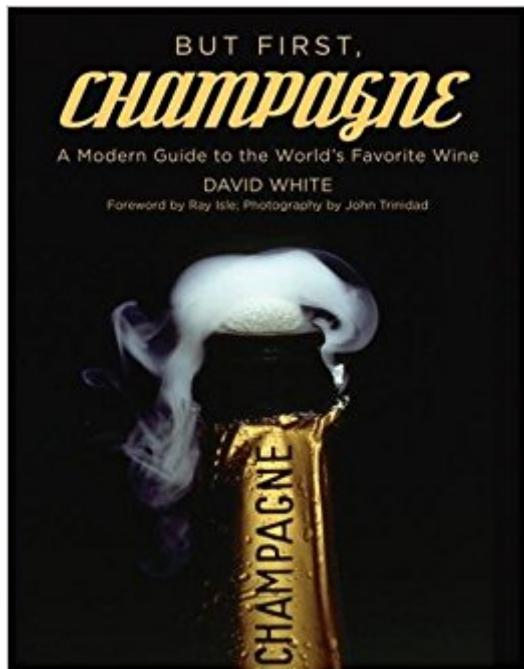


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But First, Champagne: A Modern Guide To The World's Favorite Wine



Synopsis

Both the region of Champagne and its wines have always been associated with prestige and luxury. Knowledgeable wine enthusiasts have long discussed top Champagnes with the same reverence they reserve for the finest wines of Bordeaux and Burgundy. But everyday Americans usually keep Champagne way back on the high shelf. It's for big celebrations, send-offs, and wedding toasts and, more often than not, is bought by the case. The good stuff costs plenty; and frankly, rarely seems worth the price. Today, though, Champagne is in the midst of a renaissance; no longer to be unjustly neglected. Over the past decade, an increasing number of wine enthusiasts have discovered the joys of grower Champagne; wines made by the farmers who grow the grapes. Thanks to a few key wine importers and America's newfound obsession with knowing where food comes from, these shipments have been climbing steadily. In *But First, Champagne*, author David White details Champagne's history along with that of its wines, explains how and why the market is changing, and profiles the region's leading producers. This book is essential reading for wine enthusiasts, adventurous drinkers, foodies, sommeliers, and drinks professionals. With a comprehensive yet accessible overview of the region, its history, and its leading producers, *But First, Champagne* will demystify Champagne for all. From the foreword: "Smart, entertaining, and valuable . . . one of those rare wine books that should appeal to people just getting into Champagne and longtime Champagne obsessives." —Ray Isle, Executive Wine Editor, *Food & Wine*

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Customer Reviews

“But First, Champagne is the book you didnâ™t know you needed.â • —Fine Wine Concierge“This is an instant classic, the definitive guide to the sparkling wine of a justly ballyhooed region . . . As with the wines themselves, White's most joyous accomplishment is in the finely etched details. —StarTribune“A comprehensive, smartly written guide.â • —Food & Wine “David White shares an enthusiasm for the worldâ™s classiest bubbly in his delightful new book . . . [he] has penned an indispensable guide to the French region and its wine.â • —The Washington Post“Exploring the renaissance of grower Champagne . . . White dives into the Champagne regionâ™s storied history and demystifies the good stuff for wine geeks and newbies alike.â • —Chicago Tribune“You'll be entertained by the lively history and sumptuous photographs.â • —The New Criterion“[We] can confidently recommend this book as a good companion as you sip a bottle of bubbly.â • —Vino-Sphere“Those that pick up But First, Champagne . . . will be richly rewarded . . . White never loses sight of what makes the region a truly unique place, perhaps the only place that could give birth to the world's most magical wine.â • —Tasting Panel“Champagne is one of wineâ™s most misunderstood topics, not helped by the preponderance of philosophically rusty books on the topic. Enter David Whiteâ™s sleek effort . . . it covers Champagne 101 deftly and in detailâ • —PUNCH“A gratifying read. The book is not pretentious in any sort of way, rather simply admires the historical process that has brought about so many bubbles. At times, one forgets the book is about wine at all (in a good way), while the people, land, and tradition take center stage. But First, Champagne is great if you are looking for a new read or need something handy for reference. Either way, enjoy the rambunctious party that is the story of Champagne.â • —Grape Collective “Whiteâ™s book brings a new perspective to a magical region thatâ™s witnessed more heartbreak—and lubricated more celebrations—than anywhere else in the world. Packed with beautiful photographs, But First, Champagne is essential reading for wine enthusiasts, adventurous drinkers, and foodies.â • —Miami Culinary Tours“[White] has done a very, very good job of laying out the current state of Champagne in the context of the world wine marketplace. Thereâ™s a lot to like in But First, Champagne, not the least of which is the fact that both newbies and jaded connoisseurs alike can find ample merit within its pages.â • —1 Wine Dude

David White is one of the worldâ™s leading wine writers and author of a nationally syndicated wine column hosted by Grape Collective. He is the founder and editor of Terroirist.com, one of the worldâ™s most popular wine blogs, for which heâ™s been awarded both Best New Wine Blog and

Best Overall Wine Blog. His writing has been published in the World of Fine Wine, the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, the Washington Post, and more. White also serves as chair of Heartâ™s Delight, one of the worldâ™s largest charity wine auctions. He resides in Washington, DC. Ray Isle is executive wine editor of Food & Wine. In addition to overseeing the magazineâ™s wine department, Ray writes the monthly column, Tasting Room, and regular feature stories, plus directs all spirits and beer coverage; he also writes weekly for CNNâ™s Eatocracy site. Prior to joining Food & Wine in 2005, Ray was managing editor of Wine & Spirits. He lives in New York and can be found on Twitter as @islewine and on Instagram as @rayisle. John Trinidad is an avid photographer, wine enthusiast, and attorney. After working harvest in Burgundy and in Healdsburg, John combined his legal education and interest in wine by joining the law firm of Dickenson, Peatman and Fogarty, where he works with the wine law practice group. He lives in Napa, California.

Whether you are just getting into champagne or you want a deep dive into some of the best producers in the world, this is the book for you. David White nails it with his vivid telling of the history of the region and the methods by which champagne made while John Trinidad's pictures transport you to France. Candidly I learned more about "tasting stars" from his book than any wine class I have taken. As a side note my wife is a champagne enthusiast and I got it for her as a "date night" gift. Needless to say she loves it (although I've borrowed it quite a bit). Unfortunately for my pocket book we are now ordering so much more Pol Roger, Pierre Peters and Egly-Ouriet as a result. A small price to pay for happiness.

Anyone looking for a thorough but accessible book on Champagne -- the wine, the region, the history and more -- should take a serious interest in this book. White's writing is clear and not marked with the kind of superfluous or self-aggrandizing flourishes that many food and wine writers often deploy to convey expertise; he simply lets his own knowledge speak (plainly) for itself. He also does an admirable job as a kind of wine journalist, speaking to the actual current state of Champagne and featuring the full gamut of producers, both big and small, and thus covering the wines and region in a more authentic / genuine way. Far too often, books like this one either skip the (incredibly important) little guys or just focus on what's trendy (less of an issue overall, I suppose, but still not good for a general resource). "But First, Champagne" gives you both -- and beautiful photography to match -- and for that, it should be commended highly.

Best book on Champagne I've read! Interesting, informative, well-written. David White finds the sweet spot between providing enough detail for the serious wine lover while not making it so academic that only those in the trade can follow along. If you like wine--but aren't 100% sure you can diagram every champagne process or name the top 25 grower champagne producers--this book is for you.

So excited to finally receive my copy and read through it. It has a great combination of thoughtful analysis of Champagne's history along with commentary about more recent trends. For the wine lover, you get such great detail and depth on the region's coolest producers (Ledru, Provost, Laval, Selosse, etc) along with plenty of commentary on the big houses, too. I've always been a fan of David's writing, so it's no surprise that I plowed through this book quickly. My only question to the author is, "what region are you focusing on next?" My vote would be for Rioja!

This book was a really interesting, informative, yet easy & digestible read. Though an avid drinker of wine and champagne who has visited the region multiple times, I'm far from being an oenophile or connoisseur. White's colorful descriptions of the history of the region and production process make it easy for amateur drinkers to follow along; meanwhile the detailed grower profiles (of which there are dozens) offer quite a bit of information that I imagine would be new to even the most educated champagne drinkers. As others have noted in their reviews, I found the commentary on recent trends to be especially interesting. The picturesque photos are an added bonus to this wonderful book.

A great, comprehensive look at champagne! My spouse and I are very into grower champagne, and this book was a solid foundation on the topic. Good coverage of Selosse et al.. We absolutely recommend bringing the book along on any travels to France, since you can essentially use it as a guidebook like Lonely Planet for wine.

I love Champagne. I try to enjoy a different Grand Marque Champagne during our Christmas celebration. This book gave me a better appreciation of the types of grapes that are in my favorite wine. Now I have more information about Grower Champagnes that may have the same composition and maybe available at a lower price point. The search now begins to find these new wines. I am looking forward to the search.

For someone whose understanding of champagne began and ended with the fact that I enjoy drinking it, and some vague understanding that you ferment it more than once, this book was perfect. It's an easy read, packs in fun and fascinating history, and even looks great on the coffee table. Bottom line: buy the book. It'll have you excited to drink more delicious wines (especially the 'Grower Champagnes' that the author does such a nice job promoting and profiling).

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