

Champagne adds sparkle to big day

Every step in orchestrating your wedding, from the style of the invitations to the bridal toast, can enhance the ceremony.

Depending on the mood you've decided to create, serving champagne from France in delicate flutes adds elegant grace notes during the reception, lunch or dinner, even at a tete-a-tete breakfast on the morning after.

Is your heart set on a soft, rosy glow? Color your wedding romantic

with Rose champagne, the traditional bubbly for nuptials. Complement the sparkling blush of pink champagne with salmon filets as the main course, and decorate guest tables with centrepieces of miniature pink roses and soft raspberry tablecloths.

For sparkles of another dimension, have the toast to the bride poured from a gigantic Salomanazar bottle (contains 12 standard bottles) or Balthazar (16 standard bottles in one). Later you can convert the bottle

into a lamp base for a cherished memento of your milestone event.

Whatever your preferences, you'll find a style of champagne to match your taste. You may select a light, crisp blanc de blancs (white champagne made only from white grapes) as a wedding breakfast wine. Or a fuller-bodied non-vintage champagne to lend zest and gaiety to luncheon or dinner. For classic perfection and elegance, serve vintage or prestige cuvee connoisseur champagne.

Champagne is appropriate at any hour of the day or night, and can properly be served with any menu. Here are some tips from the Champagne News & Information Bureau to help make your wedding memorable:

- Serve champagne in tall, slender, long-stemmed glasses, not saucer-shaped glasses which quickly dissipate the bubbles and aroma.
- It is the best man's responsibility to make sure all glasses are filled

before giving the first toast, which he makes while holding his own glass in his right hand.

- The bride stays seated when receiving a toast. She stands to toast the groom, the two families or perhaps her friends.
- Avoid being caught short. A champagne bottle contains six four-ounce portions. Allow one bottle for every three guests at the reception, or one glass per guest for each toast.

• Offer champagne to bridesmaids and ushers at rehearsals. It will add to the joyous atmosphere.

• Chill the wine well. Bottles will be at the right temperature if they are cooled in a mixture of ice and water for at least 30 minutes.

• Authentic champagne, from the region of the same name 90 miles east of Paris, is easily recognized. Just look for the word "Champagne" standing alone and "produce of France" on the label. If the label says "methode champenoise" it is definitely not champagne, but rather a sparkling wine from another place.

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