

Champagne on Tap at the Co-op

by Victor Moore, wine/liquor manager

Chestnuts roasting on an open fire, Jack Frost nipping at your nose...As you all can see, I am enthralled in the holiday spirit and loving every moment of this special time of year. The holidays are all about Champagne and his jealous brother, sparkling wine. These fantastic creations are a divine indulgence that electrifies the palate but also extirpates the pocketbook. I have some super deals on spectacular Champagnes and even better values on imported and domestic sparklers.

In addition, I will be running a Champagne tasting on December 15, 2007, from 5pm to 8pm in the downstairs meeting room. We will be tasting over 35 Champagnes and sparkling wines from around the world! Come experience the most exciting tasting of its kind on the Southside.

Champagne is a sparkling wine, full of effervescence, named for the northeast region of France around the cities of Reims and Epernay. True champagne only comes from this specific area. In the 17th century, Benedictine monk Dom Pérignon, cellermaster at the Abbey of Hautvillers until 1715, was credited for his work in the blending of champagnes. French champagne is normally a blend of chardonnay, pinot noir, and the pinot menuier grapes. The traditional méthode champenoise requires a second fermentation of the wine in the bottle, along with some one hundred manual operations. It is this method that makes champagne so expensive, because it is labor-intensive.

Sparkling wines from other regions are known as spumante in Italy, Sekt in Germany, cava in Spain and vin mousseux in other French regions. Some sparkling wines are now made in the United States and labeled as Champagne, so be sure and check the vineyard to see if you are getting true French champagne. US laws do not preclude vineyards labeling domestic sparkling wines as Champagne, but true connoisseurs will not touch any champagne not coming from the northeast region of France.

I hand picked these sparklers for this holiday season. These sparklers are delicious as well as diverse.

Louis Roederer Brut Premier NV \$49.99 750ml.

Brut Premier is the embodiment of Louis Roederer style, combining all the fruitiness and freshness of youth with the vitality of a fully mature wine. This is a structured and elegantly mature wine, with a lively attack and a smooth palate. It is a blend of 56% Pinot Noir, 34% Chardonnay and 10% Pinot Meunier, including 10% of reserve wines from three former harvests,

aged in oak casks for 2-6 years. It has golden color with fine bubbles and a nose of fresh fruit and hawthorn. It has a smooth, complex palate with mingling flavors of white-fleshed fruit (apple and pear) with red berries (blackberries, raspberries, cherries) and notes of toast and almonds. This is a pleasurable wine, deliciously smooth and mature. The Brut Premier is excellent as an aperitif but also readily accompanies light entrées based on fish or shellfish.

Perrier Jouett Fleur de Champagne (flower bottle) \$119.99 750ml.

Launched in 1969, from a design made by Emile Gallé early this century, the cuvée Belle Epoque has gone from strength to strength. The famous "flower bottle" contains Perrier-Jouët's most distinguished champagne a single year vintage ennobled by the patrician Chardonnay grapes from Cramant. There's depth and power here, along with a firm structure underlying the honey, vanilla and bread dough aromas and flavors. Seems to be on the dry side, but that may just be very high acidity. Fine length and character describes this beautiful champagne.

Pol Clement Brut \$11.99 750ml.

This is made from only the Chardonnay grape. It is very fine, delicate, & dry. For generations sparkling wine from France has set the standard for wine lovers the world over, this applies right across the range from premium Champagnes to everyday sparklers. Pol Clement Brut is an excellent dry white wine of its type, made predominantly from Chardonnay for character and strength. It is elegant and fruity with delicate bubbles.

Segura Viudas Brut Reserva \$9.99 750ml

This is a reserve cava that accompanies any meal perfectly from start to finish. It is pale straw yellow in color and elegant and harmonious on the nose. This cava is fresh and well balanced on the palate, where the predominance of Macabeo is evident. Ample flavors and length make this an outstanding buy. It is a blend of 50% Macabeo, 35% Parellada and 15% Xarello.

Deutz Brut Classic \$29.99 750ml.

Deutz Champagne has been produced by five generations of the same family since 1838. Thanks to their concern with quality rather than quantity, Deutz long ago acquired an exclusive cachet in France. Deutz Brut Classic owes its distinctive taste to a carefully controlled blend of Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier and Chardonnay grapes from the Montagne de Reims and villages around Epernay. Every bottle is aged for at least three years, with traditional methods used in the cellars. Floral aromas followed by hints of toast, marzipan and ripe fruits, and an intensely fruity

after taste, make this well-rounded wine a delightful aperitif. It's also the perfect way to celebrate any occasion.

Roederer Estate Brut \$19.99 750ml

Roederer Estate Brut, the first California sparkling wine produced by Champagne Louis Roederer, builds upon a 200-year tradition of fine winemaking that has made Roederer champagne among the most sought-after in the world. Roederer's winemaking style is based on two elements: ownership of its own vineyards and the addition of oak-aged reserve wines to each year's blend or cuvée. All the grapes for the Anderson Valley wines are grown on the estate. Each year, the winemaker selects a portion of the best wines for aging in French oak casks. Aged from one to three years, wines from this reserve cellar are added to the blend, creating a multi-vintage cuvée in the traditional Roederer style, known for its body, finesse and depth of flavor. The Roederer Estate Brut debuted in October 1988, and has since established its reputation as one of California's premier sparklers, remaining true to the heritage of excellence and style of its French forebears.

Stefano Farina Moscato D'asti \$9.99 750ml

Not a traditional sparkler but this Italian sweet gem is sparkling and very refreshing. On the palate there is a slight taste of alcohol then an inviting acidity and a pleasant sweetness that is never cloying. For those who prefer the sweet stuff this is the sparkler for you.

These are just a few of the great sparklers we have. All wines and spirits can be purchased at the Hyde Park Coop Liquor Department.