

# CSWWC 2022: The French sparkling empire strikes back

Tom Stevenson, the competition's chairman, gives the results and behind-the-scenes story of the Champagne & Sparkling Wine World Championships

With a grand total of 147 gold and 248 silver medals, this was the most successful competition since the standout year of 2019. It was also the year when France stepped back up to the plate. Until 2019, France had always taken top place, but in 2020 and 2021 Italy roared ahead. In 2022, however, France fought back strongly, winning 55 golds and 48 silvers compared to Italy's 53 golds and a whopping 129 silvers (more than half of the silver medals awarded in the entire competition). In pure Olympian terms, this makes France the clear winner, but Italy missed out by only two gold medals, and with such a massive number of silver medals, it can hold its head up high.

This was the year when Roger Jones, the CSWWC's ambassador extraordinaire and super-talented former Michelin-starred in-house chef, decided he would be Dr Dolittle. (See this 26-second clip, <https://tinyurl.com/2529bud2>, no special effects involved!) In 2020, when we were locked down at Merrieweathers at the height of the Covid pandemic, we were forced by circumstance to overwork Roger and confine him to a bunk bed. In 2022, however, we had the means to make amends at Jon Carter's New House Farm Country Retreat in the High Weald of East Sussex, where we enjoyed spoiling him with a spacious suite overlooking the swimming pool. Roger was ably assisted by his lovely wife Sue, whose charm, calm, and efficiency pervaded the entire team. Unhindered by the pandemic, we were also able to give them both a day off when we took everyone to The Bell Inn in Ticehurst, an establishment that the CSWWC happily endorses for its amazing Sunday lunch and friendly service.

## How we score

All medals must be agreed by all three judges tasting blind.

- n Gold: 18.5–20 points
- n Silver: 17–18 points
- n Bronze (theoretical, not awarded): 15.5–16.5 points
- n No award: 12.5–14 points
- n Possibly faulty: 12 points
- n Definitely faulty: 11 points (and the judge must name the fault).

This is a 20-point system, and the top three are pretty much standard the world over. Some wine competitions have adopted the 100-point scale, but that is merely a matter of calculation, and any professional taster should be able to jump from one to the other without difficulty.

In recent years, we have seen the introduction of an upper level of so-called double-gold or platinum medals at various other competitions, but in my opinion, skimming off the top layer of gold-medal wines devalues the other gold medals. This was also the opinion of Tony Jordan, who always used to say that gold medals should be regarded as the ultimate achievement in any competition. Any awards beyond gold should reflect a specific purpose, such as Best in Class or a trophy. There can only be one Best in Class or trophy winner. These are not categories of medal and do not affect the stature of gold. Best in Class is the last truly objective verdict in any competition. All wines are judged blind, of course, but up to and including Best in Class they are judged blind exclusively against other wines of the same provenance and style. Take one step beyond Best in Class, and the judging starts veering from objective to subjective.

For example, a Regional Trophy still retains provenance, but it is a choice

between different styles, whereas a National Trophy is a choice between different regions and quite often different styles. World Champion Trophies strictly adhere to one style, but the choice is between wines from different origins. Neither the style nor the provenance will be revealed when judging for such awards, but the decisions made can never be fully objective. If asked which is best between a Non-Vintage blend, Vintage blend, blanc de blancs, blanc de noirs, and a rosé, it comes down to a subjective judgment in the end, even if they all come from the same provenance. It's like being asked to judge apples against pears. We try to resolve this dilemma by looking for the best balance of purity, finesse, and complexity, but the choice will ultimately be a personal preference.

## No award, possibly faulty, and definitely faulty

Allowing a score of between 12.5 and 14 points enables the judges to indicate how bad a technically correct wine can be. However, we use a single, fixed score to distinguish between a no-award wine and one that is possibly (12 points) or definitely (11 points) faulty. To receive the lowest-possible score of the competition and the dubious honor of being labeled definitely faulty, the judge making that call has to name the fault in question.

## Unique to CSWWC

- n All wines received in clear glass bottles are double-bagged in thick, lightproof plastic bags to protect the contents from light-strike.
- n Rather than taking just days and using hundreds of judges, leaving producers to wonder who might be tasting their wines, the CSWWC takes weeks and uses

the same world-class sparkling-wine specialists for the sake of consistency and accuracy.

- n A panel of three equals is better than having a panel of four and giving the chair a casting vote. This is not TV looking for drama. If the judges are the best, trust them to agree.
- n When the number of entries jump, we increase how long we judge, not the number of tasters.
- n A second bottle of all wines failing to win a gold or silver medal is opened by Orsi Szentkiralyi, our tasting quality-control director, who compares it to the bottle judged. If she finds any sign of bottle variation, that wine is seamlessly fed back into the judging schedule. Even if the judges have requested a second bottle, a third bottle will be opened up.

## The results for 2022

It took us 11 days to taste our way through almost 1,000 sparkling wines from 21 different countries. Keeping pace the whole way was Simon Stockton, our reserve judge, who has to remain absolutely in the zone if for any reason one of three judges should drop out.

With France regaining its number-one spot and Italy snapping at its heels, for the first time Australia took third place on the leader board, followed by the UK, while Spain and New Zealand were in equal-fifth position.

## An ABC of entries not reviewed

Argentina can certainly win golds and often does. In some years, however, such as 2022, silvers are as high as it gets. Time to enter magnums? We received entries from Belgium for the first time, with Domaine du Chant d'Eole 2019 Brut Rosé winning a silver straight out of the starting blocks, indicating, perhaps, that this country has potential. Unfortunately, Brazil is a consistent underperformer. I have tasted knockout mature sweet sparkling Moscato from Brazil in the past. Such wines might not be to everybody's taste in the 21st century, but for their category, they are without doubt world-class, so why not submit them? Canada has not shown its best this year, while Chile plays truant more often than not, which is a pity for a former trophy-winning country.

## In vino Veritas

As chairman of the CSWWC, I have no additional powers when it comes to judging. All three judges are equal in rank, and there is no (ludicrous) situation where a chair of judges has the casting vote. I am, however, responsible for how the competition is set up, and one of the most important decisions I have to make is the choice of glass.

Riedel Veritas Champagne Glass is easily my first choice for home and judging. The only glass that comes remotely close, as far as I am concerned, is also from Riedel: the Superleggero Champagne Glass, but that is handmade, hand-finished, significantly more expensive, and its stem is too long to be practical for competition use. At the table, though, Superleggero is peerless.

The Veritas bowl is as elegant as it gets, with a paper-thin rim and an exquisitely slender stem that looks thinner than a Zalto. (Actually, it is an optical illusion, because Zalto's is microscopically thinner for only half an inch [1cm] or so, from which it widens noticeably toward both the bowl and the stem, whereas Riedel's Veritas retains its slenderness for 95 percent of the length of its stem.) The Veritas stem-to-bowl ratio is perfect for swirling, nosing, and assessing, while the bowl-to-stem and stem-to-base joints are utterly seamless, thanks a proprietary machine-pulling technology that is unique to Riedel. Other manufacturers will no doubt catch up one day, but as far as I am concerned, this machine-made glass is superior to virtually all handmade and hand-finished glasses.



With France regaining its number-one spot and Italy snapping at its heels, for the first time Australia took third place on the leader board, followed by the UK, while Spain and New Zealand were in equal-fifth position

China has underperformed again. Croatia has submitted entries for a few years now, but without much progress and should now submit magnums to determine the potential of that beautiful coastal country.

Most sekt producers do not care about a global reputation, just sales on the domestic German market, so most years we see few German entries and seldom any gold-medal winners. For the most part, these producers do not appreciate that global reputations create demand and that demand drives price, whether they constrain themselves to their own market or not. Imagine if Champagne generally, and the makers of DP and Cristal specifically, had the same attitude. They would not be able to ask more than

€10 a bottle. So, come on, Germany: Try to muster up even just a fraction of the pride you have for Riesling and Pinot Noir. There was a time when I tasted 350 sekt every year, and loads of them were of gold-medal quality.

India failed to shine this year. Japan produced a silver for the second year running, but if other producers entered, we might see a gold. Portugal and South Africa also failed to shine, which is very disappointing for countries that have won national trophies in the past.

## Should do better (and why)

In 2022, the CSWWC received 97 Prosecco entries, of which just two won gold medals and six won silvers. Compare that to Prosecco's average of nine golds and 30 silvers for the three preceding years and you have to ask why. There was an excessive number of faulty, often smelly, wines, but even the non-faulty theoretical bronze and no-award wines lacked fruit, softness, and elegance. When tasting Prosecco, DOCG or DOC, there is always an abundance of amylic aromas, as a result of cool fermentation on extremely youthful wines that try to preserve as much primary and secondary aromas as possible, but there has to be fruit and softness. When the second flight was just as disappointing as the first, Essi

PROSECCO Conegliano-Valdobbiadene Superficial harvest analysis 2018-22									
Harvest	Locality	ABV %	pH	Total acidity (g/l)	Tartaric acid (g/l)	Malic acid (g/l)	Flowering	Picking	Days
2018	Conegliano	9.8	3.4	5.3	6.2	2.2	May 22	September 4	105
	Valdobbiadene	9.1	3.3	5.9	6.2	2.6	May 26	September 10	107
2019	Conegliano	9.7	3.2	7.3	6.7	3.4	June 7	September 11	96
	Valdobbiadene	9.3	3.3	7.6	6.8	3.9	June 11	September 17	98
2020	Conegliano	9.9	3.3	5.5	5.8	2.5	May 26	September 7	104
	Valdobbiadene	9.1	3.2	7.1	6.4	3.5	May 28	September 12	107
2021	Conegliano	9.9	3.1	8.4	5.7	3.3	June 10	September 16	98
	Valdobbiadene	9.1	3.0	10.9	7.0	6.2	June 18	September 21	95
2022	Conegliano	9.8	3.2	6.1	6.9	1.8	May 28	August 30	94
	Valdobbiadene	9.3	3.2	6.6	6.9	2.2	May 31	September 6	98

asked, “Where is all the juicy ripe pear fruit we are so used to?”

We got the distinct impression that most of the defects could be tracked back to the grapes, not the handling or vinification, which made sense because the production method is short and relatively simple, and the vast majority of producers are extremely competent at what they do. This is why most Proseccos are so extraordinarily consistent. Trouble in the vineyard would be a logical explanation, and because the vast majority of the Proseccos submitted in 2022 were from the 2021 harvest, whether vintaged or not, the first thing we did was to check out 2021. But all sources, official and otherwise, suggested that 2021 was an excellent vintage. When I returned home from the judging, I continued to ask questions about 2021, but some producers even declared that it was possibly the greatest vintage they had ever experienced. So, I did a little digging into the basic parameters of the last five harvests, and this is what I found.

What immediately jumped out was the malic acid for Valdobbiadene. An average of 6.2g/l was so far off the charts that I asked the official source of my data to double-check, which they did, and it was confirmed to be correct. A quick look at the entries for 2022

showed that no fewer than two thirds were exclusively from Valdobbiadene. The picking in 2021 might have started later than any of the other years in the table above, but obviously not late enough, because the grapes were simply not ripe. This explains why there was an absence of fruit, freshness, elegance, and softness in the Proseccos we tasted and why, consequently, the haul of medals was so scant.

I hope that Prosecco producers in Valdobbiadene will not get defensive about this analysis, because they need to accept that the grapes most of them harvested in 2021 were unripe before they encounter a similar year in the future. They might have started picking late for Prosecco in 2021 and the grapes had achieved sugar ripeness, but they were nowhere close to acid ripeness.

Lifetime Achievement Awards

It has always been my hope to present just one or two Lifetime Achievement Awards per year, but when we started in 2018 and 2019, there had just been a round of retirements, so we had a lot of catching up to do. Then the pandemic happened, and a few years later, we find ourselves again trying to catch up. On top of which, half the intended recipients were traveling on the day of our awards dinner, so the process will take a couple of years. Here are the recipients of this year’s awards:

Michel Davesne of Champagne Deutz

Before moving to work his magic at Champagne Deutz, Michel was the *chef de cave* at Palmer & Co, where he established its signature blanc de blancs style by focusing on Chardonnay from the eastern Montagne. He was also way ahead of his time, bottling a high proportion of magnums, even in 1985, when some vineyards produced barely one ton per hectare.

Alain Pailley of Domaine Alexander Bonnet

When Lanson-BCC took over Alexander Bonnet in 1998, it was given the freedom and resources to express itself, and Alain, who has been *chef de cave* since 1985, set about enhancing Bonnet’s reputation for blanc de noirs, and developing Bonnet’s identity as a domaine in Les Riceys through a range of single-vineyard wines.

Michel Drappier of Champagne Drappier

Just like his father, Michel has always been a keen exponent of low-sulfur regimes and large-bottle formats, the latter of which helps offset the former. This quest may have been a little too keen at times for me, personally, but you have to push the envelope to see what works in bottle rather than on paper, and he has certainly achieved that.



REGIONAL TROPHIES

FRANCE  
BEST NON-DELUXE CHAMPAGNE

**The shortlist:**  
BEST IN CLASS CHAMPAGNE  
BRUT NON-VINTAGE Louis Roederer Non-Vintage Collection 242 in Magnum  
BEST IN CLASS CHAMPAGNE BRUT VINTAGE  
Louis Roederer 2014 Brut Vintage in Magnum  
BEST IN CLASS CHAMPAGNE BLANC DE BLANCS  
Non-Vintage Palmer & Co Non-Vintage Blanc de Blancs in Magnum  
BEST IN CLASS CHAMPAGNE BLANC DE NOIRS  
Non-Vintage Palmer & Co Non-Vintage Blanc de Noirs in Magnum  
BEST IN CLASS CHAMPAGNE ROSÉ Non-Vintage  
Henriot Non-Vintage Rosé in Magnum  
BEST IN CLASS SINGLE-VINEYARD Champagne  
Pommery 2004 Clos Pompadour in Magnum

The winner:

**Louis Roederer NV Collection 242 in Magnum**  
Champagne, France (150cl, 12.5% ABV)  
42% Chardonnay, 36% Pinot Noir, 22% Meunier (White, 8g/l RS)

A wow wine. Lovely vanilla-laden toasty aromas lead to zesty succulent fruit on a smooth yet deliciously vigorous palate, with notes of yeast-complexed biscuit. A super-fine mousse and beautiful balance. Complete!

BEST DELUXE CHAMPAGNE

**The shortlist:**  
BEST IN CLASS DELUXE CHAMPAGNE Vintage  
Perrier-Jouët 2012 Belle Epoque Brut in Magnum  
BEST IN CLASS DELUXE CHAMPAGNE BLANC DE BLANCS Dom Ruinart 2010 Blanc de Blancs  
BEST IN CLASS DELUXE CHAMPAGNE ROSÉ  
Perrier-Jouët 2010 Belle Epoque Rosé in Magnum

The winner:

**Dom Ruinart 2010 Blanc de Blancs**  
Champagne, France  
100% Chardonnay (White, 4g/l RS)

Aged on first cork, not crown-cap, this amazing Champagne has a fantastic, toasty nose, with overtones of green coffee bean. So fine and light, yet full in stature. Delightfully pristine and elegant fruit of extreme complexity. Lots of detail. Flinty, flirtatious, and fabulously reductive. Very, very long. This is a Champagne that makes a statement.

BEST CHAMPAGNE

**The shortlist:**  
BEST NON-DELUXE CHAMPAGNE  
Louis Roederer NV Collection 242 in Magnum  
BEST DELUXE CHAMPAGNE  
Dom Ruinart 2010 Blanc de Blancs

The winner:

**Dom Ruinart 2010 Blanc de Blancs**

See Regional Deluxe Champagne Trophy.

ITALY  
BEST ALTO ADIGE

**Kettmeir 2018 Athesis Brut in Magnum**  
Alto Adige DOC, Trentino-Alto Adige, Italy (150cl, 12.5% ABV)  
49% Chardonnay, 42% Pinot Blanc, 9% Pinot Noir (White, 5.5g/l RS)

Soft, creamy, clean-as-a-whistle aromas leading to fresh, yeast-infused fruit, gently cushioned by a lovely, soft mousse. Opulent, pristine, and elegant. Hugely impressive.

BEST ASTI

**Cuvage NV Acquesi Asti**  
Asti DOCG, Piedmont, Italy (75cl, 7% ABV)  
100% Muscat (White, 89g/l RS)

Super-fresh Moscato aromas on nose and palate, with nicely balanced fruit and sweetness on the palate. Deliciously creamy mousse, with a fresh and fluffy finish. The perfect accompaniment to the sweet end of an afternoon tea.

BEST FRANCIACORTA

**The shortlist:**  
BEST IN CLASS FRANCIACORTA BRUT NATURE  
Ca’ del Bosco 2013 Annamaria Clementi in Magnum  
BEST IN CLASS FRANCIACORTA BRUT NV  
Lantieri de Paratico NV Brut  
BEST IN CLASS FRANCIACORTA BRUT VINTAGE  
Vigneti Cenci 2012 Sessanta in Magnum  
BEST IN CLASS FRANCIACORTA  
BLANC DE BLANCS NV Fratelli Berlucchi NV Brut 25 in Magnum  
BEST IN CLASS FRANCIACORTA BLANC DE NOIRS Vintage Derbusco Cives 2009 Decem Annis  
BEST IN CLASS FRANCIACORTA ROSÉ VINTAGE  
Mosnel 2016 Parosé

The winner:

**Fratelli Berlucchi NV Brut 25 in Magnum**  
Franciacorta DOCG, Lombardy, Italy (150cl, 12.5% ABV)  
100% Chardonnay (White, 8g/l RS)

Lovely lemon-toasty aromas followed by succulently rich and juicy fruit, fine-textured mousse, and a yeast-complexed biscuity finish.

BEST LAMBRUSCO

**The shortlist:**  
BEST IN CLASS LAMBRUSCO BRUT-STYLE  
SECCO NV Zanasi Societa Agricola SS NV  
Brunozanasi

This amazing Champagne has a fantastic, toasty nose. Delightfully pristine and elegant fruit of extreme complexity. Lots of detail. Flinty, flirtatious, and fabulously reductive

BEST IN CLASS LAMBRUSCO BRUT-STYLE  
SECCO VINTAGE Cleto Chiarli 2021 Vecchia Modena Premium in Magnum

The winner:

**Cleto Chiarli 2021 Vecchia Modena Premium in Magnum**  
Lambrusco di Sorbara DOC, Emilia Romagna, Italy (150cl, 11.5% ABV)  
100% Sorbara (Red, 8g/l RS)

Bright cherry color, with sweet candied-fruit aromas on the nose, and fresh, zippy ripe fruit on the palate. Very red-fruit driven. Beautiful fruit.

BEST PROSECCO

**The shortlist:**  
BEST IN CLASS PROSECCO NV EXTRA DRY  
Mionetto NV Extra Dry  
BEST IN CLASS PROSECCO VINTAGE DRY  
Valdo Spumanti NV Viviana

The winner:

**Mionetto NV Extra Dry**  
Valdobbiadene DOCG Prosecco Superiore, Veneto, Italy (75cl, 11% ABV)  
100% Glera (White, 15.2g/l RS)

Lovely, soft aromatic aromas follow onto the extremely fresh palate, where there is soft, juicy, ripe-pear fruit, with notes of banana and tutti-frutti and a very long finish. Classic Prosecco in a year when even half-decent Prosecco was rare.

BEST SICILIAN SPARKLING WINE

**G Milazzo 2003 Federico II in Magnum**  
Campobello di Licata, Sicily, Italy (150cl, 12.5% ABV)  
100% Chardonnay (White, 6g/l RS)

What more could anyone reasonably expect from a 20-year-old (or thereabouts) sparkling wine made from grapes grown on a baking hot rock in the Mediterranean in a pan-European drought year? We put out a call to other sparkling-wine producers in Sicily and tasted some of those, but they were not in the same league. We even asked our logistics guru Donald MacKenzie and his wife Vicky MacKenzie MW to check out Milazzo while they were holidaying on the island. Interestingly, they found the cuvées we consistently pick out as the best come from the oldest vines close to the winery, where they are pergola-trained. This system gets bad press, but under Sicily’s merciless sun, it provides shade and elevates the bunches away

from heat radiated from the ground. Clearly it provides the best balance for Milazzo’s sparkling wines, and generally it should be earmarked for testing in other regions of the world where they might be facing hotter years, to slow down the shortening of the vine’s growth cycle. Specifically, here, it provides a stylish, clean, and long sparkling wine, with spicy complex notes that might be evolved, but it is not without freshness.

BEST TRENTODOC

**The shortlist:**  
BEST IN CLASS TRENTODOC BRUT VINTAGE  
Endrizzi 2017 Piancastello Riserva  
BEST IN CLASS TRENTODOC BLANC DE  
BLANCS VINTAGE Ferrari Trento 2016 Perle  
in Magnum  
BEST IN CLASS TRENTODOC VINTAGE BLANC  
DE NOIRS Ferrari Trento 2013 Ferrari Perle Nero  
Riserva in Magnum  
BEST IN CLASS TRENTODOC ROSÉ VINTAGE  
Ferrari Trento 2016 Perle Rosé Riserva  
BEST ORGANIC TRENTODOC Maso Martis 2017  
Blanc de Blancs Brut in Magnum

The winner:

**Ferrari Trento 2013 Ferrari Perle Nero  
Riserva in Magnum**  
Trentodoc, Trentino-Alto Adige, Italy  
(150cl, 12.5% ABV)  
100% Pinot Noir (White, 2.7g/l RS)

Gloriously fragrant and pristine aromas, with  
expressively toasty notes. Long, linear, and  
intense, with elegant, juicy fruit. Classy.

SPAIN  
BEST CAVA

**The shortlist:**  
BEST IN CLASS CAVA BRUT NV  
Freixenet NV Cordon Negro Brut in Magnum  
BEST IN CLASS CAVA BRUT VINTAGE Bodegues  
Sumarroca 2015 Núria Claverol Homenatge  
BEST IN CLASS ORGANIC CAVA  
U Mes U 2018 Larus Rara Avis Collection

The winner:

**Freixenet NV Cordon Negro Brut  
in Magnum**  
DO Cava, Cataluña, Spain (150cl, 11.5% ABV)  
50% Macabeo, 25% Xarel-Lo, 25% Parellada  
(White, 9g/l RS)

Lovely, toasty aromas bring a classic dimension  
to the traditional terpenic style of this wine.  
Crispy, crunchy fruit. This is easygoing on  
the palate yet developing some complexity  
on the finish.

BEST CORPINNAT

**Llopart 2017 Panoramic Imperial**  
Barcelona, Cataluña, Spain (75cl, 11.5% ABV)  
50% Xarel-lo, 40% Macabeo, 10% Parellada  
(White, 6g/l RS)

Clean, crisp, and fresh, with an elegant restraint  
on the nose and a smooth, caressing mousse.  
Nicely balanced, with a pleasing texture and  
extreme length.

Gloriously fragrant and  
pristine aromas, with  
expressively toasty notes.  
Long, linear, and intense,  
with elegant, juicy fruit

USA  
BEST CALIFORNIA SPARKLING WINE

**The shortlist:**  
BEST IN CLASS CALIFORNIA BLANC DE BLANCS  
VINTAGE Caraccioli 2016 Blanc de Blancs  
BEST IN CLASS CALIFORNIA BRUT VINTAGE  
Caraccioli 2016 Brut Cuvée  
BEST IN CLASS CALIFORNIA ROSÉ VINTAGE  
Caraccioli 2016 Brut Rosé

The winner:

**Caraccioli 2016 Blanc de Blancs**  
Santa Lucia Highlands, California, United States  
(75cl, 12% ABV)  
100% Chardonnay (White, 6g/l RS)

Classic, complete, and satisfying, with jasmine  
and a touch of pineapple adding primary notes  
of complexity to the fruit. Soft and cushiony  
mousse, with very good length.



NATIONAL TROPHIES

BEST AUSTRALIAN SPARKLING WINE

**The shortlist:**  
BEST IN CLASS AUSTRALIAN BRUT VINTAGE  
Bream Creek Vineyard 2016 Cuvée Traditionelle  
BEST IN CLASS AUSTRALIAN BLANC DE  
BLANCS Swift 2011 Blanc de Blancs  
BEST IN CLASS AUSTRALIAN BRUT NATURE  
House of Arras 2006 EJ Carr Late Disgorged  
in Magnum

The winner:

**Swift 2011 Blanc de Blancs**  
Orange, New South Wales, Australia  
(75cl, 12% ABV)  
100% Chardonnay (White, 5g/l RS)

Nicely evolved nose, with notes of wheat,  
coffee, and cream. Fresh, yeast-complexed,  
coconutty Chardonnay fruit on a rounded  
palate, softly supported by a gentle mousse.  
Undeniably Australian.

BEST BULGARIAN SPARKLING WINE

**Midalidare Estate NV Sparkling Wine  
Gold in Magnum**  
Thracian Lowlands, Bulgaria (150cl, 12% ABV)  
100% Chardonnay (White, 5.6g/l RS)

Beautiful toasty aromas, with fresh and zesty,  
multilayered fruit on the palate. Lovely flintiness.  
Midalidare is the sole oasis of world-quality  
classic brut-style sparkling wine in Bulgaria.  
There are many fine-wine producers of other  
styles in this country, and it is about time that  
the most enterprising among those should see  
the potential and have a go themselves.

BEST ENGLISH SPARKLING WINE

**The shortlist:**  
BEST IN CLASS ENGLISH BRUT NV Hattingley  
Valley Wines NV Classic Reserve in Magnum  
BEST IN CLASS ENGLISH BRUT VINTAGE  
Gusbourne 2018 Brut Reserve  
BEST IN CLASS ENGLISH ROSÉ VINTAGE  
Gusbourne 2018 Rosé  
BEST IN CLASS ENGLISH BLANC DE BLANCS  
Gusbourne 2018 Blanc de Blancs  
BEST IN CLASS ENGLISH BLANC DE NOIRS  
Simpsons Wine Estate 2018 Flint Fields Blanc  
de Noirs

The winner:

**Simpsons Wine Estate 2018 Flint Fields  
Blanc de Noirs**  
Kent, England (75cl, 12.5%)  
100% Pinot Noir (White, 6g/l RS)

In 2019, Simpsons won Best in Class English  
Sparkling Wine Newcomer, and just three years  
later it has picked up the coveted National Trophy.  
I have always emphasized that the best English  
sparkling-wine producers are the new kids on the  
block (from and including Nyetimber), and those  
in the pipeline and Simpsons are proof of that. The  
cooler the climate, the harder it is to produce a  
blanc de noirs without a niggling hint of phenolic  
oxidation, but this 2018 is almost perfect. Lovely  
and light for a pure Pinot Noir, this pale-lemon  
beauty has a precociously toasty nose with  
fleeting notes of coffee, and bright red fruit on the  
palate. Very fresh and elegant. Fruity and juicy.  
Long and linear. Impressive indeed.

BEST FRENCH SPARKLING WINE

**Dom Ruinart 2010 Blanc de Blancs**

See *Regional Deluxe Champagne Trophy*.

BEST HUNGARIAN SPARKLING WINE

**Sauska NV Brut in Magnum**  
Tokaj, Hungary (150cl, 11.5% ABV)  
60% Furmint, 30% Hárslevelű,  
10% Chardonnay (White, 11g/l RS)

Last year, Sauska caused a shock when it took  
the National Trophy away from Kreinbacher after  
a succession of wins. Now Sauska has done it  
again. Will Kreinbacher fight back? If so, it will  
have to fight hard. This delicious wine is so very  
fresh and expressively fruity on the nose, with

elegant, bright fruit on the palate, and a lovely,  
soft mousse. Very precise.

BEST ITALIAN SPARKLING WINE

**The shortlist:**  
BEST ALTO ADIGE Kettmeir 2018 Athesis Brut  
in Magnum  
BEST ASTI Cuvage NV Acquesi Asti  
BEST FRANCIACORTA Fratelli Berlucchi NV Brut  
25 in Magnum  
BEST LAMBRUSCO Cleto Chiarli 2021 Vecchia  
Modena Premium in Magnum  
BEST PROSECCO Mionetto NV Extra Dry  
BEST SICILIAN SPARKLING WINE  
Milazzo 2003 Federico II in Magnum  
BEST TRENTODOC Ferrari Trento 2013 Ferrari  
Perle Nero Riserva in Magnum

The winner:

**Kettmeir 2018 Athesis Brut  
in Magnum**

For the first time, Italy’s National Trophy has  
gone to a wine other than Franciacorta or  
Trentodoc. See *Regional Alto Adige Trophy*.

BEST NEW ZEALAND SPARKLING WINE

**The shortlist:**  
BEST IN CLASS NEW ZEALAND BRUT VINTAGE  
Hunter’s Wines 2017 Mirumiru Reserve  
BEST IN CLASS NEW ZEALAND ROSÉ No.1  
Family Estate NV Rosé

The winner:

**No.1 Family Estate NV Rosé**  
Marlborough, New Zealand (75cl, 13% ABV)  
100% Pinot Noir (Rosé, 8.6g/l RS)

Exquisitely pale peach, with aromas rich in cherry  
fruit, a biscuity complexity and a stylish, spicy  
twist. Feisty and expressive, with a precise mousse.

BEST ROMANIAN SPARKLING WINE

**Carassia NV Rosé in Magnum**  
Transylvania, Romania (150cl, 12% ABV)  
64% Pinot Noir, 18% Meunier, 9%  
Chardonnay, 9% Pinot Blanc (Rosé, 9g/l RS)

A serious rosé by any standard. Peach color.  
Seductive and succulent, with a sumptuous  
mousse. Fresh and elegant. This is just lovely.

BEST SPANISH SPARKLING WINE

**The shortlist:**  
BEST CAVA Freixenet NV Cordon Negro Brut  
in Magnum  
BEST CORPINNAT Llopart 2017 Panoramic Imperial

The winner:

**Freixenet NV Cordon Negro Brut in  
Magnum**

Amazing quality for an annual production of  
200,000 magnums. See *Cava Regional Trophy*.

BEST US SPARKLING WINE

**Caraccioli 2016 Blanc de Blancs**

See *California Regional Trophy*.



WORLD CHAMPION CLASSIC BRUT NV

**The shortlist:**  
BEST IN CLASS ENGLISH BRUT NV Hattingley  
Valley Wines NV Classic Reserve in Magnum  
BEST IN CLASS CHAMPAGNE BRUT NV  
Louis Roederer NV Collection 242 in Magnum  
BEST IN CLASS FRANCIACORTA BRUT NV  
Lantieri de Paratico NV Brut  
BEST IN CLASS HUNGARIAN BRUT NV  
Sauska NV Brut in Magnum  
BEST IN CLASS CAVA BRUT NV  
Freixenet NV Cordon Negro Brut in Magnum

The winner:

**Louis Roederer NV Collection 242  
in Magnum**

See *Non-Deluxe Champagne Regional Trophy*.

WORLD CHAMPION CLASSIC BRUT  
VINTAGE

**The shortlist:**  
BEST IN CLASS AUSTRALIAN BRUT VINTAGE  
Bream Creek Vineyard 2016 Cuvée Traditionelle  
BEST IN CLASS ENGLISH BRUT VINTAGE  
Gusbourne 2018 Brut Reserve  
BEST IN CLASS CHAMPAGNE BRUT VINTAGE  
Louis Roederer 2014 Brut Vintage in Magnum  
BEST IN CLASS ALTO ADIGE BRUT VINTAGE  
Kettmeir 2018 Athesis Brut in Magnum  
BEST IN CLASS FRANCIACORTA BRUT VINTAGE  
Fratelli Berlucchi NV Brut 25 in Magnum  
BEST IN CLASS SICILIAN BRUT VINTAGE  
Milazzo 2003 Federico II in Magnum  
BEST IN CLASS TRENTODOC BRUT VINTAGE  
Endrizzi 2017 Piancastello Riserva  
BEST IN CLASS CAVA BRUT VINTAGE Bodegues  
Sumarroca 2015 Núria Claverol Homenatge  
BEST IN CLASS CORPINNAT BRUT VINTAGE  
Llopart 2017 Panoramic Imperial  
BEST IN CLASS NEW ZEALAND BRUT VINTAGE  
Hunter’s Wines 2017 Mirumiru Reserve  
BEST IN CLASS CALIFORNIA BRUT VINTAGE  
Caraccioli 2016 Brut Cuvée

The winner:

**Gusbourne 2018 Brut Reserve**  
Kent, England (75cl, 12%)  
46% Meunier, 35% Chardonnay, 19% Pinot Noir  
(White, 8.9g/l RS)

Up against the world’s best Vintage brut, this

is a big win for Gusbourne, and it shows in the  
winemaking, which is exemplary. Soft, restrained,  
white-fruit aromas. Fresh and invigorating on the  
palate, with elegant, bright fruit, a soft mousse,  
and biscuity notes on the long finish. Classy wine.

WORLD CHAMPION CLASSIC  
BLANC DE BLANCS

**The shortlist:**  
BEST IN CLASS AUSTRALIAN BLANC DE BLANCS  
Swift 2011 Blanc de Blancs  
BEST IN CLASS BULGARIAN BLANC DE BLANCS  
Midalidare Estate NV Sparkling Wine Gold  
in Magnum  
BEST IN CLASS ENGLISH BLANC DE BLANCS  
Gusbourne 2018 Blanc de Blancs  
BEST IN CLASS CHAMPAGNE BLANC DE  
BLANCS NV Palmer & Co NV Blanc de Blancs  
in Magnum  
BEST IN CLASS FRANCIACORTA BLANC DE  
BLANCS NV Fratelli Berlucchi NV Brut 25  
in Magnum  
BEST IN CLASS TRENTODOC BLANC DE  
BLANCS VINTAGE Ferrari Trento 2016 Perle  
in Magnum  
BEST IN CLASS CALIFORNIA BLANC DE  
BLANCS VINTAGE Caraccioli 2016 Blanc de  
Blancs

The winner:

**Palmer & Co NV Blanc de Blancs  
in Magnum**  
Champagne, France (150cl, 12% ABV)  
100% Chardonnay (White, 6.9g/l RS)

Consistently one of the finest Champagnes on  
the market, this is the third time that Palmer has  
won this trophy. Lovely, sweet toastiness on the  
nose, with notes of coffee, cream, lemon curd,  
and tropical fruit filtering through to the palate.  
A fine, linear acid line focuses super-pure fruit of  
serious potential complexity, while the cushiony  
mousse brings a lightness and precision to the  
massive yet surprisingly elegant fruit. Drink now  
or keep 20 years—your choice.

WORLD CHAMPION CLASSIC  
BLANC DE NOIRS

**The shortlist:**  
BEST IN CLASS ENGLISH BLANC DE NOIRS  
VINTAGE Simpsons Wine Estate 2018 Flint  
Fields Blanc de Noirs  
BEST IN CLASS CHAMPAGNE BLANC DE NOIRS  
NV Palmer & Co NV Blanc de Noirs in Magnum  
BEST IN CLASS FRANCIACORTA VINTAGE  
BLANC DE NOIRS VINTAGE Derbusco Cives  
2009 Decem Annis  
BEST IN CLASS TRENTODOC BLANC DE NOIRS  
VINTAGE Ferrari Trento 2013 Ferrari Perle Nero  
Riserva in Magnum

The winner:

**Palmer & Co NV Blanc de Noirs  
in Magnum**  
Champagne, France (150cl, 12% ABV)  
53% Pinot Noir, 47% Meunier  
(White, 6.9g/l RS)

This is such a difficult trophy to win (see English  
National Trophy winner) that it is the only

World Champion trophy by style that is not won every year. In fact, this trophy was not awarded for the first five years. Ferrari's Perlé Nero was the first to succeed in 2019 and then again in 2021. Our Lifetime Achievement recipient, Alain Pailley of Alexandre Bonnet, won it in 2020, and now we have Palmer pairing up with trophies for both its blanc de blancs and its blanc de noirs. This wine's pristine aromas demonstrate fine, controlled, and smooth evolution with toasty notes. The fruit is clean, rich, and silky, cradled by a soft mousse, with great length, complex biscuity aromas building, and a long, lingering freshness on the finish. This is just so lovely. If I had to sum up this wine in just one word, it would have to be "sumptuous." Smart viticulture and gifted winemaking in every sense.

## WORLD CHAMPION CLASSIC ROSÉ

### The shortlist:

BEST IN CLASS ENGLISH ROSÉ VINTAGE  
Gusbourne 2018 Rosé  
BEST IN CLASS CHAMPAGNE NV Rosé  
Henriot NV Rosé in Magnum  
BEST IN CLASS FRANCIACORTA ROSÉ  
VINTAGE Mosnel 2016 Parosé  
BEST IN CLASS TRENTODOC ROSÉ VINTAGE  
Ferrari Trento 2016 Perle Rosé Riserva  
BEST IN CLASS NEW ZEALAND ROSÉ NV  
No.1 Family Estate NV Rosé  
BEST IN CLASS ROMANIAN ROSÉ NV  
Carassia NV Rosé in Magnum  
BEST IN CLASS CALIFORNIA ROSÉ VINTAGE  
Caraccioli 2016 Brut Rosé

### The winner:

#### Henriot NV Rosé in Magnum

Champagne, France (150cl, 12% ABV)  
60% Pinot Noir, 30% Chardonnay,  
10% Meunier (Rosé, 7g/l RS)

It was only after the competition had finished and I was auditing the whole process that I discovered this wine nearly wasn't entered, and then, when it was, it nearly didn't turn up. Essi had recommended that Henriot should enter this magnum, believing that it would excel. Then when the wine did not turn up, there was a lot of effort behind the scenes to chase up delivery. Good thing, too, because but for others, this superb Champagne would not have received the trophy it truly deserved. Invitingly pale peachy color, with a super-toasty nose and beautifully balanced, silky red-fruit driven palate, linear structure, long finish, and great finesse on the aftertaste, this is textbook rosé.

## WORLD CHAMPION SPARKLING RED

### Cleto Chiarli 2021 Vecchia Modena Premium in Magnum

See Regional Lambrusco Trophy.

## WORLD CHAMPION SPARKLING AROMATIC

### Cuvage NV Acquesi Asti

See Regional Asti Trophy.

## WORLD CHAMPION LIBRARY VINTAGE

### House of Arras 2001 Museum Release Blanc de Blancs

Tasmania, Australia (75cl, 12.7% ABV)  
96% Chardonnay, 4% Pinot Noir  
(White, 3g/l RS)

This is the very first time World Champion Library Vintage Trophy has gone to a sparkling wine beyond the boundary of Champagne. If I have told them once, I have told them a dozen times: If anyone could snatch this trophy away from the Champenois, it would be Arras or Ferrari—and Arras got there first. I had written, "Classic aged Aussie blanc de blancs" in my notes, but that's a lie because very few Australian blanc de blancs can age as beautifully as this. I should have written, "Classic aged Ed Carr blanc de blancs," but competition judging is not a guessing game. This is a wine of contradiction; it is evolved yet fresh, it is energetic yet soft, and it is rounded by age yet crisp and vibrant. It is full of toasty richness and massive fruit, with wheat and dried-fruit yeast-complexed aromas.

## WORLD CHAMPION TONY JORDAN RISING STAR

### Kettmeir

This trophy has to go to Kettmeir for breaking the monopoly that Franciacorta and Trentodoc have held on the Best Italian Sparkling Wine title since the first CSWWC competition in 2014. If it was not easy to steal this trophy, it will be even harder to keep hold of it, because both those classic sparkling-wine appellations will fight even harder to take it back.



### CHAIRMAN'S TROPHY

### The winner:

#### Bernard Lonclas NV Grand Brut Blanc de Blancs

Champagne, France (75cl, 12% ABV)  
100% Chardonnay (White, 7g/l RS)

Bernard Lonclas NV Grand Brut Blanc de Blancs receives the Chairman's Trophy because he was one of two standouts in a recent tasting organized for me by the Syndicat Général des Vignerons, and indeed this was one of the most mesmerizing Champagnes I tasted at

this year's competition. He could not compete for Best in Class Grower Champagne (won by Gabriel Merreaux NV Brut) because, for tax purposes, he is registered as a *négociant-manipulant*. He is a grower, however, in all but business classification, because every single one of his wines comes exclusively from his own vineyards. I think he and Alain Pailley should get together with other like-thinking growers to form not a club of grandes marques but a club of great domaine-bottled Champagnes. In the meantime, I will help them on their way with this hugely deserved trophy. This classy wine is rich and linear. I love its sweet, fruity, slowly evolving nose, its beautifully textured, silky fruit, and its long, tapering finish. It is zippy and zingy, with seductive very chalky notes, a soft, cushiony lovely mousse, and a finish that shows great finesse.

## SPARKLING WINE PRODUCER OF THE YEAR

### The winner:

#### Ferrari Trentodoc

Well, we all knew who the recipient of this trophy was going to be as soon as the medals were announced, because it is not some cooked-up award pondered over by a jury behind closed doors; it's the clear-cut result of having achieved the highest number of gold medals. And since Ferrari has won it more years than any other producer (only Louis Roederer comes close), it is undeniably a testament not only to its quality but also to its consistency.

## SUPREME WORLD CHAMPION

### The shortlist:

BEST AUSTRALIAN SPARKLING WINE  
Swift 2011 Blanc de Blancs  
BEST BULGARIAN SPARKLING WINE  
Midalidare Estate NV Sparkling Wine Gold in Magnum  
BEST ENGLISH SPARKLING WINE  
Simpsons Wine Estate 2018 Flint Fields Blanc de Noirs  
BEST FRENCH SPARKLING WINE  
Dom Ruinart 2010 Blanc de Blancs  
BEST HUNGARIAN SPARKLING WINE  
Sauska NV Brut in Magnum  
BEST ITALIAN SPARKLING WINE  
Kettmeir 2018 Athesis Brut in Magnum  
BEST ROMANIAN SPARKLING WINE  
Carassia NV Rosé in Magnum  
BEST SPANISH SPARKLING WINE  
Freixenet NV Cordon Negro Brut in Magnum  
BEST US SPARKLING WINE  
Caraccioli 2016 Blanc de Blancs

### The winner:

#### Dom Ruinart 2010 Blanc de Blancs

This is the first time since 2015 (our second competition, when magnums were relatively rare among the entries) that a 75cl bottle has won Supreme World Champion. See Regional Deluxe Champagne Trophy.