Welcome to The Society's ‘Sparkling Wine Growers’ tasting.

Sparkling wine, or a ‘glass of giggles’ as it can affectionately be known, is no longer a drink limited to special occasions. There need be no excuse for the sound of a popping cork and that’s something we can all get on board with! The sparkling wines shown today range from under £7 to over £60, so whether it’s celebrating an a big life event or just commiserating a long Wednesday, there’s a sparkling wine to suit.

We have a range of styles from complex vintage Champagnes to semi-sweet sparkling to pair with puddings and plenty of fresh European wines perfect for sipping in the garden. This evening is designed to help you discover what you like, and equally importantly what you don’t. Understanding a little about how the wines are made, and what is written on the label, will hopefully help you navigate the world of bubbly a little more easily.

For those who wish, there is a blind-tasting quiz at the end of the tasting featuring three mystery wines. Once you have tasted wines 1-24, why not try and see if you can answer the questions about 25, 26 and 27?

We hope you enjoy your tasting and please do find a member of The Society team if you have any questions.

Thanks,
Anna, Tim, Emma, Gil and Maria
Tasting and Events Team

Wines are numbered on tables around the room and are grouped by style. Please try as many as you like and in any order you wish. Please also keep the same glass throughout the evening and there is water available for you to rinse your glass between wines.

PRICES AND TASTING

A discount of 10% on wines featured at this tasting (subject to availability) is offered to all members attending tonight.

Please hand your order to a member of The Society’s staff tonight or telephone us on 01438 741177 by 8pm on Thursday 17th May, 2018.

Please quote reference XFD when contacting Member Services. Alternatively you can now order online at thewinesociety.com/sparklinggrowers
Esporão Alandra Branco 2013
Savoury dry white that makes a great partner to a wide variety of dishes, whether full or mild in flavour. Made from a blend of local grapes that are part estate-grown and part bought-in. Drink this year and next. 12.5%
ref PW4861 £5.50 bottle  £66 dozen

Notes:

Esporão Monte Velho Branco, Alentejano 2013
Flavourful dry all-rounder unfazed by strong Mediterranean flavours, this white is a blend of traditional local grape varieties: roupeiro adds flesh and flavour, the more neutral perrum adds ballast, and antão vaz provides freshening acidity. Drink this year and next. 13.5%
ref PW4631 £6.75 bottle  £81 dozen

Notes:

HERDADE DO ESPORÃO
Herdade do Esporão is Portugal's largest privately owned wine company, producing c. 10m bottles per annum, and in our view proof that big can be beautiful. The large Esporão estate is in the heart of the Alentejo and forms an oasis in this strikingly dry landscape. A good part of Esporão's production comes from their own fruit, but other needs are satisfied by long term contracts with local growers. The long-term chief winemaker is naturalised Australian David Baverstock, responsible for the introduction of verdelho, semillon, syrah, and a range of single varietal wines.

Red - White - Rosé - Sparkling - Fortified
- Screwcap - Synthetic closure
1 - 9 bone dry to intensely sweet (S) Screwcap (P) Synthetic closure
ITALY

Now the UK’s favourite fizz, sales of Prosecco show no signs of slowing. Unlike Champagne, Prosecco is almost always made using the ‘tank method’ of production meaning it has less contact with the ‘lees’ – dead yeast cells that give Champagne a more nutty aroma and sometimes savoury palate. Proseccos are often less fizzy, especially the ‘frizzante’ style which permits up to two bars (or atmospheres) of pressure giving it a light spritz, whereas ‘spumante’ style must have over three and a half bars of pressure meaning its fizz is more similar to that of Champagne.

Sparkling Trivia:
Global sparkling wine consumption is expected to rise by 7% in 2019 – bucking the trend for still wines which are in decline.

The Society’s Prosecco
A delicious growers’ Prosecco from the heart of the best vineyards belonging to the Adami family. Light in style and all about the purity, this is a lovely aperitif to serve with nibbles to get everyone in the party mood. Prosecco, grown in the province of Treviso, has long been the aperitif of choice in Venice, and increasingly all over Italy, and now in the UK too. Drink over the next 12 months. 11%

ref SG2201 £10.50 bottle £126 dozen

Notes:

Sparkling Trivia:
Until 2010, ‘Prosecco’ was the name of a grape variety rather than an area in Northern Italy. As popularity grew, the Italians tried to protect the name but they could not ban other regions, or even other countries, from using their grape variety. To combat this, they used the Designation of Origin legislation (that which protects Champagne) and renamed the region Prosecco and the grape variety glera. Legal battles continue to be fought across the world for the right to call fizz made from glera ‘Prosecco’, in particular in Australia where it’s so popular that there is even a ‘Prosecco Road’.
PORTUGAL

Portuguese sparkling wine, or Espumante as it is can be known, is grown all over the country. In the north, where the lightly sparkling Vinho Verde has been flying the flag for fizz for some time, semi-sparkling and full sparkling styles are increasingly popular (as is their price tag!). The wines are made with a plethora of grapes such as the popular indigenous malvasia fina as well as Champagne varieties pinot noir and chardonnay. The region of Vinho Verde has been legally permitted to make semi and fully sparkling wines since the 1990s and has the perfect climactic conditions for some seriously good fizz.

2 Hortas do Caseirinho Frisante

Portugal may not be the first place you think of when looking for good fizz, but this is a delightful, delicate, semi-sparkling white from the home of Vinho Verde which we reckon could give Prosecco a run for its money!

Drink over the next 12 months. 10.5%

ref PW6501 £6.95 bottle £83 dozen

Notes:

Sparkling Trivia:
Five countries produce over three quarters of the world’s sparkling wine. Can you name them? Find the answer on a separate sheet handed out by the Society Staff.
**SPAIN**

Cava continues to be a sparkling wine for those with their ears to the proverbial grapevine. Its affordability is both a blessing and a curse – brilliant for delivering low-cost quality, but often misunderstood and dismissed as ‘cheap’. In fact, this fizz is made in the same method as Champagne and whilst it usually uses indigenous grape varieties, xarel-lo, macabeu and parellada, it’s also legally permitted to use pinot noir and chardonnay bringing it even closer to its pricier French counterpart.

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**Sparkling Trivia:**
In the 1970s, Spain only exported around 7.5% of Cava produced; now it exports around 56% feeding the global fizz appetite.

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3 **The Society’s Cava Reserva Brut NV**
Benchmark Cava and one we are proud to say receives accolades across the wine press. Sumarroca spare no expense in crafting this fruity, lively sparkling wine from grapes the family grow, vinify and then age for over two years in bottle, just like in Champagne. Always terrific value for money. Drink this year and next. 12%

ref SG1661 £8.50 bottle £102 dozen

**Notes:**

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**Myth Busted:**
Unfortunately, putting a silver spoon in a bottle of Champagne or sparkling wine will not stop it going flat. In fact, it will make no difference at all.
FRANCE (OUTSIDE CHAMPAGNE)

For those less in the know, it could be fair to say that French sparkling wine can be synonymous with Champagne. However, there’s a world beyond Champagne offering staggering value for money as well as true differentiation from region to region. For perfumed, light styles one might look to Alsace where grapes such as riesling are permitted, whereas ‘Champagne alternatives’ are in abundance in the regions of Jura and Burgundy. This could be the sparkling category to watch as each region establishes itself on the export stage and whets the appetite of those looking for good, affordable sparkling wines.

Sparkling Trivia:
‘NV’ on a sparkling wine means that the wines within are a blend of different years. It stands for ‘Non-Vintage’ but as many believe this implies it is lesser quality than vintage wines, there is a move to call these styles ‘Multi-Vintage’ or ‘MV’. Multi-vintages are simply a way of creating a consistent style for people to enjoy year on year.

Crémant d’Alsace Cuvée Julien Dopff au Moulin NV
This is a ‘blanc de blancs’ blend of pinot blanc and auxerrois, now with extended lees ageing of 24 months for greater complexity. Fresh, round and appetising.
Drink now to 2020. 12%
ref SG321 £12.95 bottle £155 dozen

Notes:

Sparkling Trivia:
‘Blanc de blancs’ simply means ‘white from white’ and refers to white sparkling wines where only white grape varieties are used to make the wine. You may also see ‘blanc de noirs’ on labels; this means the wine is made exclusively of red/black grapes — however, this does not mean the wine will be red or rosé. The style is still a white sparkling as the grapes are pressed very gently and the skins (which give the wine its colour) are removed immediately.
5 The Society’s Saumur Brut NV
On fine form, Gratien & Meyer’s Loire fizz is currently based on the ripe, healthy 2015 vintage, which brings body to the wine without losing the freshness that is essential in a good sparkler. Easy on both palate and pocket, great on its own or as a mixer. Drink now to 2020. 12%
ref SG1061 £9.95 bottle £119 dozen

Notes:

6 The Society’s Saumur Brut Rosé NV
This fragrant rosé, made from cabernet franc with a touch of grolleau, which adds roundness and charm, has a soft, fruity flavour and persistent ‘fizz’. Delightfully clean and refreshing, this is a lovely aperitif but can also be served with food; try with a light lunch of quiche and cold meat, for example. Drink now to 2020. 12%
ref SG1071 £10.95 bottle £131 dozen

Notes:
The Society’s Celebration Crémant de Loire 2014

Elegant Loire Crémant, a classic blend of majority chardonnay with chenin blanc and splashes of pinot noir and cabernet franc, with persistent fine bubbles and apple freshness on the finish. This is an amazing-value party fizz, which is why we named it ‘Celebration’. Drink this year and next. 12%

ref SG2141 £12.95 bottle £155 dozen

Notes:

Myth Busted:
It is an urban legend that the ‘coupé’ or bowl-style Champagne glasses were modelled on Marie Antoinette’s breasts!

Crémant du Jura Brut Domaine de Montbourgeau NV

From the Autoroute des Alpes, which Society buyer Joanna Locke travels on at least a couple of times a year, you can see the beautiful vineyards of the Jura. Made from young vines by Nicole Deriaux at her family domaine and by the Champagne method, it is a chardonnay bottled without dosage but rounded and deliciously easy to drink. Drink now to 2020. 12%

ref SG1651 £13.95 bottle £167 dozen

Notes:

Sparkling Trivia:
3.7 million bottles of Crémant were sold last year and that figure is predicted to rise in the coming years.
9 Blanquette de Limoux Reserve Antech 2015
From the world’s first sparkling wine region, this is a dry, crisp, and fruity southern French sparkler. A lovely, light and refreshing fizz. Drink this year and next. 12%
ref SG2421 £9.95 bottle £119 dozen

Notes:

10 Blanquette de Limoux Méthode Ancestrale Antech NV
A delightful, medium-sweet and effervescent Languedoc white, fermented just once in bottle. Refreshingly light, low in alcohol and with a taste reminiscent of apples, this is perfect with fruit-based desserts such as apple pie as well as lightly spiced canapés. Drink this year. 6.5%
ref SG751 £10.50 bottle £126 dozen

Notes:

Sparkling Trivia:
The ‘Ancestral method’ (Méthod Ancestrale) was actually established over a century before sparkling wine production emerged in Champagne. In Limoux, where this style of wine was produced as early as 1531, they continue to create wines in this style as well as those made using the Champagne method. – where the bubbles come from the second fermentation in bottle.

PLEASE RINSE YOUR GLASS AND TRY A CRACKER OR CHEESE AFTER TASTING WINE 10 AS THE RESIDUAL SUGAR IN THE WINE WILL AFFECT YOUR PALETTE MOMENTARILY

To order thewinesociety.com 01438 741177
FRANCE: CHAMPAGNE

No wine-growing region in the world carries the same prestige as Champagne. No wines have been as well documented through history, or piqued the interest of more celebrities, world leaders or artists. It is the drink of celebration, of romance and often even of commiseration. But the world of Champagne is not all supermodels and super yachts; the weather varies a lot from year to year and so poses challenges in the vineyards and the increasing popularity of Prosecco continues to dent Champagne’s share in key markets like the UK. But for true Champagne lovers there can be no substitute, and this selection will hopefully demonstrate not only the consistent quality but also the diversity available.

Sparkling Trivia:
The pressure inside a Champagne bottle is equal to that of a double decker bus tyre.

The Society’s Champagne Brut NV
Extraordinarily fine, poised Champagne, made from 45% chardonnay and equal parts pinot noir and pinot meunier by experienced boutique producer Alfred Gratien. The small Epernay-based house has supplied The Society with excellent Champagne since 1910. Longer fermentation in small oak casks and additional bottle ageing give rise to great depth of flavour and a long finish. Drink now to 2021. 12.5%

ref CH331  £32.00 bottle  £320 dozen*
ref CH334  £66.00 magnum  £792 dozen

*Six for five promotion already applied. No further discounts applicable.

Notes:
Alfred Gratien Cuvée Paradis Brut 2008
2008 will go down as one of the great vintages of Champagne, and this stunning prestige cuvée from Alfred Gratien is gentle, smooth and utterly delicious. Rich and intense enough to enjoy now but with the structure to age with grace. Drink now to 2025. 12.5%

ref CH3421 £52.00 bottle £624 dozen

Notes:

Sparkling Trivia:
Vintage Champagnes must be aged for a minimum of three years on the lees compared with 15 months for multi-vintage or ‘non-vintage’ Champagnes.

Alfred Gratien Blanc de Blancs 2009
A wonderfully concentrated apple, lemon and brioche-scented Champagne. This 2009 is beautiful now but will also cellar well. Drink now to 2023. 12.5%

ref CH3621 £33.00 bottle £396 dozen

Notes:
Esporão Alandra Branco 2013
Savoury dry white that makes a great partner to a wide variety of dishes, whether full or mild in flavour. Made from a blend of local grapes that are part estate-grown and part bought-in. Drink this year and next. 12.5%

Esporão Monte Velho Branco, Alentejano 2013
Flavourful dry all-rounder unfazed by strong Mediterranean flavours, this white is a blend of traditional local grape varieties: roupeiro adds flesh and flavour, the more neutral perrum adds ballast, and antão vaz provides freshening acidity. Drink this year and next. 13.5%

Notes:

Herdade do Esporão is Portugal’s largest privately owned wine company, producing c. 10m bottles per annum, and in our view proof that big can be beautiful. The large Esporão estate is in the heart of the Alentejo and forms an oasis in this strikingly dry landscape. A good part of Esporão’s production comes from their own fruit, but other needs are satisfied by long term contracts with local growers. The long-term chief winemaker is naturalised Australian David Baverstock, responsible for the introduction of verdelho, semillon, syrah, and a range of single varietal wines.

Champagne Challenge:
Can you guess the record for the furthest distance a cork has travelled from a Champagne bottle? The correct guesses will be entered into a draw and one winner chosen at random to win a bottle of Jean de Foigny Brut Premier Cru NV. (No cheating!)
Jean de Foigny Brut Premier Cru NV
Super Premier Cru Champagne at a party price. This has a lovely lemon toasty nose and fine mousse, with green apple and flint on the palate. Drink this year and next. 12.5%

ref CH3761 £19.95 bottle £198 dozen*

*Six for five promotion already applied. No further discounts applicable.

Notes:

Castelnau Réserve Brut NV
A rich, round and full Champagne from this Reims-based house established in 1916. About 40% each of chardonnay and pinot meunier, with the rest pinot noir, resulting in a very stylish aperitif. Drink this year and next. 12.5%

ref CH3391 £28.00 bottle £280 dozen*

*Six for five promotion already applied. No further discounts applicable.

Notes:

Sparkling Trivia:
The city of Reims, so called after Saint Remi, has historical ties to the French monarchy going back centuries. Since 1027 it has been the official place for coronations and only two kings since this time were not crowned here. No doubt this connection with regal celebration helped establish the prestige of the wine, not only in France but around the world.
Henriot Brut Souverain NV
A classic chardonnay-dominant blend that has had three years' ageing on lees. Charming honeysuckle and brioche notes and a surprisingly long finish. Drink now to 2020. 12%
ref CH3581 £36.00 bottle £360 dozen*
*Six for five promotion already applied. No further discounts applicable.
Notes:

Champagne Henriot Blanc de Blancs Brut NV
Henriot specialise in blanc de blanc Champagnes. This is soft, round and intense with the elegance and class of chardonnay from Champagne's finest vineyards. Drink now to 2020. 12%
ref CH3511 £38.00 bottle £380 dozen*
*Six for five promotion already applied. No further discounts applicable.
Notes:

Sparkling Trivia:
Before Champagne bottles were manufactured to the thickness they are today, they would often explode due to the intense pressure in the bottle. Riddlers (the people employed to turn the bottles whilst they aged encouraging the dead yeast towards the neck) would often wear fencing masks to shield their faces from sporadic explosions!
NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand prides itself on affordable traditional-method sparkling wines with great acidity and freshness. The freshest of these often come from cool-climate Marlborough where there is increasing focus on the Champagne varieties. Gisborne and Hawke’s Bay offer richer versions of this style.

19 Hunter’s MiruMiru Marlborough Brut NV
A delicious Kiwi blend of chardonnay and pinots noir and meunier made in the traditional method. Plenty of green apple, lemon and brioche flavours.
Drink over the next 12 months.

ref SG1821  £17.00 bottle  £204 dozen

Notes:

Sparkling Trivia:
Approximately 169 million bottles of sparkling wine were drunk in the UK in 2016, a figure which looks set to rise to 194 million by 2021.
AUSTRALIA

Few countries offer such wide choice when it comes to sparkling wines as Australia. Whilst most is made using the Champagne method with Champagne grape varieties, the penchant for Prosecco means that there are plenty of affordable ‘charmat-method’ wines too. Sparkling red wine is also arguably more universally popular here than any country on the planet and such popularity has meant it is now the epicentre for the creation of such wines. Hunting down cool-climate zones is key to the success of the sparkling here and areas with elevation or ocean influence such as Yarra Valley and Adelaide Hills prove they can deliver quality. The island of Tasmania, however, continues to shine brightest for mineral, high-acid and deliciously food-friendly wines.

Pirie Tasmanian Traditional Method NV

Tasmania is making some excellent sparkling wines that have great elegance and character. This blend of 55% chardonnay and 45% pinot noir has undergone second fermentation in bottle and three and a half years on the lees, giving it a rich toasty note. Drink over the next 12 months. 12%

ref SG2171 £27.50 bottle £330 dozen

Notes:
USA

The first recorded sparkling wine from the US was made using the indigenous American variety catawba in 1842. Since then the rocky road of winemaking in the states has meant that sparkling wines here are really in their infancy when compared with many other parts of the world. During Prohibition, sparkling wine production screeched to a halt whilst many people were fermenting still red wine at home from bought grapes or juice; sparkling was more complicated to create and therefore ‘DIY viticulture’ far less common. Nowadays the country stands at the forefront of modern quality production, mostly using the Champagne method and often with chardonnay playing a lead role. California takes the biggest bite of the American pie with many Champagne producers flocking here for top-notch growing conditions. (The lifestyle probably helps too!)

Sparkling Trivia:
California is a popular spot with Champagne houses. The following all have vineyards in the Golden State:
- Louis Roederer
- Moët & Chandon
- Taittinger
- Mumm
- Piper Heidsieck

21 Quartet Anderson Valley Brut, Roederer Estates NV
A standout wine for class, complexity and balance from the Anderson Valley in Mendocino County, California. Wonderful lemon and brioche notes on the nose are very reminiscent of Champagne, but with a little more ripeness and generosity. Drink now to 2020, 12.5%

ref SG161 £24.00 bottle £288 dozen

Notes:

Sparkling Trivia:
Unlike almost every other major wine producing country, the United States is legally allowed to call some of its sparkling wines ‘Champagne’. This is because the legislation banning other countries from using the famous term (a section squeezed into the Treaty of Versailles) was never officially ratified by the US Senate. Because of this, Americans often use the misnomer ‘Champagne’ when referring to any style of sparkling wine. Whilst this legislation was revisited in 2005, only brands who established themselves after this year were banned from using the term and thus most of the older sparkling wine producers continue to do so.
ENGLAND

Everyone remembers where they were at the fall of the Berlin Wall, or the day of the Royal Wedding. Whilst it’s not a pinpoint in time, we will certainly all be able to look back and say ‘we were there’ when English sparkling wine became a genuine fine wine of the world. The best fizzes, modelled largely on that of Champagne, often beat their competition across the channel in blind tastings and look set to go from strength to strength. The turning tides were confirmed last year when Taittinger planted a vineyard in Kent – the first footprint a French Champagne House has made on English soil.

Hambledon Première Cuvée Brut NV
Having beaten the likes of Dom Perignon and Krug in a blind tasting in 2017, this is one of the most exciting English sparkling wines on the market. Broad, rich and with real finesse, this is a full bodied wine with class in abundance.
Drink now to 2020. 12%
ref SG2411  £38.00 bottle  £456 dozen

Notes:
23 Nyetimber Brut Classic Cuvée NV
Full-flavoured sparkler from the Sussex Downs and the classic Champagne mix of grapes. The blend includes wines from the 2011 harvest alongside reserve wines from 2007-2010 and was aged for more than three years on its yeast lees to add extra complexity, resulting in a savoury, full-flavoured and thoroughly classy English sparkling wine. Drink now to 2025. 12%

ref SG2131 £31.00 bottle £372 dozen

Notes:

24 Nyetimber Rosé Brut NV
Deep in colour and bold in flavour; this is serious rosé. Delightful ripe red-fruit flavours and braeburn apple acidity lead into a long finish. Try this with cured salmon for an indulgent treat. Drink now to 2022. 12%

ref SG2311 £35.00 bottle £420 dozen

Notes:

Sparkling Trivia:
Different size bottles, or ‘formats’ as they're often known, have specific names:

- Magnum: 2 bottles
- Jeroboam: 4 bottles
- Rehoboam: 6 bottles
- Methuselah: 8 bottles
- Salmanazar: 12 bottles
- Balthazar: 16 bottles
- Nebuchadnezzar: 20 bottles
- Solomon: 24 bottles
- Primat: 36 bottles
- Melchizedek: 40 bottles

To order thewinesociety.com  01438 741177 21
Using the information and experience from this evening’s tasting, can you make predictions on the final three wines and test your skills and knowledge?

Answers and information on wines A, B and C will be handed out at the end of the evening (unless requested earlier). Please feel free to ask a member of The Society staff for your copy.

Circle the answer you believe is correct for each wine:

How was the wine made?
A  i) Champagne/Traditional Method  ii) Tank Method
B  i) Champagne/Traditional Method  ii) Tank Method
C  i) Champagne/Traditional Method  ii) Tank Method

Which grapes were used?
A  i) Chardonnay, pinot noir and/or meunier  ii) Others
B  i) Chardonnay, pinot noir and/or meunier  ii) Others
C  i) Chardonnay, pinot noir and/or meunier  ii) Others

Are they aged vintage wines or youthful Non-Vintage?
A  i) Aged vintage  ii) Youthful non-vintage
B  i) Aged vintage  ii) Youthful non-vintage
C  i) Aged vintage  ii) Youthful non-vintage

And finally, can you take a stab at what these wines might be? (You have tried each of these styles today!)
A
B
C