

## VINTAGE CHAMPAGNE

**N**o other wine excites like champagne, and with vintage champagne we reach the pinnacle. Not only that, we find in this line-up, a handful of wines that are indeed the crème de la crème of an elite category.



**2002 Krug Vintage** What a magnificent champagne this is. There's a complex nuttiness to the vibrant nose without the excessive aldehyde that marred some earlier Krugs. The palate is utterly compelling – fine, long, dry and creamy with a strong acid spine. This may be the best champagne I've ever tasted. (\$395.00) ★★★★★  
<http://www.champagnegallery.com.au/krug-vintage-2002-p-1475.html>

**2002 Bollinger RD Extra Brut** Another brilliant '02 which is super-fresh. It's so powerful, yet subtle. The length, balance and dryness make for delightful drinking. The pinot component is to the fore, but the chardonnay fineness makes its point. (\$360.00) ★★★★★  
<http://www.boccaccio.com.au/buy/bollinger-r.d.-2002/1233>

**2002 Billecart-Salmon Elisabeth Salmon Rosé** Delicate pink/onion skin colour. It's complex, perfumed, musky, and very enticing – and there's a definite hint of rose petal. The palate is powerful, dry and creamy and has the structure required for fine rosé champagne. Superb. (\$343.00) ★★★★★  
<http://www.cellardor.com.au/bubbles/champagne/champagne-france/billecart-salmon-cuvee-elisabeth-salmon-brut-rose-champagne-2002/>

**2002 Piper Heidsieck Rare Millesime** The nose delivers a seductive meld of toasted brioche and nuts, and is gloriously fresh. The intense fruit comes into its own on a long, creamy palate. (\$300.00) ★★★★★  
<http://www.champagnegallery.com.au/piper-heidsieck-rare-millesime-2002-p-1477.html>

**1995 Charles Heidsieck Blanc de Millenaires** In beautiful condition. Shows a hint of grilled almond and is a great example of aged champagne. It still has a spring in its step and is in no way tired. A champagne for meditation. (\$300.00) ★★★★★

[https://www.danmurphys.com.au/product/DM\\_489075/charles-heidsieck-blanc-des-millenaires-champagne-1995](https://www.danmurphys.com.au/product/DM_489075/charles-heidsieck-blanc-des-millenaires-champagne-1995)

**2004 Pol Roger Cuvée Sir Winston Churchill** This classic bids you welcome from the first sniff. It's complex, toasty and fresh. Not only that, there's great length, a very creamy mousse and a lively acid finish. (\$299.00) ★★★★★

<http://www.rathdownecellars.com.au/products/online-store/>

**2005 Charles Heidsieck Millesime Brut** Here's knockout richness and complexity, together with a very creamy, utterly satisfying palate. A lovely drink indeed. (\$150.00) ★★★★★

[https://www.danmurphys.com.au/product/DM\\_489039/charles-heidsieck-vintage-2005](https://www.danmurphys.com.au/product/DM_489039/charles-heidsieck-vintage-2005)

**2006 Billecart-Salmon Vintage Brut** The nose is delightfully perfumed, and the palate offers delicacy and power. This champagne is very light on its feet. (\$175.00) ★★★★★☆

**2002 Mumm René Lalou** Restrained yet complex, offering subtle aromas of mushroom and brioche. A tight, reserved sparkling wine with length and appropriate acidity. It needs time. (\$275.00) ★★★★★☆

**2006 Deutz Cuvée William Deutz** Very fresh, with baked bread notes. This is an intense, precise champagne with a perfectly judged dosage. Very impressive. (\$290.00) ★★★★★☆

**2006 Dom Perignon** Quite up-front for Dom Perignon. It's toasty but fresh and comparatively soft. Although it's not a great Dom, it still delivers the goods. (\$220.00) ★★★★★☆

#### **Best value \$\$\$**

**2006 Piper Heidsieck Vintage Brut** Here's the bargain of the tasting. It's vibrant and bready but not too developed. The palate is intense, acid-fresh, creamy and fine. (\$65.00) ★★★★★☆

[https://www.firstchoiceliquor.com.au/Sparkling/piper-heidsieck-vintage-brut-750ml\\_1233015](https://www.firstchoiceliquor.com.au/Sparkling/piper-heidsieck-vintage-brut-750ml_1233015)

**2009 Deutz Blanc de Blancs** Very impressive. It's a true blanc de blanc in style, with a touch of development. An excellent pre-dinner wine. (\$135.00) ★★★★★☆

**2005 Bollinger La Grande Année** There's some nutty aldehyde on the nose, although it's not over the top. The palate is creamy and pinot-driven, with a persistent finish. (\$185.00) ★★★★★

**2006 Louis Roederer Brut Nature Deluxe** Delicate, powerful and complex, with baked bread overtones, but it verges on being too dry and austere. (\$130.00) ★★★★★

**2006 Pol Roger Vintage** Quite restrained, showing subtle complex notes. It's a bit straightforward on the palate and lacks wow factor, but has a creamy texture. (\$110.00) ★★★★★

**2007 Alfred Gratien Grand Cru Blanc de Blancs Brut** This champagne has commendable freshness and intensity. There are also influences of development and autolysis. It's all held together by a strong line of acidity. (\$100.00) ★★★★★

**2007 Ayala Blanc de Blancs** There's attractive maturity and freshness to be enjoyed, together with good fruit weight and acidity. Probably at its peak now. (\$125.00) ★★★★★

**2007 Perrier-Jouët Belle Epoque Blanc** Apple-like, with very subtle autolysis breadiness. It's a good apéritif style with plenty of acid on the finish. (\$225.00) ★★★★★

**2006 Alfred Gratien Cuvée Paradis** The complex autolysis characteristics are enticing. The rich flavour also has attraction and the acid is pronounced but not hard. (\$150.00) ★★★★★

**2008 Pol Roger Blanc de Blancs Vintage** Fresh and restrained, but it's a bit too tight and lean, lacking the usual plushness and creaminess. (\$135.00) ★★★★★

**2009 Deutz Brut Vintage** Very reserved. A little simple and citrus-like, with a racy green-apple palate. (\$120.00) ★★★★★

**2006 Moët & Chandon Grand Vintage** It has reasonable fruit weight, freshness and length, but lacks complexity and excitement. (\$80.00) ★★★★★

**2005 Jacquesson Avize Champ Cain Recolte Extra Brut** A very distinctive champagne showing more than a touch of aldehyde nuttiness. It's powerful and very dry, with phenolic grip and prominent acidity. Very fresh but not seamless. (\$360.00) ★★★

**2005 Lanson Brut Vintage** The nose is still lively, with nutty/bready overtones, but the acidity really kicks in on the finish. (\$89.00) ★★★

**2006 Besserat de Bellefon Cuvée des Moines Brut Millesime** Nuts and butter characteristics show out in the bouquet, and the palate is weighed down by similar artifact. (\$120.00) ★★★

**2006 Mumm Vintage** Simple, with melon rind overtones. A plain champagne. (\$90.00) ★★☆☆

**2009 Lenoble Grand Cru Blanc de Blancs Gentilhomme** Shows too much development. (\$99.00) ★★☆☆

Vintage champagne may be the ultimate, but clearly some wines, and vintages, are better than others.

Lester Jesberg

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