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### Tasting Notes

#### Champagne adds sparkle to events

By Bob Hosmon:

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Those of you planning to celebrate Valentine's Day — or planning ahead for a June wedding — consider this: Nothing is more celebratory than champagne. And nothing seems more appropriate for these special occasions than pink champagne.

The best "pink" champagnes tend toward a pale salmon color, but they still look terrific in a fluted or tulip-shaped long-stemmed glass. Fortunately, there are rosé bubbliés that are right, relatively speaking, for the current economic times.

Indeed, if you select any of these sparklers listed here, you're bound to please not only yourself but also your loved ones and guests.

From California, I favor several nonvintage and vintage rosés including the *2005 Gloria Ferrer Brut Rosé* from Carneros, the nonvintage *J Vineyards Brut Rosé* from the Russian River Valley, the *2002 Mumm Napa Brut Rosé* from Napa and the *2005 Schramsberg Brut Rosé* from California's North Coast.

Although good values in French Champagne or sparkling wine are hard to find, there is the very affordable nonvintage *Bouvet Rosé Excellence* produced in the Loire Valley.

And I find the following to be, if not inexpensive, at least priced fairly: Moët & Chandon nonvintage *Brut Rosé Imperial* from Epernay, nonvintage *Pommery Brut Rosé Imperial* from Epernay, nonvintage *Pommery Brut Rosé Springtime* from Reims and nonvintage *Piper-Heidsieck Rosé Sauvage* from Reims. One of Champagne's best values is the nonvintage *Nicolas Feuillatte Brut Rosé Chouilly* from Epernay.

Arguably, the best budget-priced pink bubbliés are from Spain. I recommend the nonvintage *Segura Viudas Aria Brut Pinot Noir* and the nonvintage *Freixenet Cordon Rosado Brut*. Although they won't "knock your socks off," they are quite nice and ideal choices for serving at large parties.

*Serve with:* I like pink champagne with smoked salmon, ham, fried chicken and hamburgers. It also can be served with salted nuts (especially almonds) and popcorn.

*Availability/suggested retail:* Sold primarily in wine and gourmet food shops (although some of the

less expensive bottles can be found in food markets), the Gloria Ferrer retails for \$42, the J Vineyards for \$40, the Mumm Napa for \$24 and the Schramsberg for \$40 a bottle.

The Bouvet is priced at \$17, the Moet & Chandon at \$50, the Pommery at \$55 and the Piper-Heidsieck at \$50 a bottle. The bargain-priced Segura Viudas sells for \$12; the Freixenet for \$14.

*Have a question about wine?* Write to Wine, Sun Sentinel, 200 E. Las Olas Blvd., Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301-2293. Or send an e-mail with your first and last name, address and telephone number to [dhartz@SunSentinel.com](mailto:dhartz@SunSentinel.com) with "Wine Column" in the subject line. Sorry, no personal replies.

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