

WTOP Radio Wine of the Week July 12, 2013
French for a Day – Bastille Day



It is said that on Saint Patrick's Day, everyone is Irish. And while I think the same analogy can be drawn that everyone is French while celebrating the famous date that commemorates the beginning of the French Revolution, I would go so far as to take the liberty of modifying the statement just a tad. On Bastille Day, everyone *drinks* French.

The French national holiday commemorates the storming of the Bastille on July 14, 1789. The Bastille was a prison that was seen as a symbol of the absolute and arbitrary power of Louis the 16th's Ancient Regime. This sparked an uprising and became known as the start of the French Revolution. By capturing the Bastille, the French people declared that the king's power was no longer absolute. The French recognize Bastille Day as the end of the monarchy and beginning of the modern republic. The lasting significance of the event was in its recognition that power could be held by ordinary citizens, not in the king.

So, in honor of independence in France and around the world, I say, "Let them drink wine... French Wine!"

For those of you who know me, know that I LOVE starting off every celebration with a glass of Sparkling wine – and of course, on Bastille Day, the bubble have to come from Champagne. **Non-Vintage Moët & Chandon Champagne Brut Impérial**, formerly known as "White Star," is a wonderful way to declare your independence. The newly revised cuvee is now a tad less-dry and features flavors of baked brioche, green apple and Gala apple, and just a touch of honey. Notes of nectarine and pineapple are carried across the finish by precise bubbles. \$37

If you are looking for a different sparkling wine to celebrate with, try the **Non-Vintage Luc Belaire Rosé** from the Provence region of France. It is a unique blend of Grenache, Cinsault and Syrah grapes selected for their vibrant, fresh character. Carefully aged before release, the blend is imbued with a delightful effervescence, resulting in a beautiful, deep red sparkling Rosé with aromas of strawberry and blackcurrant. A final liqueur de dosage addition of 100% Syrah adds a sweet - but not too sweet - nuance, resulting in a perfect harmony of aroma, taste, body, and finish. \$35

The Alsace wine region has an interesting history of bouncing back and forth French and German ownership, but today, it is profoundly French and home to the deliciously refreshing **2011 Lucien Albrecht Riesling Réserve**. I love the notes of tangy green apples and lemon/lime fruit that zip over the tongue, buoyed by hints of crushed stone on the medium body. The abundant acidity kept the notes of nectarine and apple light and bright on the finish. \$15

The Burgundy region is home the **2009 Champy Bourgogne Pinot Noir Signature**. This absolutely delicious Pinot Noir has a deep ruby color with a nose bursting with scents of red fruit and dried cherries on the bouquet and flavors of fresh strawberry, raspberry and red cherry on the palate, this wine is fun and easy to drink. The abundant acidity keeps the fruit in balance on the medium bodied finish. \$29

Not all Bordeaux wines have to be outrageously expensive. There are a few gems that deliver power and finesse at a price somewhere between a bargain and a splurge. The **2009 Château Lalande-Borie** from St.-Julien is one such wine. A blend of 50% cabernet sauvignon, 40% merlot and 10% cabernet franc, it is it is a forward wine with scents of red cherry, cranberry and sweet oak in the nose. Rich and creamy flavors of blackberry, plum and dark cherry are nicely integrated with the soft tannins which keep the fruit focused all the way through the medium finish. Remarkably enjoyable and fun to drink. \$35