

## Zero–Two–Wine–Three–Eight

*The most opinionated wine Newsletter in America*

Volume 1 **Chapter 3**, book of Bertil

### A very sparkling subject... The nativity

Champagne, Prosecco, Cava, & Pet'Nat:  
Myths and Reality

Dear readers, friends as emeritus members of Bonde Fine Wine, I am introducing our third newsletter.

That is the topic of the hour. Who, what, how? Champagne, Prosecco and Cava are technically not "styles" of sparkling wines, but appellations that can only be referred to the concepts of "terroir". As Ancestral, Traditional, Charmat, Russian and Pet'Nat it can only be referenced to "wine methods". Yes, yes.. I know, all this is very confusingly unfriendly for the common man (I am mortal too, do not worry). And yet all this is so simple and even more so when it comes to American sparkling wines. So here it is.

### Chapter 3.1 Methods

Simplicity: The traditional method formerly known as "Méthode Champenoise" refers to a practice used in the Champagne region, since Dom Pérignon (early 18th century) and it has been included in the specifications of the winemaking practices of the Champagne Appellation since 1927. Be aware the method (known and practiced now) is not limited to Champagne region and appellation but can be practiced in the rest of the world; this is called the "Traditional Method".



This method consists in producing a sparkling wine from still wines put in second fermentation in bottle with the addition of natural yeast (called Champenoise yeast) and sugar. When it comes to the Champagne Appellation, this title guarantees the origin of the grapes used come only from the Champagne wine region, as well as the use (in all discretion and freedom) of three or fewer of the grape varieties Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and/or Pinot Meunier. There are also many other boring details, but the most important thing is that the word Champagne does not guarantee quality nor to the notion of price. What it does guarantee, certainly, is the myth of the luxe.

#### *Anecdote (Humorous, Factual):*

*The so-called Traditional Champagne Method was not in fact invented in Champagne or even in France. We owe it to Christopher Merret, an English scientist, and it was at the same time that a master glassblower, also English, invented a bottle resistant enough to withstand a wine's second fermentation, the famous "Bouteille Champenoise." Therefore Mr. Dom Pérignon must receive a credit only for the invention of the protective cage for the cork (and also for the refining of the method).*

That's all! "Prosecco" is used, alas, in the USA to define a sparkling wine of low price and low quality. What for? This is due to its method can be inexpensive and easy to produce. The so-called "Charmat Method" invented first in Italy (1895) and then in France (1907), consists of reproducing the second fermentation process in a large tank (not in an individual bottle as the traditional method does) with mechanical filtration and bottling at low atmospheric pressure.

The name Prosecco refers to a region and Italian villages Veneto and Friuli Venezia where the main grape variety used is the Glera (formerly Prosecco). Depending on the production regulation subgroups.

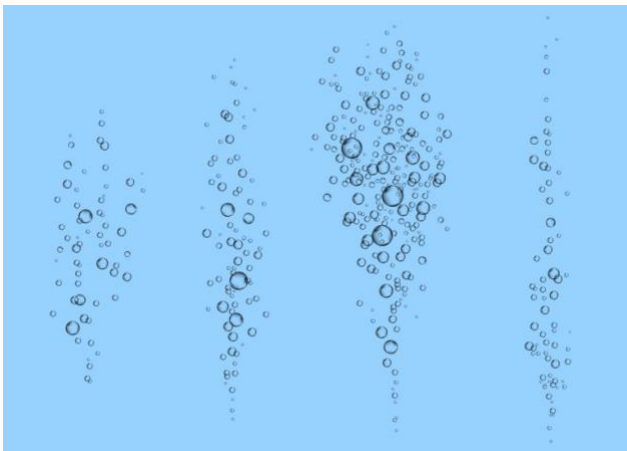
A Prosecco can be flat, Spumante (Italian sparkling wine from any area and any grape variety), Frizzante (semi-sparkling), or sparkling wine. In some cases, consequently much more expensive, it can be produced in traditional method. In this case the more expensive price determines the product's quality.

In general, remember that if the bottle of effervescent wine isn't labeled "Traditional Method" then you can 90% of the time infer that the "Charmat Method" is used.

As for the term Cava, this refers to the wine region of Catalunya, Spain. Formerly called "Spanish Champagne," Cava solely uses the practices of the "Traditional Method" with the choice of grape varieties, Macabeo, Parellada and/or Xarel-lo. The price of a Cava, as with Champagne, depends on the quality of the product offered.

But then...what is Pet'Nat?

Firstly, it refers to the translated "Natural Sparkling" but also to the practice of the "Ancestral Method." This consists of transferring a wine during fermentation (Interruption Method) to finish the fermentation in a closed bottle or with the Intermission Method (Entr'acte method) by adding fresh grape juice to a wine already fermented in a bottle in order to cause a second carbonic fermentation. In both cases the Pet'Nat wine will be good. But nothing controls or legislates the use of the word "Pet'Nat". The result is a fair for practices, keeping it figuratively kosher (more or less) and this includes Charmat, Russian and even for many the "Soda Method" (introduction of CO<sub>2</sub> by pressure into the wine at the time of bottling – yes, just like the soda gun has your favorite bar. So usually, the word Pet'Nat refers to a sparkling wine with low atmospheric pressure similar to a Spumante or Frizzante. The price indicates the method used.

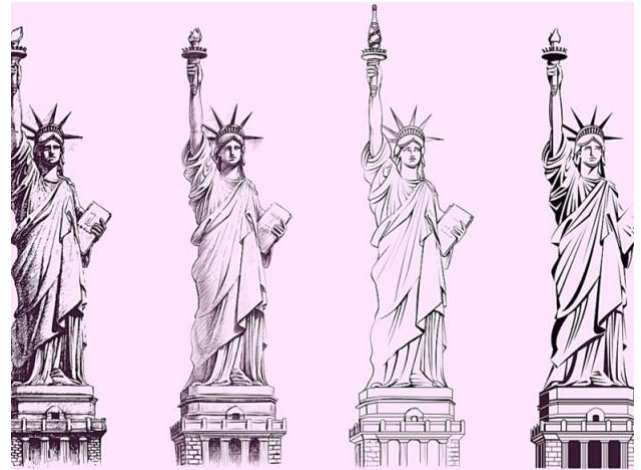


## Chapter 3.2:

### Proper Decision Making

So then, we Americans, what terms should we use to talk about sparkling wines?

If you are talking about a wine from another country, use the appellations, but if you will do refer to it once more, use the method. I admit with you that all this may be boring, complicated and confusing, so here is a solution - my solution - the only solution that will allow you to be certain of what you are buying and your \*patriotism\* (coincidentally my next topic for the January 2022 newsletter: "The United States: Our Country, Our Wines).



The U.S. today produces probably the most beautiful, the best, and the most diverse sparkling wines in the world. (There is a reason why all the largest Champagne houses are established in the USA). The fortune of our country is not to be constrained by traditions or limitations of appellations, ethical and political regulations. These producers have studied at the most prestigious houses and offer us today products at home in America spanning the gamut of price and quality. You simply just have to read the label to know the method, the origin (region), and the grape(s) used. The price will directly relate to its quality and, not surprisingly, warranty.

## Chapter 3.3:

### We are here for you

Some of the best representations of American sparkling wines are available at **Bonde** your favorite Wine Shop:

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Gruet Winery, "Blanc de Noirs" NV, New Mexico  
75% Pinot Noir, 25% Chardonnay  
Traditional Method

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Grochau Cellars, "Joyride Rosé" 2020  
Willamette Valley, OR  
95% Pinot Noir, 5% Pinot Blanc  
Pet'Nat Method

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Lieb Cellars, Sparkling Pinot Blanc 2018  
North Fork, Long Island, NY  
100% Pinot Blanc  
Traditional Method

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Stolpman Vineyards, "Combe" Pet'Nat 2020  
Santa Barbara, CA  
Trousseau & Mondeuse  
Pet'Nat

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Sea Smoke Vineyards, "Sea Spray" Blanc de Noirs 2015  
Brut, Santa Rita Hills, Santa Barbara, CA  
100% Pinot Noir  
Traditional Method

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Schramsberg Vineyards, "J Schram" 2012, North Coast,  
CA  
90% Chardonnay, 10% Pinot Noir  
Traditional Method

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Westport Rivers Vineyard, RJR 2009  
Westport Rivers, Massachusetts  
65% Pinot Noir, 35% Chardonnay  
Traditional Method

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*My words and opinions in these newsletters are and would always be personal, and I intend to offend.*

*I always accept that others have the full right and duty to challenge me, to argue, and, if it is necessary, excommunicate me from their beliefs (often dull and hollow) because I would act the same way if it were the other way around.*

Mr. B



***Time to stock again...***

**[Bondewines.com](http://Bondewines.com)**

54 Church Street  
Cambridge MA 02138  
617.9452360

[bonde@bondewines.com](mailto:bonde@bondewines.com)

**\*Memorandum:**