

[Home](#)[Featured Articles](#)[Complimentary Wine Advice](#)[Food & Wine Pairings](#)[Wine & Food Pairings](#)[Top 10 Wines of the Century](#)[Wine Savvy Tips](#)[Crosswords](#)[Contact Us](#)

33rd Annual Best of The Best Non-Vintage Champagne

QRW Tasting Team

[Log In](#)

The price of Champagne continues to rise. A check of prices from last year's QRW Best of The Best Champagne tasting shows an overall rise of 15% to 20% depending on the producer. The reasons for the increase haven't changed: demand, labor intensiveness, and not a little greed on the part of producers and growers. No matter, Champagne lovers are willing to pay because there is nothing like the bubbles that come from northern France's great growing regions. (Besides the holidays are nearing and Champagne consumers are often indifferent to prices.) Blind taste Champagne with virtually any other sparkling wine, and the difference in aroma, texture, and finish is enormous. Champagne is, well, Champagne. Anything else is anticlimax.

As is our custom, we severely limit tasting notes, which are often parodied and go largely unread anyway. Champagne flavors are incredibly similar. Alphabetically they are: apple, apricot, brioche, coffee bean, creamy, fig, hazelnut, lemony, nougaty, nutty, toasty, and steely about covers it. We have no difficulty in admitting, however, that there aren't many Champagnes we don't admire.

Champagne producers depend on Non-Vintage wines for their livelihood. Thus, consistency must be maintained. Buy Bollinger and you expect the

More ...

[Is Dining Dying?](#)[Château Margaux at Blantyre](#)[29th Annual Best of The Best: Best of Show Winners](#)[29th Annual Best of The Best: California Chardonnay](#)[29th Annual Best of The Best: California Zinfandel](#)[Photo Feature: A Nostalgic Look Back](#)[29th Annual Best of The Best: California Cabs and Bordeaux Blends](#)[29th Annual Best of The Best: California Pinot Noir](#)[All Things Grape and Small, Winter 2012/13](#)[QRW Vintage Wine Chart \[PDF\]](#)[Gaia and Gaja: Italy's First Wine Family](#)[29th Annual Best of The Best: Champagne Tasting](#)[Wine's Decline: Wither Romance?](#)[Aristocrats of the Table: Julia Child, Eating, and Dining](#)[Whining about Downton Abbey](#)[Cellar For A Lord: Downton Abbey, Part II](#)[All Things Grape and Small, Autumn 2012](#)[Best of The Best: California Cabs](#)[Best of The Best: California Pinot Noir](#)[Best of The Best: California Zinfandel](#)[Wine Scene](#)[Best of The Best: Vintage Champagnes 2008-09](#)

Bolly to be like the Bollinger you had last time. Ditto for all the others. The quest for us at QRW then is to find Non-Vintage Champagnes with enough texture, balanced acidity, and finish to satisfy, which our selections do. Twenty Brut and ten Blanc de Blancs were blind tasted. Prices may vary from region to region.

Brut Non-Vintage

AYALA Brut, Ay, \$50. One of the best buys in the market: chalky, with lemon, apple, and biscuit.

Bollinger Special Cuvee, Ay, \$75. Apple, nectarine, with brioche notes, nutty with a classic, lingering finish.

Charles Heidsieck Brut Reserve, Reims, \$45. Still one of the best Champagnes in the market. Creamy, rich coffee bean notes, apple and apricot, with long nougaty finish.

Deutz, Ay, \$45. Good buy. Silky, pear, lemony, with rich bread/dough flavor and firm and lively finish.

Louis Roederer Premier Brut, Reims, \$50. Toasty, lemon curd, grapefruit, firm mineral notes, apricot and nectarine in a lively Roederer finish.

Taittinger La Francaise, Reims, \$50. Reliable and consistent. Engaging apple tones, with lemon, nuttiness, brioche, and satisfying finish.

Blanc de Blancs Non-Vintage

Baron de Rothschild Blanc de Blancs, Cotes des Blanc & Montaigne de Reims Villages, \$125. Creamy, pear, hazelnuts, deep texture, rich brioche notes and elegant finish.

Delamotte Blanc de Blancs, Le Mesnil-sur-Oger, \$78. A Champagne that needs your attention. Nice mineral feel, with apple and lemon curd, crisp notes, and rich finish.

Henriot Blanc de Blancs, Reims, \$60. Green apple and apricot upfront with brioche, pear and peach on the palate, almondy, and elegant finish. For the price, it's the best Blanc de Blancs in the market.

Best of The Best: Non-Vintage Champagnes 2011

Wining and Dining at WGBH Studios

QRW Covers by Photographer Jim Scherer

Wining & Dining in Morocco

Wine Quiz: Varietal Variations

An Afternoon at Caymus

Shafer Vineyards: Treasure Trail; Wine, Love and Rock and Roll

Blending Buzz at Rutherford Ranch

QRW Wine Diary

Wines of the Quarter: Two Great Reds

Dernier Cri: What's a Good Wine?

Style Doyenne: Profile & Book Reviews on Mireille Guiliano

Hugh Johnson Praises QRW and Publisher Richard Elia in the Boston Globe

Hear Publisher Richard Elia on NPR