



## Star Sommelier Belinda Chang's 5 Bubblyies to Get Us Through

From a punchy pet-nat to a Cali classic, pop the cork on these sparklers now

By J.P. Anderson

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Indomitable even under quarantine, sommelier Belinda Chang is now hosting massive virtual events. (photo by Light Leak Pictures)

**Nobody throws a party** like [Belinda Chang](#). Even now. With her high-spirited personality and breezy approach to explaining the vagaries of vino, the James Beard Award-winning sommelier has graduated from high-profile gigs with the likes of Charlie Trotter and Danny Meyer to hosting a gamut of must-attend experiential events across the nation.

Has our current delicate situation slowed her down? Not a chance—the Chicago resident has made a genius pivot to hosting wildly popular digital gatherings, from Virtual Boozy Brunch parties (2,000 guests and counting) to Michelin-caliber tasting menu dinners for guests in cities around the country.

Though she is well-versed in the wines of the world, she is perhaps best known for her enthusiasm and expertise with effervescence. Here, Chang gives her top five suggestions for new sparkling wines to try now—because as Chang will attest, it's always the perfect time for bubbly.

### 1. Salon "Le Mesnil" Blanc de Blancs, (any vintage, though I would open the 1973)

If you have been waiting to win the lottery or for the day before the end of the world to finally try what many sommeliers, myself included, would consider to be the best champagne made, now is the time. Made from 100% chardonnay from a gorgeous vineyard in the most idyllic village, these are some of the happiest grapes on Earth and it shows in this legendary wine that ages for decades.

### 2. Raventos i Blanc de Nit Rosado

We just learned to love Cava a few years ago, and then Pepe Raventos left the Cava appellation, aiming to create a higher quality sparkling wine—and he did it. His wines are amazing examples of single terroir sparklers that are right at home in your good lead crystal glasses and with a spread of tapas-inspired dishes or delivery pizza.

### 3. Iron Horse LD 2010

While Iron Horse Classic Vintage Brut is more of a daily drinker if you are lucky, the late disgorged wines are a revelation. Richer, creamier, more refined—like a great sommelier, these wines get better with age.

### 4. Domaine Jousset Exilé Rosé Pet-Nat 2016

I have been adamantly against the slew of orange, organic and pet-nat bottles being slung around these days and also sometime populating entire wine lists. I love the classics—a slim Italian cut wool suit, a pair of Chanel spectator pumps, and classically proportioned and styled wines. But this charming pink bubbly with just a hint of sweetness is so delightful and delicious (and also relatively cheap and cheerful) that I have reached for this bottle several times (shhhhhh—don't tell).

### 5. Szigeti Gruner Veltliner Sekt

Szigeti Sekt—say that three times fast! I also spent a few years making fun of all of the sommeliers who would say in interviews (to be on my wine teams) that Gruner Veltliner was their favorite grape. Sure, it is the most planted grape variety in Austria and a bright, high-toned and refreshing white—but ummmm, you love it better than the grapes that make the legendary, age-worthy wines we sell to the high rollers in the dining room? Well, as it turns out, Gruner also makes a legit méthode champenoise when you let Peter Szigeti do the work. And it's a steal, too.



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In his 20-year career as a travel and lifestyle journalist, J.P. Anderson has traipsed through a dozen Loire Valley chateaux, hobnobbed with iguanas in Guadeloupe, and plucked glacier ice from an Alaskan bay for cocktails. He is currently the National Travel Editor for Modern Luxury magazines.

