

PREVIEWS

JUNE, 1986

How Nice Is the Mousse

producers, more than 50 wineries in California are producing champagne (sparkling wines) made by the renowned and original "methode champagnoise." And the fact that other prestigious French, Italian and Spanish champagne producers have planned and/or have already started sparkling wine production here in the U.S., simply adds to the wonderful mix of champagnes and sparkling wines available for our delectation. "What hath Dom Perignon wrought?"; to paraphrase A.G. Bell.

Although other methods have evolved in the production of Dom Perignon's magic bubbles in wine, for the present, concern ourselves only with the Dom's original methode champagnoise.

The wine press has been treated to some wonderful tastings of the bubbly. All those sampled, thus far, are two exceptions, have been California produced. One notable exception is the Martini and Rossi Asti Spumante. The other was an excellent sparkling wine produced in Lombardy (Franciacorta appellation) labeled "Ca' del Bosco" ("House in the Forest"). It is important to note that Ca' del Bosco Winery uses methode champagnoise. The sparkling wines of Lombardy, with specific mention of Franciacorta and Oltrepa Pavese, are excellent. Principal grapes used: Pinot Bianco, Pinot Grigio and Pinot Nero. There are also wineries now using Chardonnay grapes, of which Ca' del Bosco is one.

California champagnes were most interesting. During the summer, we tasted the bubbles of a new producer, Scharffenberger Cellars. Formerly (even presently) a grape farmer, Jim Scharffenberger is bent on producing the best-quality champagne available by the (French) methode champagnoise.

The granddaddy of all champagne/sparkling wine tastings is hosted by



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