

# VINEPAIR

## SEVEN OF THE BEST CALIFORNIA SPARKLING WINES, TASTED AND RANKED

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The holiday season is fast approaching. If there's one guarantee (besides heated dinner table "discussions," and great Aunt Cheryl enjoying one sherry too many), it's the need for a celebratory beverage. According to Nielsen data, Christmas and New Year's Eve are the biggest holidays for wine consumption in the U.S. In 2016, the two-week period leading up to New Year's saw a 69 percent jump in sales compared to the year's normal two-week average. Sparkling wines surged to the tune of 272 percent.

Champagne, Prosecco, and Cava are all excellent options, but there are also homegrown bubbles worthy of your consideration. We compiled 25 readily available domestic sparkling wines and put them to the test with a panel of blind tasters. Each wine tasted was made using the "traditional" method in which bubbles develop through a second fermentation in bottle. Wines were ranked on quality, value for money, and overall wow factor.

**Here are seven of our favorite California sparkling wines, ranked.**

### 1. **Domaine Carneros by Taittinger Brut Cuvée 2014 (\$29)**

The Carneros AVA is one of California's most celebrated winemaking regions, ranking among the world's best for producing Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. The region lends its name to Taittinger-owned Domaine Carneros, whose 2014 vintage sparkling wine was a standout among our tasters. "Whipped cream and berries," one taster said of the nose. Another likened aromas to "peaches and yogurt." An alluring wine with a lasting finish and gentle price point, this is one sparkler to buy in bulk. It's that good.

