



Bigger Than Your Head

eating & drinking: the good, the bad, and the rest of it

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Weekend Wine Sips: "Have a Super Sparkly Day!"

Posted by Fredric Koeppel under [Argentina](#) , [Burgundy](#) , [California](#) , [Chardonnay](#) , [France](#) , [Napa Valley](#) , [Pinot noir](#) , [Rose wines](#) , [Sonoma County](#) , [South Africa](#) , [Sparkling Wine](#) , [pinot meunier](#)
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Did you think we were finished with sparkling wine? *Mais non, mes amis!* Few are the wine regions around the world that don't produce some type of sparkling wine, and we touch upon some of those areas today in a "Weekend Wine Sips" post that refers to France (a little mysteriously); Argentina; Spain; South Africa; and diverse appellations in California. With one exception, these 10 sparkling wines were samples for review. Unless a year is indicated, these are nonvintage sparklers. And with one exception, they were all produced in the traditional Champagne method of second fermentation in the bottle.

I was at a doctor's office last week, and the younger nurses and assistants were all saying "Have a Super Sparkly Day" to each other, with the appropriate amount of cynicism. This term, from the credit card commercial that drove the United States of America half bonkers during the Yuletide season, has gone viral, and there are, of course, t-shirts now available. I certainly hope that as far as sparkling wine or Champagne is concerned that you indeed "Have a Super Sparkly Day."





Cachette Blanc de Blancs Brut, nv, "France." 11.5% alc. Just a tad of enological and geographical info here. This pleasant little sparkling wine is made from the *airen* grape, the white-grape workhorse of Spain but one not allowed an official label designation in France; nobody's saying you can't grow the grape, you just can't put any information on the label or use a legal appellation. "Bottled by V.A. at

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21200" is what we're told, and thanks to my research assistant, Miss Google, I can tell you that 21200 is the postal code of the hamlet of Meursanges (population 485 in 2010), in the Cote-d'Or department, Beaune district, Beaune-Sud township; in other words — Burgundy. Pale straw color; moderate stream of fairly fine bubbles; clean, fresh dry; brisk and refreshing; lots of limestone and flint; no great character but serves a purpose with decency and grace. Very Good. About \$15.

Mont-Ferrant Brut Rosé Cava, Spain. 12.46% alc. Monastrell 55%, garnacha 40%, pinot noir 5%. Cherry-maroon color; pleasing effervescence; pure raspberry and strawberry; ripe and spicy, a touch sweet initially but goes dry with taut acidity and limestone minerality; vibrant and robust, almost tannic; a wild quality, brambles, roses. Intriguing style. Very Good+. About \$19.

Gloria Ferrer Va de Vi Ultra Cuvée, Sonoma County. 12.5% alc. 89% pinot noir, 8% chardonnay, 3% muscat. Icy blond color, a froth of tiny platinum bubbles. Almond and almond blossom; lemon and quince, ginger and cloves; touch of slightly honeyed star-fruit; round and creamy but shivery with crisp acid and limestone minerality; altogether warm and seductive with a touch of sweetness at the beginning. Really charming. Very Good+. About \$22.

Simonsig Kaapse Vonkel Brut Rosé 2011, Stellenbosch, South Africa. 12% alc. 53% pinotage, 35% pinot noir, 12% pinot meunier. Pale copper-salmon color; exuberant bubbles, pretty in pink; strawberry and raspberry, very steely with a limestone background, bright acidity; very clean, slick as a whistle, a little earthy though, raspberry with all the rasp. Charming and interesting. Very Good+. About \$25.

JCB No. 21 Brut, Crémant de Bourgogne. 12% alc. Pinot noir and chardonnay. Pale gold color; lively effervescence; lemon and lime peel, touch of candied grapefruit; very crisp and dry, steely and stony, heaps of limestone and flint; spiced pear and a hint of orange blossom; taut and vibrant. Very Good+. The Boisset website lists this at \$25, but on the Internet I have not seen it over \$20, and in fact that's what I paid.

Graham Beck Blanc de Blancs Brut 2008, Robertson, South Africa. 12.21% alc. 100% chardonnay. Pale straw-gold color; clean-cut, sleek and elegant, lots of cut; also a ton of limestone and steel-like minerality, cool and bracing; yet it's round, spicy, with hints of roasted lemon and smoked and slightly honeyed almonds. Very Good+. About \$25.

V. Sattui Prestige Cuvée Brut 2009, Napa Valley. 12.5% alc. 81% chardonnay, 19% pinot noir. Pale mild gold color; nice constant stream of bubbles; crisp, clean and fresh; apples and lime peel, hints of limestone and chalk; plenty of verve from acid and scintillating minerality but lacks a little substance; still quite enjoyable. Very Good+. About \$29. Available at the winery or through the V. Sattui website.

Bianchi Extra Brut, Mendoza, Argentina. 12.3% alc. 60% chardonnay, 40% pinot

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