

Orangetwood Wines

Small Wineries, Great Wines

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Introduction

A Happy New Decade to you! I just found myself thinking the year was 19 something - only 20 years out of date.

I had hoped to let you know what had happened to the tariffs that I talked about at the end of December, but despite rumors of successful meetings between Macron and Trump, 100% tariffs are still imminent. I just wrote to the Arizona Senators. I've never done that before. It has come to that.

On a brighter note, Leslie's section explains some of the "secrets" of champagne making.

New Sales Person: Lisa Rein

Lisa Rein has been in the hospitality industry for 20 years. She started at the retail/restaurant tier, but since then has been with wineries or wholesalers. Lisa lives in mid-Scottsdale and will be focusing on accounts there.

Portfolio Notes - by Leslie Zellmer

Méthode Traditionnelle (Method Traditional)

I was once prodded by a friend (Ali Admunson, Proprietor of Uncorked Wine Lounge) to answer definitively what my favorite wine was. After going around and around stating that I didn't have a favorite (it's like choosing your favorite child!), she asked me, "What is the first thing you look at on a restaurant wine list?" That answer was a no-brainer: bubbles! Specifically, those made in the "Traditional Method". What's that, you ask?

The "Traditional Method" is how Champagne, Cava, Franciacorta and many other examples of sparkling wine are made. The ever so popular Prosecco is not made in this fashion, but rather a "Tank/Charmant Method".

Using the traditional method, the wine goes through fermentation twice. The first fermentation is done to make the still wine, the second to add carbonation. After the still wine has been made, sugar and yeast (called tirage) are added and then it is bottled. At this point, the bottle is closed with a "crown cap", more commonly known as a beer or soda cap.

The wine then goes through an aging period that is anywhere from 15 months to 6 years and those yeast cells, or lees, are still in the bottle but have died off. The bottles are "riddled" (turned) to eventually end upside-down with the yeast all in the top of the neck. The goal is to eject it (disgorge) out of the bottle and finish the wine. Yet, after the sediment is disgorged, some of the wine goes with it. This leaves you with some space to fill the bottle back up. What does it get filled with? In all cases except one it gets filled with a wine and sugar mixture called dosage. The amount of sugar used in the dosage determines how dry the finished wine will be and how it will be classified on the label: Extra Brut, Brut, Extra Dry, Dry, Demi-Sec, Sec. The one case that does not get the dosage or sugar mixture is Brut Nature. Brut Nature is the driest possible Traditional Method sparkling wine because it is finished with just reserve wine, no dosage/sugar added. In addition to being the driest bubble, it has the least sugar and carbohydrates of any type of alcoholic beverage. To that I say "Cheers and I'll have another!"

We proudly carry two Brut Nature wines: Champagne Tribaut Brut Nature from Romery, France and Jané Ventura Reserva de la Musica Brut Nature from Penedès, Spain.

The Rambler

The start of a new decade is a chance to reflect on how much we have decayed over the last ten years.

I'd like to weigh in on the discussion of whether this is the start of the new decade or whether we should wait for a year. I think the argument is between mathematicians of different eras. Back when the Romans ruled most of the then known world, the numbering system was integers: I, II, III, IV and so forth. The system had two problems. It did not lend itself to simple arithmetic. For example, what is III plus IV. It's back to counting on fingers and toes. The second problem was that it did not have a zero. How old is a new born baby? Er, I don't know, let's wait a year and say she's 1. With a zero, the answer is plain, but mathematicians had to do a lot of soul seaching to convince themselves it was OK to have nothing. (Their next challenge was negative numbers - that took more leaps of imagination.) This is why I think it is rational to say the decade starts when there is a zero at the end of the year. Q.E.D.

As I rambled around looking for what this section might cover, I found that amongst our sales team are 4 people (5 if you include me) who were selling for Orangewood 10 years ago. Cecilia, Lisa, Graham and Stanley, thank you.

Cheers,

Richard and Laurie
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