

Article Headline (H1): Guide to Sparkling Wine Types

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Meta Description: Find your favorite type of sparkling wine. In our Sparkling Wine guide, we highlight the differences between bubbly champagne, cava, brut, prosecco, and more.

Guide to Sparkling Wine Types

When it comes to sparkling wine, you might be most familiar with [Champagne and Prosecco](#). But sparkling wines go far beyond just those two regions.

If you've ever been curious to dive into the realm of sparkling wines, which are produced all over the world, this guide will walk you through the main things to know. Even if you're a long-time sparkling wine connoisseur, you may learn a new thing or two.

What is sparkling wine?

First things first: Any wine that contains carbon dioxide (CO₂) is considered a sparkling wine. In other words: Champagnes, Proseccos, Cava, and all other bubbly wines—whether red, rosé, or white, or sweet or dry—are all sparkling wines.

What are the main types of sparkling wine?

Champagne

Champagne refers strictly to sparkling wines **grown and made in the Champagne region of France**. It must also be made using the rigorous *Méthode Champenoise* a.k.a. *Méthode Traditionnelle*, or the Traditional Method. Cuvées, or sparkling wine blends, for Champagne use Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, and Meunier.

Famous Champagne houses include Moët & Chandon, Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin, and Louis Roederer.

Tasting notes: Finer bubbles and notes of brioche and pastry from the maturation on the yeast during longer aging.

Chandon

Many states produce sparkling wine, including New York, New Mexico, Oregon, and Michigan. But the most renowned for quality are California's Napa Valley and Sonoma Valley.

Here at Chandon, our winemaker **Pauline Lhote** captures the best of Northern California in our sparkling wines using *Méthode Traditionnelle*. Napa's consistently warm, sunny days steadily nurture Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, and Meunier grapes to their finest. Chilly nights accentuate the acidity of wines and yield exceptionally refreshing style.

Tasting notes: Captures California in a glass. Fruity, bright, and fresh, with a pleasant roundness.

Prosecco

This Italian sparkling wine is specifically made in the Veneto region in northern Italy, primarily using the white grape *Glera*. Also, unlike Champagne, there are fewer restrictions with the winemaking process, with most wineries using the faster and more economic Charmat Method.

Tasting notes: Straightforward, soft, and simple sparkling wines with strong fruity notes.

Other Sparkling Wines

Cava: Cava refers to sparkling wines made in Spain using predominantly Spanish grape varieties and uses *Méthode Traditionnelle*. Intense and dry, it pairs well with food and is commonly eaten with tapas.

Crémant: Besides Champagne, France also produces sparkling wines in its other regions. Among Crémants, Crémant d'Alsace and Crémant de Bourgogne are the most well-known. Crémant tends to be light, creamy, and frothy.

Sekt: Germany is ranked among the top five producers of sparkling wine in the world. German-sourced and produced sparkling wine is gaining recognition especially for its unique Riesling-based sparkling wine. Rieslingsekt is described as fruity, perfumed, fresh, and sprightly.

Others: Other regions of the world producing sparkling wines include South Africa, New Zealand, and Australia.

Is Moscato a sparkling wine?

Moscato is well-known for their sweet sparkling white varieties, like Piedmont, Italy's Moscato d'Asti (semi-sparkling) and Asti Spumante (sparkling). **Fun Fact:** There's a limit to how much fizz Moscato can contain! But Moscatos are also available in still, dry, and pink and red varieties. The name Moscato refers to this wine's use of the Muscat grape, one of the oldest wine grapes in the world.

Which country invented sparkling wine?

There's debate about whether sparkling wine was first discovered in France by the monk Dom Pérignon or in the U.K. The Ancient Romans, who were the first people to establish vineyards in the Champagne region, were the first to note effervescence in wines produced there, but they dismissed it as a defect. It wasn't until after the Middle Ages that French and English vintners sought to accomplish this effect intentionally.

How is sparkling wine made?

The bubbles in sparkling wine are created when wine absorbs carbon dioxide (CO₂) as fermentation occurs under pressure. This secondary fermentation starts when sugar and yeast are added to a still base wine.

Méthode Traditionnelle vs. Charmat Method

The difference between *Méthode Traditionnelle* and the Charmat Method is in where second fermentation takes place.

With *Méthode Traditionnelle*, used by Chandon, sugar and yeast are added to still wine. This blend is bottled and sealed with a metal crown cap. Then the fermentation process then takes place inside the bottle over a period of months.

Longer aging with the yeast can tease out deeper complexities like nutty, toasty, and creamy notes, as well as nurture elegant and refined textures like finer bubbles. Once the cap is removed, the final touches to the sparkling wine are made with the dosage, which can include wine and sugar added back to replace what is lost when the bottle is first opened. The wine is complete once the bottle is closed again with the traditional cork and wire cage.

Meanwhile, secondary fermentation with the Charmat Method takes place in large steel tanks. The process is faster and more economical, and wines produced this way tend to taste more youthful and straightforward.

How is Chandon's sparkling wine made?

Chandon uses the Méthode Traditionnelle.

Sparkling wine styles and sweetness levels

Are there red and white sparkling wines?

Yes!

White sparkling wines are actually made of both white and red grapes. For example, Chandon Brut is made of 30 percent red grapes. Blanc de blancs are made only of white grapes.

Rosé sparkling wines are white wines that include a splash of red wine.

Blanc de noirs are made only with red grapes. Chandon was one of the first in the U.S. to embrace the Blanc de Pinot Noir style with our fruit-driven Blanc de Pinot Noir, which combines Pinot Noir and Meunier.

Other well-known red sparkling wines include Northern Italy's frothy Lambrusco and Australia's sparkling shiraz.

How sweet is sparkling wine?

Sparkling wines span the sweetness spectrum, with the sugar content to match. From driest to sweetest:

- **Brut Nature:** The driest among sparkling wines
- **Extra Brut:** Slightly less dry than Brut Nature
- **Brut:** Dry, with no sense of sweetness
- **Extra Dry a.k.a. Extra Sec:** Despite the name, slightly sweet
- **Dry a.k.a. Sec:** A touch more sweet
- **Demi Sec:** Noticeably Sweet
- **Doux:** Sweet

How much alcohol does sparkling wine contain?

The alcohol content of sparkling wine depends on the production method used and the length of time it undergoes fermentation. Generally speaking, sparkling wines tend to contain less alcohol than red and white still wines.

How do I choose a sparkling wine?

Some conditions to consider:

Meal Pairing: Sparkling wines are exceptionally versatile. But to get the most out of your wine, match them to their most compatible dishes. A quick guide:

- **White:** Lighter selections like grilled chicken, halibut or scallops
- **Rosé:** Salmon, trout, and burgers
- **Red:** Smoky and savory red meat, especially when prepared with rich, intensely flavored sauces
- **Brut/Dry:** Goes fabulously with oysters or ceviche
- **Sweet:** Desserts, of course

Setting: From a range of exquisitely aged Brut wines, to fruity and vibrant [Chandon Sweet Star](#) and [Chandon Rosé](#), Chandon has a bottle of sparkling wine to fit every occasion.

Are you celebrating a special day? Our special occasion étoile wines use only grapes from our own vineyards.

Throwing a casual get-together with friends? Our reserve and vintage wines are aged longer using grapes from our own vineyards.

Looking for a daily sipper? Our signature tier wines such as Brut, Rosé, Blanc de Pinot Noir and Sweet Star are approachable to everyone and also widely available.

How do you drink sparkling wine?

What's the right temperature for sparkling wine?

The bubbles of sparkling wine are at their finest chilled. Aim for a temperature between 40 and 50 degrees Fahrenheit (5 and 10 degrees Celsius).

An easy trick? Half an hour before drinking, place the bottle in a bucket with one part water, one part ice.

The right way to open a sparkling wine bottle

People often picture loud popping corks followed by a gushing flow of foam. But that may be a recipe for disaster, especially since the pressure inside sparkling wine bottles can cause corks to fly out and cause harm.

For a safer—and less wasteful—way of opening your bottles:

- Start by covering the top of the bottle with a napkin.
- Keep your hand over the napkin and cork as you loosen the wire cage. Don't take the cage off yet, just in case the cork pops out unexpectedly.
- Pick up the bottle. Still holding onto the cork, gently pull on it as you also turn the bottom of the bottle. You'll eventually hear a whisper as the pressure releases.
- Remove cork and cage, and serve.

How do you pour sparkling wine?

Get a firm grip on the bottle. From there, there are generally two ways to pour.

- **If you want a head of “mousse”:** Set the glass upright. “Wet” the glass with a splash of wine. After allowing the bubbles to settle, finish pouring. You want to fill the glass about two-thirds of the way up. Sparkling wine is a wine you want to sip, so only pour enough to savor without risking your drink getting too warm.
- **If you want to preserve your bubbles:** Tilt your glass, and pour down the side of the glass. Again, fill two-thirds.

How do you choose glasses for sparkling wine?

Choose glasses appropriate to the wine:

Flute

Ideal for: Large events and celebrations

Wine flutes are tall and thin to preserve bubbles and keep wines sparkling longer. Look for a glass with a pointier base, which will ensure a finer, single stream of bubbles.

Tulip

Ideal for: Any wine-drinking occasion, really.

Just as it's named, these glasses are tulip-shaped, with a bowl more rounded than the flute to collect more fruity, fresh, and youthful aromas. (An even rounder bowl, such as with a white wine glass, does an even better job collecting the more aged flavors in fine vintages.)

Coupe

Ideal for: Dessert sparklers like Asti Spumante and sparkling cocktails.

Wide and flat. Bubbles disperse quicker in these glasses, making the wines taste softer.

What about stemless glasses?

Go with a stemmed glass: If you're looking to get the most from your wine-tasting. Having a stem to grip means you won't affect the temperature of your wine with the warmth of your hands. Stemmed glasses also typically feature a thin lip so as to not detract from the wine.

Go with a stemless glass: If you're worried about easy breakage. Stemless glasses are generally designed with more standing stability in mind. Plus, stemless glasses can make for a more relaxed, friendly atmosphere.

Other fun facts about sparkling wine

How should I store my sparkling wine bottles?

Store sparkling wine bottles in a cool, consistent temperature, dark area, away from direct heat and sunlight. Either standing or on its side is fine. Unopened sparkling wine bottles can be placed in a refrigerator within two days before drinking.

Does sparkling wine expire?

Sparkling wines can age, meaning their flavor profiles can evolve, and they can go flat with enough time. That said, the wine's acidity and carbon dioxide can help with preservation, especially with proper storage.

Well-aged sparkling wines can turn a darker color and evolve more subtle notes over time, especially around the 10-year mark.

That said, most sparkling wines are released for sale when ready to be consumed. So drink without aging for the intended experience.

Can sparkling wine be shipped?

Yes! In fact, all of Chandon's wines are available to order, wherever you need it shipped. Read our [FAQs for more about shipping Chandon](#).