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Spirits

What The Pros Know: The Future Is A Diversity Of Sparkling Wine

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In a year where climate change, shuttered bars and restaurants, a pandemic, consumer anxiety and a cog in the global supply chain all conspired to wreak havoc on some sectors of the wine industry, sparkling wine lived up to its name, delivering an iridescent end to the year with increased awareness, sales and quality coming to market. After a first somber year in a pandemic, Champagne sales declined, but rebounded in 2021, along with other sparklers produced across the globe. This month, Reuters reported that Champagne sales have rebounded from a troubled pandemic year and are now about 10 percent by value ahead of their 2019 peak. And Business Wire reported the increasingly popular sparkling wine “is a major driver of growth in the overall wine category” with a “rapidly growing” share in the global wine sales.

If this whole Champagne shortage rumor turns out to be true, I'll be perfectly happy with sparkling wines from Roederer Estate, **Domaine Carneros**, Schramsberg, and Gloria Ferrer. Now that many American Zinfandel producers are making less ripe, more balanced wines I think the category is actually exciting again. One thing that California still doesn't often do really well is medium-weight red wines. A friend turned me on to an incredible Susumaniello from Masseria Li Veli in Puglia, and I definitely want more. I'm also a sucker for a good Valpolicella Ripasso from Veneto, Travaligni Gattinara from Piemonte, or Frappato from Sicily.

