



What's in that Bottle?

Better Living Through Better Wine!

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Drinking Bubbles with Domaine Carneros Winemaker Zak Miller

There are a handful of California houses that have been at it for decades and **DOMAINE CARNEROS** is one of the originals. The house was started 30 years ago by the Champagne Taittinger family. Many California sparkling houses were started in a similar manor by French Champagne families (Mumm Napa, Chandon, Roederer Estate) but only Domaine Carneros has legendary California sparkling wine pioneer Eileen Crane leading the charge, and winemaker Zak Miller making the bubbles.

2012 Le Rêve Blanc de Blancs

(Blanc de Blancs means it is 100% Chardonnay). Yuh-mee! Although it's a baby, with the ability to age for up to 10 years, this wine is already showing well, with sweet Meyer lemon, green apple and pineapple wafting out of the glass. Interesting note: Zak told us that so many people mistake this wine for Champagne in blind tastings, that it gets put into a lot Master of Wine blind tastings, to test peoples' tasting abilities!

2015 Domaine Carneros Brut

(51 percent Chardonnay, 47 percent Pinot Noir and 2 parent Pinot Gris, for aromatics and freshness). Yowza! This was my favorite sparkier of them all. It's got that glorious yeasty aroma and a really elegant mouthfeel, with notes of key lime, honey, lemon meringue pie, and a nice weight. I love this wine and would drink it everyday with everything — cheeses, meats, vegetables, salads, popcorn — it's super versatile. I'd even drink it with steak! About \$40.

2016 Domaine Carneros Estate Pinot Noir

I had this with roasted chicken, crushed potatoes and Chinese broccoli and it was divine. A different winemaker at Domaine Carneros (TJ Evans) makes this wine and while Zak uses Pinot Noir in his sparkling wines, the grapes for still pinot noir are tended completely differently. It was bursting with black cherry, raspberry, baking spices and the trademark earthiness for which Pinot Noir is known. I loved it! It's about \$38 which is a stellar value for a wine of this quality.

Domaine Carneros Cuvée de la Pompadour

A non-vintage sparkling rosé made from 59 percent Pinot Noir and 41 percent Chardonnay. We all had the lemon cream tart, which was an awesome pairing. It was zingy and fresh with citrus acidity, but it also had enough richness for the wine to cut through and really sing on your palate. This wine is named after the one and only Marie Antoinette, whose breast is said to have inspired the shape of a Champagne coupe! Zak makes his sparkling rosé by adding finished pinot noir wine to his blend for the color, as opposed to fermenting juice that has had skin contact to get the color. This wine is about \$35.



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