting quality sparkling wine, he by no means invented the process; his discovery of the positive attributes of carbonation in wine was actually accidental. Perignon was tasked originally with figuring out how to rid the situation from certain bottles occasionally having bubbles in them!

Now, let's get into the vineyards. It may not be surprising that the most common varietal for white sparkling wine production is Chardonnay, but it may be that the second is most likely Pinot Noir. Grapes used for sparkling wine production tend to be best when sourced from cooler growing climates, which explains why the Champagne region, far in the northeast of France, is the ancestral home of sparkling wines (and this is also why our own Monterey County produces some fantastic sparklers as well!).

Sparkling wine grapes are harvested early in order to capture high acidity levels and to avoid high sugar levels; avoiding tannins is another goal. To deter this as much as possible, extra care is taken during the harvest to avoid splitting of the berries, and

*Continued Inside*



## Reserve Wine Selections

### SCRATCH - 2020 Scratch KW Ranch Pinot Noir



**Winemaker:** Scratch is a project of Winemaker Sabrine Rodems producing small-lot Chardonnay Sparkling, Riesling, Grenache, Pinot Noir and Cabernet from Monterey, Arroyo Seco, Santa Lucia Highlands and Santa Cruz Mountains AVA's. Sabrine received her Bachelor's degree from UCLA in Theatre, Film and Television and worked in the film and theatre industry for many years before deciding to go back to school to earn her Master's of Science in Viticulture and Enology from UC Davis. For the past twenty years Sabrine has been making highly acclaimed wines from some of the best vineyards in California.

**Vineyard:** Kirk Williams (KW) is the owner and farmer of KW Ranch. Kirk farms Pinot Noir and Syrah in this 40 acre vineyard below his lemons with the beautiful Santa Lucia Highlands rising up behind. The quality of the Pinot Noir that Scratch sources from Kirk makes some of the most complex Pinot Noirs off the bench.

**Tasting Notes:** Dark raspberry and cherry aromas are spiced by cola and geranium in the complex nose of this single-vineyard expression. Hearty flavors of roasted plum, light oak and sharp spices sit atop lively acidity and a complex structure on the palate.

**Scratch**  
2020  
KW Ranch Pinot Noir  
**Alcohol**  
14.5%  
**AVA**  
Santa Lucia Highlands  
**Composition**  
100% Pinot Noir  
**Aging Potential**  
6-7 years

### SHALE CANYON - 2019 Tempranillo



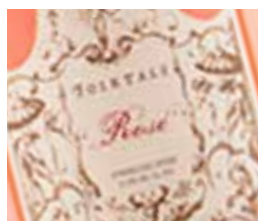
**Winery:** Shale Canyon Wines started vinting small lots of hand crafted varietals in 2008. When they started, their main focus was on 100% varietal wines such as Chardonnay, Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Petite Sirah and Zinfandel. Their estate fruit is hand harvested and fermented in small batches. Their winery is a 100% "Off Grid" solar powered facility. They use well water for their water supply and a backup propane generator for those overcast days that they need to run the equipment.

**Winemaking:** Current production is about 1000+ cases per year with their main focus on producing wines that have outstanding nose, mouth feel and finish. For the Estate wines they are currently growing Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Zinfandel, Tempranillo, Petite Sirah and Mourvèdre. They source fruit from larger, well established vineyards whose farming practices are exemplary in the industry and whose fruit is second to none. The varietals include Syrah, Malbec, Chardonnay and Petite Sirah. They enjoy making classic and unique blends as well. Quality is their main goal. Quantity is always secondary.

**Tasting Notes:** The 2019 Tempranillo is a classic bold Tempranillo with dark berry fruit on the nose. The middle is graced with blackberry, cherry and fig. The finish is long with vanilla, leather and medium firm structured tannins. 100% Tempranillo. Only 112 cases produced.

**Shale Canyon**  
2019  
Tempranillo  
**Alcohol**  
14.0%  
**AVA**  
Arroyo Seco  
**Composition**  
100% Tempranillo  
**Aging Potential**  
7-9 years

### FOLKTALE - N/V Sparkling Rose'



**Winery:** In 2015, a band of artists, crafts people, and lovers of life brought their wandering imaginations and lofty aspirations to a magical piece of land in Carmel, California. Out in the sunny valley, they cultivated grapevines and gardens to craft beautiful wines and experiences to delight the senses. They named this place Folk Tale Winery & Vineyards. Folk Tale was inspired by the idea that in every great bottle of wine, there is a story. It is filled with the uniqueness of place, a year of sun and rain, and the art and craft of winemaking. The story is about their people, their guests, and their passion. This is a love story, and the

best love stories never end.

**Wines:** Folk Tale sparkling wine begins in the vineyard, early. The Pinot Noir and Chardonnay grapes for their sparkling Rosé have to be picked at a lower sugar level than for their still wines, so they tend to harvest three weeks before they begin picking fruit for their still wines. For their first bottling of sparkling wine, they envisioned a wine that was bright, fun to drink, and food friendly. After the wine finished its primary fermentation, they put the blend together in a stainless steel tank and kicked off the secondary fermentation in tank, allowing the wine to gain its effervescence before bottling. They targeted a softer, less aggressive style that was more like the texture of a prosecco or frizzante wine – perfect for a sunny day in Carmel Valley.

**Tasting Notes:** Joyous and carefree with aromas and flavors of watermelon, kiwi and yeasty notes with a mouthfeel of a soft prosecco-like texture.

**Folk Tale**  
N/V  
Sparkling Rose'  
**Alcohol**  
11.9%  
**AVA**  
Monterey  
**Composition**  
80% Pinot Noir,  
20% Chardonnay  
**Aging Potential**  
4-5 years

### Cover Article Continued

grapes destined for sparkling wine production are pressed as soon as possible.

Moving on, let's venture into the winemaking process. White wine grapes are the most popular for use in making sparkling wines, and it is even possible for winemakers to make varietal sparklers, such as *blanc de blancs* (white of whites), which is 100% Chardonnay. However, the vast majority of sparkling wines produced are blends of several varietals, vineyards, and vintages - this is why it is not uncommon at all to see non-vintage sparkling wines.

Red wine grapes can be used for white sparkling production (as the juice is initially clear without prolonged exposure to grape skins), and these sparklers are known as *blanc de noirs* (white of blacks). *Rosé* sparkling wines are quite popular, especially in Spain and Portugal. Although rare, there are also red sparklers.

For all sparkling wines, primary fermentation occurs in the winemaking process, just as it does with still wine production. The alteration in the process that distinguishes sparkling production occurs with the introduction of a secondary fermentation (which can occur naturally on its own, explaining why Perignon began experimenting). This secondary fermentation is conducted in various methods explained below, but a by-product is the creation of carbon dioxide captured in the wine. Estimates of the amount of bubbles one bottle of sparkling can produce ranges from 50 to 250 million...that's a lot of bubbles!

As for the different methods to encourage the secondary fermentation, the most well known is the *méthode champenoise*, sometimes referred to as the "traditional" method. In this method, a base blend wine (*cuvée*) is bottled with sugar and yeast, with the sugar providing a food source for the yeast, eventually releasing carbon dioxide into the wine. The dead yeast cells (called "lees") are removed from the wine and *voilà!*

Another method used to produce sparkling wines is the *method charmant*. This method uses stainless steel tanks that are pressurized, which stimulates the process of the yeast and sugar interaction, and then the wine is bottled (i.e. basically it's a faster process than the previously described method). The last method used is carbon injection, which doesn't involve a secondary fermentation process, and instead consists of injecting carbon dioxide gas directly into the wine.

*Brut* or *Doux*: how sweet do you like your sparkling wines? The amount of sugar introduced for the secondary fermentation process will ultimately determine the level of sweetness in a sparkling wine. *Brut Natural* is the driest, although fairly limited in production. *Extra Brut* is the more common driest style of sparkling wine you will encounter, followed by *Brut*, which is arguably the most popular of all styles. *Extra Dry* (also called Extra Sec) is slightly less dry than *Brut*, followed by *Sec*. The two sweetest styles of sparkling wine are *Demi-Sec* and then *Doux*.

Sweet or dry in style, sparkling wines are produced around the world. California and France are major producers; the Aussies have a Shiraz sparkler; the Spanish produce *Cava*; the Portuguese have *Espumante*; the Germans have *Sekt*; the South Africans produce *Cap Classique*; and the Italians have various versions, with their generic term for sparkling wine being *Spumante*.

So, there you have a brief overview of this intriguing style of wine, and we hope that you will savor your glasses of *bubbly* this holiday season. One last point is that although it may be fun to open a bottle of sparkling wine by "popping" the cork out and projecting a burst of fizz...keep in mind that by doing this you are doing your bottle a great disservice. Not only are you wasting wine (nothing less than a crime on its own), but you'll be releasing so much carbon dioxide that you will not be able to fully appreciate the bubbling in your glass!

**Bryce Ternet** - is a contributing editor and is the author of: "The Stevenson Plan, A Novel of the Monterey Peninsula"



## Entertain with Wine



### MULLED WINE

Hands up if you love entertaining in winter? There's just something about a toasty warm house filled with laughter, full-bodied wine and comfort food that is good for the soul. If you've been dreaming of the ultimate winter evening with your favorite people, read on because we've got you covered.

One of our favorite things about entertaining in winter is hands-down the re-introduction of mulled wine. When done well, there is truly nothing better. There's an art to making the perfect mulled wine and we think, after many years and too many sips, we've finally perfected it.

#### All you need is:

- 1 bottle of merlot
- 1 orange
- 6 cloves
- 1 cinnamon stick
- ¼ cup of caster sugar
- 1 small nutmeg (whole)
- A splash (or two!) of Brandy
- 1 cup of water

#### It's super easy to make too!

Simply, add the water to a medium sized pot on high heat. Add the cloves, cinnamon stick and caster sugar. Let it come to a boil and grate the nutmeg into the mix.

Zest the orange and add the zest to the pot. Slice the orange and add those in too.

Let that simmer for 5 minutes.

Reduce the heat and add the whole bottle of Merlot and the Brandy.