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Tony Cenicola/The New York Times



By Eric Asimov

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Bubbles go with year’s end as surely as Thanksgiving and turkey, and Valentine’s Day and chocolates. It’s a tradition and an expectation. But why?

Is it the impression of extravagance that comes with a fine bottle of Champagne? The hope and joy in the pop of a cork? The rush of sparkle and froth that connotes celebration?

All of the above, along with a lot of successful marketing. But the pairing would not stick if people didn't love it. I know I do.

Rising prices may make many reluctant to pop a Champagne cork this year, but it doesn't mean people will drink less sparkling wine.

Prosecco, cava, crémants, spumantes, frizzantes, sekts and [pétillant naturels](#) are just some of the sparklers made outside of Champagne. Add in the wines produced using the same grapes and methods as Champagne — from the United States, Italy, [England](#), South America, Australia and more — and consumers have plenty of options if, as some have predicted, [a Champagne shortage](#) is looming.

I have my doubts about that, just as I'm never surprised when oil companies claim summer shortages require them to raise gasoline prices just as vacationers hit the road. Not that the same [supply-chain difficulties](#) impeding the availability of other consumer goods has not affected wine in general. It has, but skepticism is not unwarranted.

After a recent shopping spree for sparkling wines in New York City retail stores, I found 12 bottles I highly recommend, six Champagnes and six sparklers from elsewhere.

Now, singling out 12 bottles is like presenting a lone bubble from among the estimated [million or so](#) in a glass of Champagne. I could have selected dozens of other great bottles as well. I tried not to repeat previous end-of-the-year suggestions, although a few of these bottles are old favorites, and among the Champagnes, I stuck with nonvintage and entry-level bottles.

You can find many more recommendations in previous articles, whether about [cava](#), pét-nat, English sparkling wines or Champagne in its myriad forms, whether from [big houses](#) or [small grower-producers](#).

Some producers, departing from years of conventional wisdom that Champagne must be a consistent style blended from many terroirs, are making [single-vineyard Champagnes](#). Many, in an effort to reduce the perception of sweetness in their wines have, for better or worse, explored the [extra-brut style](#) of Champagne. Sometimes, you just want a [rosé Champagne](#), and sometimes you want [a general list of names and terms](#) to know when shopping.

Here are the 12 bottles, from least to most expensive within each category.

Sparkling Wines

[Raventós i Blanc Conca del Riu Anoia de Nit 2018 \\$22](#)

Good cava is one of the best deals in sparkling wine. The problem is that a lot more bad cava is made than good. But I've been collecting the names of producers to seek out, including [Recaredo](#), [Gramona](#), [AT Roca](#), [Mestres](#), [Bohigas](#), [Loxarel](#), [Castellroig](#), [Parés Baltà](#) and [Raventós i Blanc](#), which produces de Nit, a bottle I keep returning to because it's excellent and a great value. Like many of these I've listed, [Raventós i Blanc](#) no longer uses the term "cava" in order to avoid its poor connotations. Instead, it uses Conca del Riu Anoia, after a small area in the Penedès, where it has a biodynamically farmed estate. This rosado is made of the three traditional cava grapes, parellada, xarello and macabeu, along with monastrell, or mourvèdre, which accounts for the wine's pale pink color. It's dry, nuanced, tangy and delicious. (Skurnik Wines, New York)