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FIVE CHAMPAGNES TO DRINK NOW

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When you think of Champagne you often dream of black-tie affairs, ballroom dresses, and caviar pairings associated with this luxurious wine category. But the reality is that more and more people are embracing Champagne as an everyday wine to enjoy, given that its versatility and complexity lends itself to so many situations.

True, Champagne is often very expensive, so a bottle might be something you want to save for a special occasion. But there are some excellent options that are more affordable (or go ahead and open that \$300 vintage on a Tuesday evening). Champagne is most commonly made from Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, or Pinot Meunier grapes (often a combination of two or three), and is blended, fermented, and aged in its namesake region of France. Serve your Champagne cold but not frigid, and consider trying a glass with a more open shape instead of the traditional flute to really let the nose and palate expand as you sip. Here are five top-shelf champagnes to try now, in a variety of styles and vintages.

CHAMPAGNE BOLLINGER LA GRANDE ANNÉE 2014



Champagne Bollinger is known for its fine Champagne, its James Bond-themed releases, and now this new 2014 vintage. La Grande Année means “the great year,” and according to the Champagne house 2014 fit that description. The grapes, Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, came from 19 different Crus with a focus on sustainable winemaking methods. The wine underwent a secondary fermentation on the lees in bottles for more than eight years before being disgorged. On the nose, you’ll find cherry, lemon, and almond, and on the palate flavors of orchard fruit, citrus, and a slight sensation of saline ocean air.