

the drunken cyclist



I have three passions: wine, cycling, travel, family, and math.



A Chat with Remi Cohen of Domaine Carneros

(Part One) Posted on March 24, 2021

Domaine Carneros was the second wine club I ever joined (in case you were wondering, Cosentino was the first, which involved a sordid tale that included a married woman and, well, let's not go there). For those that have never been, the French-inspired chateau at Domaine Carneros is stunning, only surpassed, perhaps, by the stunning view that it commands over the vineyards in its shadows. The wines at Domaine Carneros, as far as I am concerned, have always been stellar but as several of the other Champagne outposts (e.g., Mumm Napa, Domaine Chandon) have changed hands, DC has remained steadfast as under the Taittinger family umbrella. In addition, the house has had remarkably consistent leadership—Eileen Crane served as winemaker and CEO of Domaine Carneros since its founding, in 1987, until last Fall when the indefatigable Remi Cohen took over as CEO.



2017 Domaine Carneros Brut, Carneros, CA: Retail \$34. Although the information on this particular vintage is scant, the new CEO, Remi Cohen indicated that every vintage of this flagship wine hovers around 50/50 Pinot Noir/Chardonnay. Pale straw in the glass with a vibrant sparkle and aromas of yeasty bread, lemon zest, lime, and a candied hazelnut. Lovely. The palate is quite tart and focused, with tart fruit, a persistent bubble, and a lengthy finish. I have been a fan of Domaine Carneros for close to three decades now and this wine is exactly why: vintage after vintage, they produce not only solid wines, but wines that inhabit “spectacular.” For under forty bucks? There is no doubt that this wine would give any wine from the more “renowned” sparkling wine region in France a run for its money. **EXCELLENT. 91 POINTS.**

NV Domaine Carneros Cuvée de la Pompadour Brut Rosé, Carneros, CA: Retail \$40. While this is technically a non-vintage, it is essentially a 2017 vintage (on occasion, reserve wines are added, but it varies). Remi Cohen, the newly minted CEO indicated that while the percentages change slightly, it is always in the 60/40 Pinot/Chard neighborhood. Remi also indicated that the color is derived from a portion of the Pinot macerated briefly, for just a few days, which is then blended into the cuvée. This is a relatively rare method used in sparkling rosé production, not, apparently, even used by the mother ship, Taittinger. This was the top wine from my Blind American Sparkling Wine Tasting back in December. And it is every bit as good now. Pale salmon color, vibrant sparkle, aromas of fresh croissant, strawberry, cherry. Lovely. While the nose is somewhat subdued, the palate is particularly fantastic: racy, subtle fruit, quite tart. Fantastic. While I would contend that this iteration of the Cuvée de la Pompadour is slightly aggressive and clearly young, it is nonetheless gangbusters. **OUTSTANDING. 94 POINTS.**

