

Palm Springs Life

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Making Spirits Bright

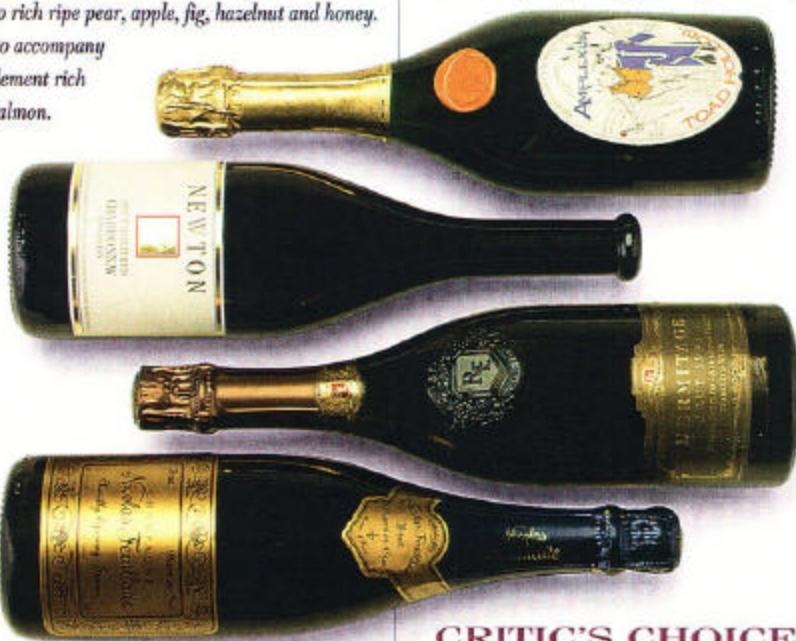
How to be sure you're invited to join in any reindeer games.

UNREAL

NEWTON UNFILTERED CHARDONNAY 1997 \$45

One of the crown jewels of California Chardonnay, Newton is rarely found at a retail level since demand is so high and production is limited. An extremely complex Chardonnay, with layers upon layers of flavor. Beginning with trace tastes of minerals and smoke, which lead to rich ripe pear, apple, fig, hazelnut and honey. Not too overblown to accompany a meal, it will complement rich fish dishes such as salmon.

Extremely rare, this is worth seeking out for Chardonnay aficionados.



A STEAL

TOAD HOLLOW CREMANT BRUT SPARKLING WINE, \$15

I was a little skeptical about this wine initially. After all, Toad Hollow makes wonderful, affordable wines but I had yet to see a sparkling wine product from them. What a great surprise it was to be served a glass of this affordable sparkler. Tiny pinpoint bubbles

cascaded up from the bottom of the glass through the pale straw colored wine. The flavors are full and surprisingly rich, showing a bit of toasted almond and ripe fruit flavors.

A DEAL

NICHOLAS FEUILLATTE
BRUT CHAMPAGNE PREMIER CRU N.V. \$35

A relative unknown and newcomer in the world of heavy-weight Champagne producers, Nicholas Feuillatte has been impressive from the beginning. A delicate and well balanced wine that is an underappreciated complement to meals, and not just to appetizers. It has refreshing fruit flavors, a hint of citrus, and a full body. Very smooth, its effervescent bubbles explode in the mouth with a lengthy finish. A wonderfully French way to ring the next century into America.

CRITIC'S CHOICE

RODERER ESTATE L'ERMITAGE SPARKLING 1993 \$35

Consistently the highest-rated California sparkling wine by Wine Spectator, Roderer Estate gets my vote as producing the classiest, most complex and, well, most French sparkling wine in the state. Wonderfully creamy and mouthfilling, it exhibits toast, vanilla, hazelnut and pear flavors. Combine those flavors with a long, lingering finish and it competes very well with French Champagnes double the price. It really is the patriotic way to ring in 2000.

Wine prices are approximate retail and may vary. Photo by Allen Lane.

ADAM ZACK IS VICE PRESIDENT OF JENSEN'S FINEST FOODS AND PUBLISHES A MONTHLY FINE WINE NEWSLETTER. FOR A COMPLIMENTARY SUBSCRIPTION TO THE NEWSLETTER, CALL (760) 325-8282. E-MAIL: WTT1364@AOL.COM