

Unit 5 - Sparkling Wines  
WSET Diploma  
October 2005 - November 2015

Date	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3	wine 1	wine 2	wine 3
Nov-15	Pressing and the first fermentation in Champagne production	New Zealand	Styles of Cava	Riesling Brut 2013	Champagne Rose NV	Australian Sparkling Shiraz NV
Jun-15	Removal of sediment from bottle fermented wines	Rose Champagne	Muscat	Prosecco NV	Cremant de Loire NV	Blanc de Blanc 2011 (Schramsberg, USA)
Mar-15	Lees ageing	Cap Classique	Sekt	Gran Reserva Cava 2007	Asti NV	Central Otago Akarua Brut NV
Nov-14	<i>to be completed with new examiner's report due January 2016</i>			Champagne Brut	Champagne Rose	Champagne Demi Sec (Pol Roger)
Jun-14	<p><u>blending</u></p> <p>[ most candidates limited their response to Champagne simply writing about the three key varieties and their characteristics. There was significantly more to this question than this. Good candidates wrote about when it is done, how it is done, why it is done, what is used etc. They extended the scope beyond Champagne, for example writing about interregional blending in places like Australia, or blending base wine from different countries even, such as with cheaper Sekt. When it came to the reasons for blending, they wrote about more than simply maintaining a house style or evening out vintage variation, covering issues such as volume production as in the case of large volume inexpensive sparkling wines etc. Many candidates forgot that even Vintage Champagne is a blended wine.]</p>	catalunya	<p>Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin OR Moet &amp; Chandon OR Krug</p> <p>[this was the weakest section]</p>	Prosecco Brut NV	(Italian) Blanc de Blancs NV	Piemonte Asti NV
Mar-14	CM (Cooperative-manipulant) OR Pol Roger OR CIVC	Samur	Black grapes	Prosecco (Valdobbiadene) Extra dry	Codorniu Cava NV	Schramsberg Blanc de Blancs 2010 (USA)
Nov-13	<p><u>Conegliano-Valdobbiadene</u></p> <p>[ how this differs from generic Prosecco]</p>	<p>Vallee de la Marne OR Montagne de Reims OR Cote des Blancs</p>	<p><u>Automated riddling</u></p> <p>[some simply wrote about riddling in general, including hand riddling rather than limiting their comments to AUTOMATED riddling. The superfluous information earned them no marks]</p>	Cava Brut Rose NV	Vouvray Reserve NV	Champagne 2006
Jun-13	tank method	Pinot Noir	Limoux	New Zealand Brut NV	Asti NV	Sparkling shiraz 2008 (Barossa)

Although all three of these wines were Italian, candidates were not required to identify the origin. Instead, the focus was on quality levels and method of production along with grape variety. With two clearly aromatic grape varieties (Glera and Moscato), it was obvious that the first and last wine were tank method, and specifically the Asti method in the case of wine 3. The very obvious autolytic nature of the second wine indicated that this had been bottle fermented. Where marks were lost was inevitably in the assessment of quality for these wines. Many candidates still do not seem to understand what is required here, simply repeating their observations from the tasting note, with no indication of why these have any significance in terms of defining quality. Others just described the ageing potential of the wines and whether they were "ready to drink", or in some cases, just explained what the wine is and how it is produced.

it was in the assessment of quality that candidates lost marks, and since in this instance this accounted for 5 marks on each wine it could have a significant effect on the final grade if candidates answered this poorly. In this paper, candidates had not actually been asked to identify the wines, yet many insisted on providing this information, along with an indication of the wine's age and potential for ageing rather than providing a reasoned analysis of the quality level of each wine

generated good marks, however the three tasting notes were sometimes all too similar. The difficulty lay in the sweetness of the Vouvray (Medium-dry; not dry)

Date	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3	wine 1	wine 2	wine 3	
Mar-13	Chenin Blanc	<p><u>Louis Roederer</u></p> <p>[Those with better knowledge wrote about its historical links with the Russian court and the resulting style and packaging of Crystal Champagne. They were able to give an indication of the size of their vineyard holdings and the effect this has on production. This in combination with additional information on the various styles produced by this House (e.g. the classic "oaked style" NV), together with an idea of the scale of production would have been enough for a good mark in this section of the question.]</p>	Dosage	Pol Roger 2002	Riesling Extra Trocken 2008	South Africa (Chardonnay/ pinot noir) NV	A surprising number missed the classic petrol/kerosene aromas that pointed to the Riesling variety, and as a result this was identified as Cremant by a number of candidates.
Nov-12	<p><u>Chardonnay</u></p> <p>[Candidates needed to consider the characteristics of this variety as well as its use in sparkling wines, remembering to extend the scope of this beyond Champagne]</p>	<p><u>Yeast</u></p> <p>[ needed to be discussed in the context of all three roles it plays in the production of sparkling wine – the initial fermentation of grape juice for base wine, the initiation of the second fermentation to create the "sparkle" and its role in the development of autolytic flavours.]</p>	<p><u>South Africa</u></p> <p>[factors that influence wine production – climate, soil, grape variety, method of production, style etc.]</p>	Laurent-Perroer Demi Sec NV	Champagne NV	Champagne 2000	Candidates were told these three were champagne, and had to assess the quality.
Jun-12	Prestige Cuvee Champagne	<p><u>Franciacorta</u></p> <p>[grape variety, climate, soil, weather, viticulture, vinification, maturation) along with a description of the wine style.]</p>	<p><u>Australia</u></p> <p>[The best candidates structured their answer to compare the vast range of styles and quality levels produced throughout Australia.]</p>	Extra Dry Prosecco	Vouvray Mousseaux NV	Roederer Quartet NV	The vouvray proved the most difficult
Mar-12	Transfer Method	prosecco	Vintage Champagne	Rosado Brut Cava	Jack Rabbit White Zinfandel	Champagne Rose	problems with quality assessment; colour
Nov-11	Loire Valley [all the various sparkling wines and the differences between them in style, climate, etc..]	Traditional method Rose [Champagne, Cava and Cremant]	Sekt	Segura Viudas Brut Rosado Cava NV	Segura Viudas Brut Reserva Cava	Codorniu Cava NV	All were from the same country and candidates were asked to assess quality.
Jun-11	Pinot Meunier	Asti DOCG	Champagne Bollinger S.A.	Cremant de Limoux NV	Champagne NV (Ayala Brut Majeur)	Sparkling shiraz 2006	

Date	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3	wine 1	wine 2	wine 3
Mar-11	Cremant	<u>NM (Negociant-manipulant)</u> [why do they buy in grapes? Do they own vineyards of their own and, if so, why do they still buy in grapes? What sort of contract do they have with their suppliers/growers? Why would they want to have any sort of contract, what are the advantages of this for them? What are the disadvantages of being an NM? ]	Cava DO	Champagne Brut 2005	Champagne Brut NV (Wine society)	Louis Roederer Carte Blanche Demi-sec NV
Nov-10	Champagne village classification	<u>Sparkling red wines</u> [only fully red wines (rose scored no points): Australian wines, Italian wines, French (Bourgogne Mousseux Rouge)]	USA	Prosecco NV	Champagne Ayala Brut Majeur NV	Asti 2009 DOCG
Jun-10	<u>Champagne districts</u> [topography, impact of climate on choice of grape variety for the 5 districts. Don't just name and say what is grown there]	Cava grapes	<u>Prosecco</u> [take note of 2009 legislation and the use of the term Glera outside of the DOC(a) area]	Vouvray Brut 2005	Bruno Paillard Rose NV	Miru Miru NV (New Zealand)
Mar-10	Codorniu	Clairette de Die Tradition	<u>Maturation of Champagne</u> [focus on various stages where maturation takes place: reserve wine, lees ageing/autolysis, and maturation both pre- and post-disgorging.]	Yellowtail Bubbles	Louis Roederer NV	Asti Martini NV
Nov-09	Dom Perignon [man & wine]	Cremant d'Alsace	<u>New Zealand Sparkling wine</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some indication of the relative "newness" of sparkling wine production here (first produced by Salaks in 1971, but really came to prominence with the launch of Lindauer in 1981)</li> <li>• Mention of the key areas of production and the reasons for these (climate, soil, etc)</li> <li>• Discussion of grape varieties (chardonnay, pinot noir, sauvignon blanc and earlier attempts with Muller Thurgau)</li> <li>• Method of production (not just traditional); significance of reliability of vintages and use (or not) of reserve wines</li> <li>• Key producers</li> </ul>	Prosecco NV	Freixinet Vintage Brut Vintage 2004	Sekt 2006
Jun-09	South Africa	<u>Lees ageing</u> [second fermentation is correct; secondary fermentation is incorrect]	Recoltant-manipulant (RM)	Sekt extra trocken	Jacob's Creek chardonnay pinot noir	Deutz Champagne 2000

Don't find autolytic character that isn't there

Date	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3	wine 1	wine 2	wine 3
Mar-09	<u>Sekt</u> [difference between Sekt and Deutscher sekt; details relating to production methods; grape varieties used; percentages of these]	<u>Franciacorta</u> [grape variety, climate, soil, weather, viticulture, vinification, maturation) along with a description of the wine style.]	Chardonnay	Cava NV	Jacob's creek	Rose Champagne NV
Nov-08	Champagne soils	Australian sparkling wine	<u>Blending</u> [of different grape varieties, vintages, vineyards, villages, regions (as in Australia); or even countries (EU Sekt). Don't limit to champagne]	Roederer Quartet NV	Champagne Deutz 2000	Asti Martini
Jun-08	<u>Liqueur d'Expedition</u> [not to be confused with liquid de triage; discuss with relation to transfer and tank method not just traditional]	Chenin Blanc	<u>Freixenet</u> [the producer not about cava in general] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What it is: the largest exporter of Cava in the world; producing 20% of Spanish sparkling wine</li> <li>• Where: San Saduni de Noya in Penedes</li> <li>• What it produces? (names &amp; styles)</li> <li>• Where it produces these (Freixenet SA, Segura Viudas SA, Castellblanch SA and Torelavit SA including international subsidiaries of Champagne Henri Abele, Gloria Ferrer in Carneros and Dona Dolores in Mexico.</li> <li>• How it produces these products: (not a full-blown description of the traditional method, but issues that are relevant to Freixenet such as their preference for indigenous varieties rather than chardonnay; its development of gyropalettes)</li> </ul>	Sainsbury's Blanc de Noirs Brut	Billecart-Salmon Brut Rose	Champagne Henriot Souverain Brut
Mar-08	Montagne de Reims [do not blab on about traditional method]	California	Lambrusco [show a commercial knowledge]	Vouvray Demi-Sec NV	Penley estate Pinot Noir/Chardonnay 2001	Asti Martini NV
Nov-07	Cremant	Asti DOCG	<u>Champagne pruning systems</u> [the four permitted systems (Cordon du Royat, Taille Chablis, Guyot and Vallee de la Marne) and the advantages and disadvantages; have a rudimentary understanding at least]	Yalumba Dunes Pinot Noir/Chardonnay NV	Freixenet Cordon Negro	Waitrose Blanc de Noirs Brut NV

autolytic notes does not immediately imply that the wine is champagne; look beyond the wine for other notes (rubber notes in cava)

Candidates were told all three were champagne; the emphasis should have been on quality

Date	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3	wine 1	wine 2	wine 3
Jun-07	<p><u>LVMH</u></p> <p>[an acronym for Moet Hennessy Louis Vuitton SA (in that order); A Paris-based holding company with over 60 luxury brands covering leather goods, fashion, watches, jewellery and cosmetics as well as wines and spirits. Some background information about the formation of this group; when the merger took place (sparkling wines: Moet et Chandon, Krug, Mercier, Ruinart and Veuve Clicquot); previous owners of Champagne Pommery and Lanson; importance in the champagne market (60 million bottles per year; 31% sales to the US); huge influence in advertising and sponsorship; involvement with CIVC in research work on the use of alginate beads and other initiatives.]</p>	<p><u>Cremant de Bourgogne AC</u></p> <p>[grape varieties, yields, regions of production and other things particular to this region]</p>	<p>Tank Method</p>	<p>Schramsberg Blanc de Blancs 2002</p>	<p>Freixenet Cordon Negro NV</p>	<p>Diel Riesling Sekt NV</p>
Mar-07	<p>Transfer Method</p>	<p>CIVC</p>	<p><u>Tasmania</u></p> <p>[know the specifics; pinot Gris, Sauvignon Blanc or Riesling; the climate is generally cool, yet the complex geography results in a diversity of climates and terroirs. Name areas Launceston in the north or Hobart in the south; give name of key producers]</p>	<p>Coroniu Rosado 2004</p>	<p>Tattinger Rose NV</p>	<p>Beringer Sparkling Zinfandel</p>
Nov-06	<p><u>Sekt</u></p> <p>[difference between Sekt and Deutscher sekt; details relating to production methods; grape varieties used; percentages of these]</p>	<p>Cava grapes</p>	<p><u>The Aube</u></p> <p>an area of Champagne, to the south of the main areas of Montagne de Reims, Vallee de la Marne and Cote des Blancs, ca. 112km south east of Epernay. It was originally a separate 'second zone' of champagne when they were defining the region in 1911 but was eventually included in the main appellation when boundaries were finally fixed in 1927. The soil is Kimmeridgean marl (ideally suited for Chardonnay) and it has no Grand Crus. It covers an area of ca. 5.5k ha and plantings are 85% pinot noir, 8% chardonnay, 7% pinot meunier (the two pinots were planted when Gamay was grubbed up). It produces ripe fruity wines.</p>	<p>Prosecco di Valdobbiadene La Marca [lacked the grapey character of Asti]</p>	<p>Pommery NV Champagne</p>	<p>Jackobs Creek Chardonnay Pinot Noir [not champagne because acidity was not noticeable enough! fruit had a distinct ripe quality to it]</p>
Jun-06	Describe how Cave DO is made, including regions, grape varieties and ageing regulations			Lindauer Rose	Malard Rose NV Champagne	Banrock Station Sparkling Shiraz
Mar-06	When producing traditional method sparkling wine, how may costs be reduced and what effect do these have on quality?			Asti Martini	Veuve Clicquot NV	Deinhard Lila Riesling Sekt

Cavas usually appear in tasting papers. The sekt was difficult as it had the Riesling character (peach, apricot, mineral, petrol) but was overlaid by light autolytic aromas as well

Most underestimated the quality of the Tattinger and overestimated the quality of the Beringer. Candidates confusing overt fruitiness and ripeness with complexity. Fruit intensity is not a direct correlation with quality!

Date	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3	wine 1	wine 2	wine 3
Oct-05	Prosecco DOC	Sparkling Shiraz	<u>Blanquette de Limoux AC</u> [Traditional method; do not confuse with Cremant de Limoux; Mauzac accounts for 90% of blen the rest being Chardonnay &/or Chenin Blanc.]	Pol Roger 1996	Derose NV Champagne	Freixenet Cordon Negro

The question indicated all were *traditional method sparkling wines from Europe* .