

A few dates & facts about Champagne

The French Story so far.

Info from CIVC Comite Interprofessionel du Vin de Champagne.

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- 1668 is the date when Dom Perignon 1638-1715 first entered the Abbey at Hautvilliers near Epernay as cellar master, aged 30. He stayed there for nearly fifty years and he was by all accounts an excellent cellar master and ardent observer of natural fermentation and kept vines well pruned and used only certain grapes.
- 1674 Champagne was originally described as a wine that bubbled in the cask L'art de bien traiter.
- 1685 The French started using the cork stoppers. Prior to that they used small wooden pegs wrapped in hemp and soaked in tallow called broquelet as described in 1670.
- 1689 Champagne wine first described as effervescent by Madame de Sevigne. Le vin du diable really methode rurale
- 1715 Dom Perignon dies in harness aged 77.
- 1718 Canon Godinot published a set of rules that were said to be established by Dom Perignon. It is said that he invented champagne about twenty years before ie around 1698.
- 1728 25th May Champagne wines allowed by Royal Decree to be exported in bottles.
- 1729 First Champagne house established Ruinart.
- 1735 The Champenois adopt a glass vessel of their own design.
- 1813 Degorgement invented and perfected in 1818 by the distinguished Widow Veuve Cliquot.
- 1821 Dom Groussard gives an account of Dom Perignon inventing champagne. 'Come quickly I am drinking the stars' only appeared in print as an advertisement in the late 1800's. At the same time they started to use crystallised sugar in 1820. End of 19th century a former pharmacist Jean-Baptiste Francois showed by research that 4 gms of sugar per litre produced a rise in pressure of one bar or atmosphere after fermentation. Today a bottle is designed to withstand a pressure of 20 bar.
- 1936 Dom Perignon champagne was introduced by Moet et Chandon. Interestingly the bottles now have the date 1668 on the label … which is the date Dom Perignon entered the monastery of Hautvilliers as cellar master.
- 1998 Tom Stevenson publishes the World Encyclopaedia of Champagne and Sparkling Wine and first draws attention to the words of Christopher Merrett; 'Our wine coopers of late times use vast quantities of sugar and molasses to make all sorts of wines to make them drink brisk and sparkling to give them spirit as also to mend their bad tracts' This raises the English question mark over the invention of Champagne and methode champenoise.

more info on...Ciderland by James Crowden