

10 rules about champagne

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Publicity photos



Anselme Selosse is a cult grower and one of Champagne's most special and iconoclastic winemakers. He has revolutionised the grower champagne scene with his impressive wines. In an exclusive interview with *Baltic Outlook*, he outlines ten rules to follow in order to make an unforgettable journey into the world of champagne.

It's never too early to try champagne

I first tried champagne when I was still a baby, because my mom sometimes poured a few drops of the drink onto my lips. Champagne has played an important part in the history of my family and I've been closely linked with it from the day I was born. The work at our champagne house is being passed on from generation to generation. [In 1949, Jacques Selosse, Anselme's father, created the champagne house that still bears his name. Anselme took over the estate in 1974. – Ed.]

Champagne is not only a holiday drink

Winter, spring, summer or fall – champagne can be consumed during any season. It can be enjoyed both at festive events and on an everyday basis. It can be savoured to celebrate victories, or to mitigate crushing feelings of defeat, or to get to know the story of this visually simple yet structurally complicated drink, or finally, to listen to one of the most magnificent sounds in the world – that of bubbles fizzing in a glass. Now this is true music!

A good champagne doesn't come cheap

Regarding the price of a bottle of Jacques Selosse, I want to stress the importance of the *terroir* – the environmental factors like the climate, the soil and the topography – on the champagne's attributes. I have been inspired by and represent the Burgundian winemaking philosophy. You are in a constant battle with the elements. You need to show an enormous degree of patience, but the result is worth it. Like children, champagnes with character can drive their parents to exasperation, but at the same time, they provide an unparalleled sense of joy and satisfaction.

A taste that doesn't repeat itself

I am always dreaming about the champagne that I haven't yet created. That's where the challenge

lies – to surpass oneself every time, to sense new nuances and make new discoveries every time. Those who think that they have found their favourite champagne should get ready for new surprises. Keep looking at things with the eyes of a child. Only then can you break the barriers that you have set up as an adult.

Things that people don't know about champagne

The soil and the climate are of paramount importance. We can control the production process of our favourite drink, but when you realise the importance of the *terroir*, then your eyes really open up. You exit from a tunnel and discover the labyrinth of champagne's diverse tastes!

Each year brings new surprises

The first half of 2016 was a disaster in many parts of France, including Champagne. Rain, rain and more rain! That was not a typical spring. The weather finally changed in July, saving our harvest. That was followed by a wonderful August and a good September. Every year, I have to adapt to the weather. This year, that involved combatting the negative effects of excessive moisture. I can't order the sun to come out. I can only adapt to the weather at hand and work very hard to reap a good harvest.

The bottle reflects the personality of its maker

I'm not insisting that champagne is the best wine in the world, but it certainly is one of the few drinks that reflects the personality of its creator. I wouldn't want to call myself the maker of Jacques Selosse champagne, but rather the person who gives it its personality, like a foster father. It depends on me what personality my "children" will develop during the years that they spend in my cellar, before they finally reach the glasses of their drinkers.

Don't be afraid to make mistakes

If you haven't yet established a relationship with champagne, then don't be shy to get to know the drink. Cast away your stereotypes and fears about any lack of knowledge that you might have. I know that mamma's home-cooked soup tastes the best, but don't be afraid to try new things as well. Once you have tasted a good champagne, let your instincts guide you and you will no longer err in your choices.

Champagne is a wonderful accompaniment to meals

Since my wife, Corinne, and I opened the small hotel and gastronomic restaurant *Les Avisés* in my home village of Avize in Champagne, we have given our guests the opportunity to open the doors even wider to the diverse world of champagne. Our establishment embodies the philosophy of Champagne – hospitality and the region's gastronomic diversity. The drink on your table might come from our estate, or just as well from another house that makes fine champagnes. In any case, it will be a wine that we ourselves would pair with our own personal meals. You can pair several different champagnes with a multi-course meal and compose a splendid symphony of tastes in the process!

The best heritage is knowledge

Since I started working shoulder to shoulder together with my son Guillaume, I've realised how hard it is for young people to receive the heritage of previous generations. I tell my son that the most important thing is to follow the path that you have chosen and not to let anything force you to go astray. The day when he completely takes over my life's work, I will pass the business over to him with the words that have been my guiding motto: "Do as you feel." **BO**