



# Champagne, Uncorked: The House of Krug and the Timeless Allure of the World's Most Celebrated Drink

*Alan Tardi*

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Champagne is the epitome of effervescence, the centerpiece of celebration, and a symbol of good fortune. It has become an icon, a symbol of luxury, an emblem of the "good life," and few are not attracted to its sparkle.

*Champagne, Uncorked* is a journey into the heart of this beloved wine, anchored by the year the author spent inside the very secretive, prestigious Krug winery in Reims, France. It tells the dramatic story of the creation of the Grande Cuvée, one of the most distinctive and high quality champagnes in the world, from the growing of the grapes to the challenges of harvest, through fermentation in old wood barrels, to the extended process of tasting and analyzing the wines which eventually result in the determination of the all-important final blend.

During the course of the narrative, Alan Tardi jumps backwards and forwards in time, telling a larger story about the history and cultural impact of champagne. He reveals how we came to use champagne to celebrate (hint: we can all thank Napoleon) and introduces Eugene Mercier of Dom Perignon, who in 1889 built the "Cathedral of Champagne," one of the first modern examples of brand marketing: the largest wine cask in the world, holding about 200,000 bottles' worth of bubbly, it debuted at the Paris World's Fair that year as the second most popular exhibit (the first being the unveiling of the Eiffel Tower). He also regales us with the story of "Champagne Charlie," the first person to bring champagne to America, who was paid for his champagne in embargoed cotton during the Civil War and who was thanked for his effervescent contribution with the deed to a little town called Denver, Colorado.

In *Champagne, Uncorked*, Tardi is our guide, taking us into the fields of France to learn how finicky grapes in an unstable climate can lead to a nail-biting season for the vintners, and deep into the caves at Krug, where the delicate and painstaking process of blending takes place, all of which culminates in the glass we raise to toast in celebration of life's finer moments. You'll never raise a glass of champagne the same way again.

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