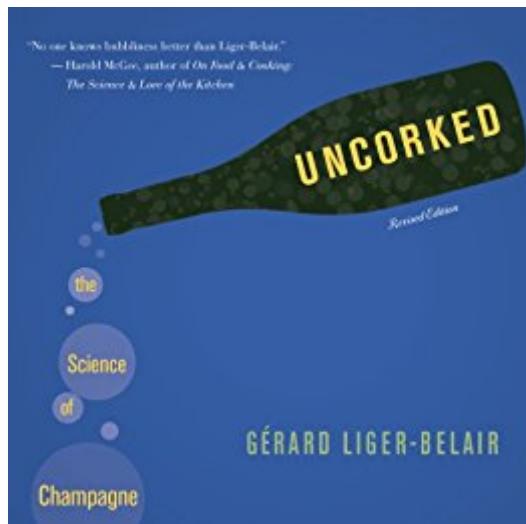


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Uncorked: The Science Of Champagne



Synopsis

Uncorked quenches our curiosity about the inner workings of one of the world's most prized beverages. Esteemed for its freshness, vitality, and sensuality, champagne is a wine of great complexity. Mysteries aplenty gush forth with the popping of that cork. Just what is that fizz? Can you judge champagne quality by how big the bubbles are, how long they last, or how they behave before they fade? And why does serving champagne in a long-stemmed flute prolong its chill and effervescence? Through lively prose and a wealth of state-of-the-art photos, this revised edition of Uncorked unlocks the door to what champagne is all about. Providing an unprecedented close-up view of the beauty in the bubbles, Gérard Liger-Belair presents images that look surprisingly like lovely flowers, geometric patterns, even galaxies as the bubbles rise through the glass and burst forth on the surface. He illustrates how bubbles form not on the glass itself but are "born" out of debris stuck on the glass wall, how they rise, and how they pop. Offering a colorful history of champagne, Liger-Belair tells us how it is made and he asks if global warming could spell champagne's demise. In a brand-new afterword, he updates the reader on new developments in the world of bubble science and delves even more deeply into the processes that give champagne its unique and beautiful character. Bubbly may tickle the nose, but Uncorked tackles what the nose and the naked eye cannot--the spectacular science that gives champagne its charm and champagne drinkers immeasurable pleasure.

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Customer Reviews

The subtitle of this book is "the Science of Champagne", and this is a book of science. It starts with an historical introduction to sparkling wine (the real history, not the myths). But then it gets into science. Real science. As you go through this book you'll encounter Henry's law and Van der Waals forces. You'll learn the difference between the fluid sphere limit and the rigid sphere limit. On one page you'll encounter wake instabilities and hydrodynamic instability. You'll learn about nucleation and laser tomography. None of which is bad. I'm a physicist by training, and I eat this stuff up. If you are interested in both science and bubbly, you should enjoy this book. But if the preceding paragraph put you off, this probably isn't the book for you. This is a fairly technical book with figures, photos, and references. As technical works go, it's a quick read. But if technical stuff turns you off, you won't enjoy it. As a warning, there is a section on what global warming might do to the Champagne region. If you refuse to accept that warming is occurring, this might annoy you. Overall, I enjoyed this book. But it's not for everyone.

Uncorked : the science of champagne or how all to learn on this festive and sparkling beverage so much appreciated throughout the world? In a very pleasant prose to read, the author : Gerard Liger-Belair, an associate professor in Physical Sciences at the University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne and consultant for the research department of Moet & Chandon, describes elegantly and for the first time the fragile and transitory life of a champagne bubble from its birth to its burst on the surface. Furthermore superb and fascinating black and white photographs permit to visualize what the naked eye cannot perceive like the formation of geometrical structures in the shape of flowers or dynamics of the bubbles such galaxies at the liquid surface. This book is a real concentrate of knowledge combining with brilliance history, science and art. Here is a physicist in love with bubbles and phenomenon of effervescence which makes the dynamics of fluids attractive! I think that Uncorked is a remarkable tool for popularisation, accessible to the greatest number and Gerard Liger-Belair, a professor that any student would dream to have. Never again you will look at a champagne flute in the same way! A lover of champagne

A short review for a short book -- the science is fascinating; unfortunately the author mixes his knowledge of science with his lack of knowledge about wine. While I share his love of Champagne, some of M. Liger-Belair's other vinous statements are either not based on fact or are based on opinion -- that would be welcome whether I agreed with his opinions or not, if it didn't confuse the original thesis, which is, "this is a book about the science of bubbles." Still, this book is worth reading if only for the terrific, entertaining foreward. Cheers.

When I ordered this book I was hoping for more about science around Champagne as a whole, but this book is very focused on the bubbles and the science behind them. Literally how the bubbles form, move, etc not much on which yeasts will get better results, nor how various grapes or styles of rose will impact the bubbles. There's definitely some useful information in here, but I would buy this book only if you're really into Champagne or liquid/bubble physics.

The problem with Champagne, at least for me, is that it tends to disappear too fast. That was also the problem with this book. It reads too fast. Before I knew it the pleasure was behind me. Uncorked starts with the history of this famous drink, including the revelation that Dom Pierre Perignon was originally told by the Pope and other powers to get those lousy bubbles out of the white wine. Then the members of the Royal Court at Versailles under Louis XIV began to appreciate the bubbles. So, after years of fruitless labor trying to get the bubbles out of the wine, at the end of the seventeenth century, Dom was ordered to reverse his efforts and devise methods to increase the bubbling in the wine, which, incidentally, he did. After history, we have a chapter on making Champagne: pretty standard stuff. But if you don't know it yet, learn it here so at the next dinner you can talk with authority. Next comes the most informative chapter: A Flute or Goblet? Which is better? Those of you who know Champagne know the answer. And those of you who don't know Champagne can find the correct answer here. The amazing thing for me is that I knew the answer, but I didn't understand the scientific reasons why flute was better. Science is always right and here we find no exception. The last few chapters then talk in extenso about bubbles and as this is the essence of Chamapgne, the discussion is well worth the effort expended in studying the science of Champagne bubbles and the photographs that illustrate that science. Just as a book has a beginning, a middle, and an end, a bubble has a birth, a rise, and a burst. This book didn't make me want to go out and read more about Champagne, but it did make me want to go out and drink some more and while drinking I shall appreciate the remarkable history and science that goes into this fine drink.

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