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SCIENCE

The Science of Pét-Nat Wines

How interrupting fermentation enables winemakers to create semi-sparkling wines

written by Paul Adams | published February 6, 2018

The first time you use a beer-cap opener to pop open a sparkling wine can be a bit of a jolt if you're accustomed to Champagne and its muzzled mushroom corks. It's only the first of many surprises in the world of pétillant-naturel wines, the moderately fizzy sparklers whose cloudy, unrefined-seeming nature endears them to natural-wine lovers and belies the careful finesse with which they're made.

ONWARD + FARMSTRONG

"I love that lower-bubble, less aggressive texture," says Faith Armstrong Foster, who makes two pét-nats at **Onward Wines** in Napa, California: a Pinot Noir rosé and a Malvasia Bianca...

...with its signature freshness and versatility, a pét-nat makes "an any-time-of-day drink," says Armstrong Foster. "It's so fresh and clean, it can be a brunch wine. Or it can be a great late-at-night wine—after [having] a bunch of big wines in the evening—to clear [the] palate." For winemakers who are champions of the style, there's no question that pét-nats are worth the gamble.



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