

Sparkle Motion

"Sometimes I doubt your commitment to Sparkle Motion," moans one frenzied pageant mom to another in a scene from the cult-classic film *Donnie Darko*. Well, don't doubt ours. In this column, the editors at *The SOMM Journal* rate the most notable sparkling wines that cross our desks and lips each issue. Given the wide range of production methods, styles, and price points the category covers, we've devised the following system to score each on its own merits.

1 BUBBLE 🍷

Simple but satisfying.

2 BUBBLES 🍷🍷

Satisfying and a little more complex.

3 BUBBLES 🍷🍷🍷

A strong example of its kind.

4 BUBBLES 🍷🍷🍷🍷

A superb example of its kind.

5 BUBBLES 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷

Stellar by any standard.

For details on submitting wines for review, send an email to rtobias@tastingpanelmag.com and jabs@sommjournal.com.



Argyle 2016 Vintage Brut, Willamette Valley, Oregon (\$100/3-bottle set)

Bubbly was made for the holidays, but this Art of Sparkling gift pack is particularly appropriate for two reasons. First, it's gorgeous, with three different labels designed by scholarship-winning students at the Pacific Northwest College of Art as part of an annual collaboration with Argyle. Second, the 2016 vintage—a blend of 55% Chardonnay, 35% Pinot Noir, and 10% Pinot Meunier—smacks of the season, with aromas of candied pear, butter cookie, and sugared almond paving the way for flavors of ripe golden apple with a hint of pineapple. The creamy texture, meanwhile, is reminiscent of cassata. Luscious as that may sound, it all coalesces around a through line of seabreezy minerality.



Herzog NV Lineage Momentus, USA (\$20)

Showing pale yellow with a silvery tint, this off-dry sparkler is a charmer that bursts with notes of ripe citrus—lemon, lime, pink grapefruit—as well as honeysuckle and croissant. It wears its residual sugar well, balancing creamy lime curd plus a touch of pith with a suggestion of salted taffy, and would pair nicely with vibrant, smoky Thai curry and South Indian fare.



La Vieille Ferme NV Réserve Sparkling Rosé, France (\$15)

Venerable Rhône producer Famille Perrin added the first sparkling expressions to the lineup of its value brand, La Vieille Ferme, last year; this rosé is a blend of Grenache, Cinsault, and Pinot Noir. Appealingly cantaloupe colored amid a light but lively perlage, it starts with aromas of tart strawberry, ripe pear, and orange cream-sicle, which continue on the palate along with cider apple and a touch of herb in a rush of mouthwatering acid. There's not much of a finish, but it's fun while it lasts.



VINEYARD BRANDS



MAN Family Wines NV Sparkling Chenin Blanc Brut, South Africa (\$16)

From dry-farmed vineyards in the Agter-Paarl region, this sparkling Chenin has an energetic mousse and bright notes of lime leaf, ripe grapefruit, and honeydew plus a sprinkling of salt. Yet it's softer in texture than you might expect from that description, delightfully bringing to mind melted sherbet.



VINEYARD BRANDS



Schramsberg 2010 Réserve, North Coast (\$120)

What a beauty. Almost rose gold in the glass, with a bead that fairly zigzags, this blend of 84% Pinot Noir and 16% Chardonnay from the first name in California sparkling wine offers ripe d'Anjou pear, brioche au sucre, and a hint of miso caramel on the nose. On the palate, tarte tatin and cinnamon-poached pear show as enticingly as the display in a pâtisserie window, even as a jaunty ribbon of fresh green apple unfurls toward a long, fine finish. *SJ*

