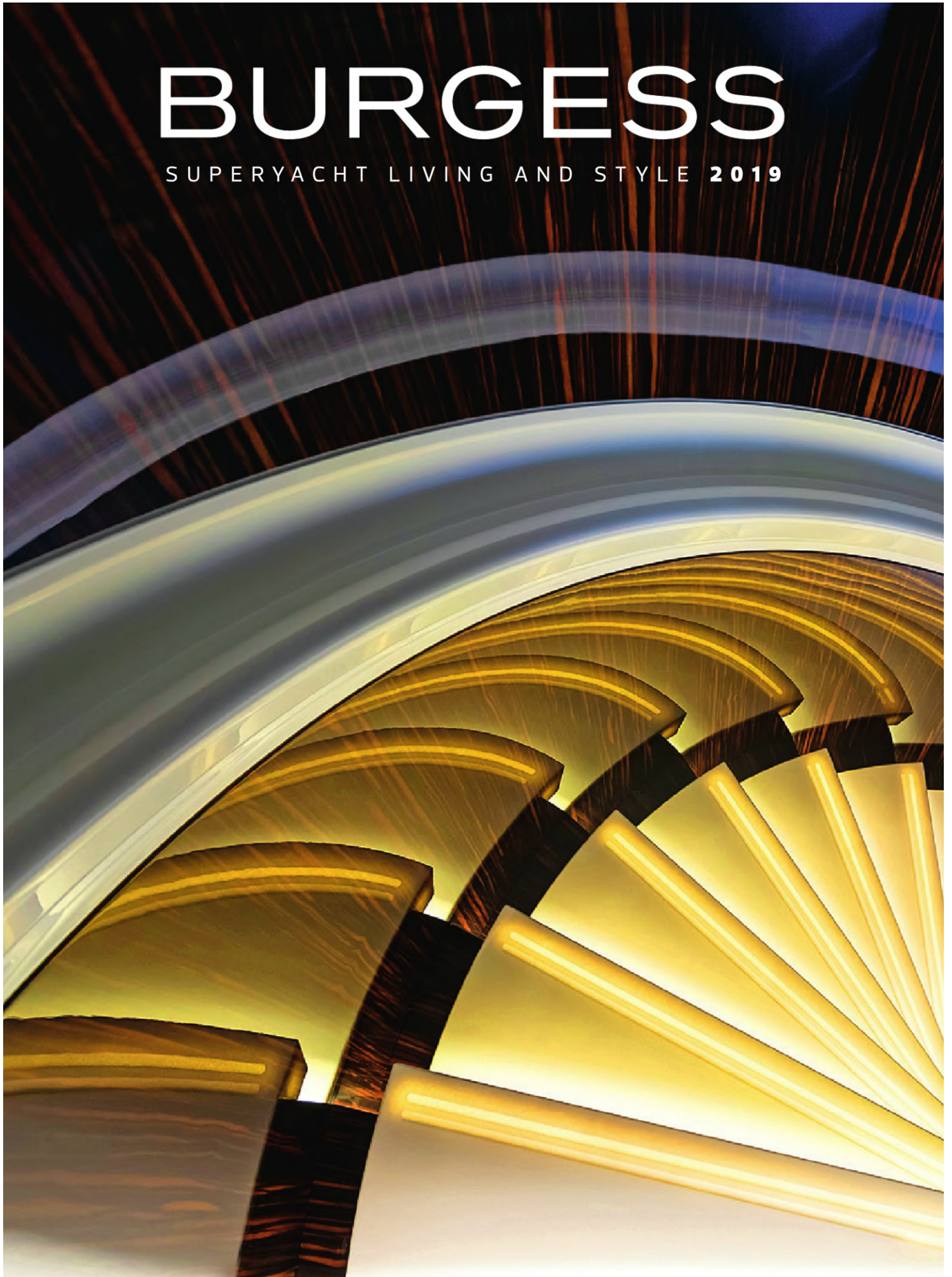


BURGESS

SUPERYACHT LIVING AND STYLE 2019



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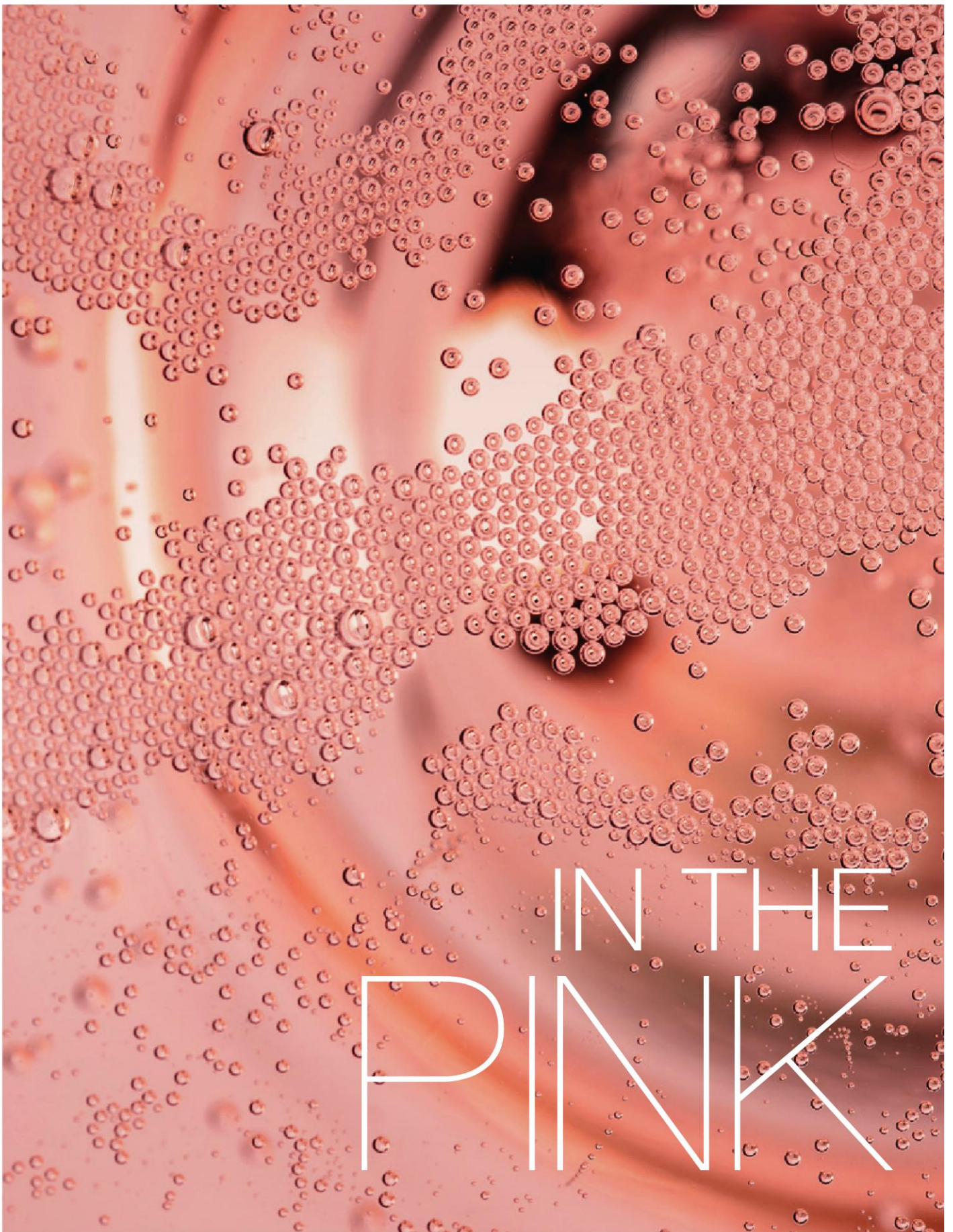


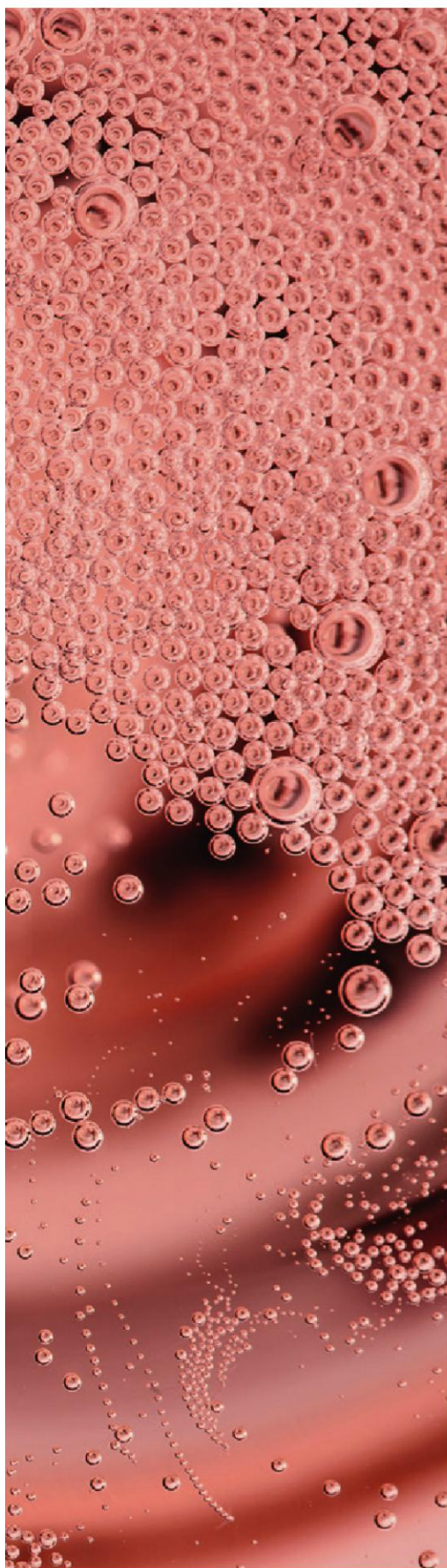
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Once considered the choice for those who didn't know their way around a wine list, today's oenological connoisseurs are seeking out rosé Champagne for more than just its colour. Lucie Muir reports

In the words of American writer, poet and playwright Gertrude Stein: 'Rose is a rose is a rose'. In the case of rosé Champagne, it is not that straightforward.

Varying in colour from the lightest blush to a more vivid salmon pink tint, the current crop of prestige brut and vintage rosés are cleaner and drier than before, brimming with rich complexity. Once seen as a 'girlie' tippie, relegated to bridal showers and summer picnics, today's sophisticated rosés have a cool Riviera vibe. And don't be fooled by the pretty pink packaging. The latest cuvées pack plenty of punch.

The heavy hitters – Ruinart, Billecart-Salmon, Pol Roger, Charles Heidsieck, to name but a few – have been making exceptional rosés for some time. Today's grower Champagne brands, which are small-batch, handcrafted Champagne with great provenance, are also helping to direct pink fizz in a much more serious direction.

"Billecart-Salmon is among the first to make waves with a serious rosé Champagne," says Mark Pardoe, buying director at Berry Bros. & Rudd. "It already has a very well-regarded brut rosé non-vintage, but their creation in 1988 of their vintage Rosé Cuvée Elisabeth Salmon really altered perceptions of rosé Champagne, as a complex wine for the table as well as an apéritif." Today, its Cuvée Elisabeth (current vintage 2006) contains delicious fresh fig, white peach and tangy mandarin notes, all of which unravel lavishly in the mouth.

In 2018, Billecart-Salmon and Laurent-Perrier, two brands that were early champions of pink Champagne long before the current fashion for it, both celebrated important milestones. Laurent-Perrier marked 50 years of its iconic Cuvée Rosé, while Billecart-Salmon (or Pink Bill as it is fondly referred to in the US) popped

the cork on its bicentenary celebrations. And, Mathieu Roland-Billecart will become CEO of this celebrated Champagne house in January 2019, the seventh generation of the Billecart family to head up the company.

Elsewhere, Krug has expanded the numbered 'Édition' concept for its Grande Cuvée range to include rosé for the first time. The Krug Rosé 21ème Édition is the latest release since the expression was first bottled in 1983 and features a blend of 57 wines, ageing from 2000 to 2008.

There are other factors that determine how quickly something can become a trend, as Pardoe explains: "Firstly, rosé wine has become a lot more interesting recently and wines are being made with real individuality, so it was inevitable that interest in rosé Champagne would follow suit."

The trend for much drier pink Champagnes, and emergence of brut zero rosé and more terroir-based fizz that uses only red grapes (such as Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier) for a more vinous style, has meant that the quality of today's rosés has never been better. "A good rosé Champagne is a really fine glass of wine. It is equally at home before or during a meal, just like a still wine," adds Pardoe.

FIZZ FOR A MODERN PALATE

Ethan Boroian, Champagne ambassador UK at Moët Hennessy, notes that those who have dismissed pink Champagne in the past are pleasantly surprised when they rediscover a classic, such as Moët et Chandon Brut Rosé Impérial. "People forget that the addition of red wine, Pinot Noir, adds more structure and fruitiness to a rosé Champagne, not sweetness," he says. "Compared with 10 years ago, our rosés are slightly drier to suit a more modern palate."

Indeed, this and other rosé Champagnes are surprisingly versatile. No longer restricted

to fish and seafood dishes, they can be paired with a gamut of culinary styles, including game and red meat. They are also successful with goat's cheese and sublime with decadent chocolate desserts.

"Rosé Champagne has incredibly delicate flavours – just try drinking a glass on its own, without food or distraction. The body, the complexity, the weight really define it," says Chris Denney, executive chef at 108 Garage restaurant in London's Notting Hill.

As part of the 2018 edition of the Frieze London art fair, Denney was invited by Ruinart to come up with an eight-course pairing menu around its Dom Ruinart Rosé 2002 and Ruinart Rosé. "Just like a vintage Champagne, which has its own individual character, a good rosé can cut through fatty dishes," he adds.

And, as any good barman worth his salt knows, rosé Champagne can also form the basis for a punchy cocktail. If you are visiting Cecconi's latest outposts in Amsterdam or East London, be sure to order the house special La Dolce Vita, made with a mix of Grey Goose orange vodka, Campari, Passoa passion fruit liqueur, grapefruit juice and Champagne rosé.

In Champagne, there are around 15,800 growers, 140 co-operatives and 320 Champagne houses. The terroir in this part of northern France, which is home to the commercial hubs of Épernay, Troyes and Reims, is unique. The topsoil is more clay-rich, rainfall is moderate, while row upon row of centuries-old vines, carrying the Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier grapes required for Champagne, snake over steep limestone slopes as far as the eye can see. Many of these red wine grapes are harvested to produce still red wines, usually Pinot Noir, which is then added to the otherwise white assemblage, resulting in pink Champagne.

Grapes are picked by hand during harvest time. The exact date is set by Comité Champagne and can be anywhere between the end of August and the beginning of October. The record-breaking weather of 2018 meant that the Champagne harvest started early on 20 August, only the fifth vintage in the last 15 years to begin in that month.

A RECORD-BREAKING YEAR

"The quality and quantity, especially of red grapes, has been exceptional," enthuses Hervé Deschamps, the seventh cellar master since Perrier-Jouët was founded more than 200 years ago. "The weather picked up from May, which will be good news for the assemblage of our rosé cuvées," he adds. Today the house produces two award-winning rosés: Perrier-Jouët Blason Rosé and Perrier-Jouët Belle Époque Rosé (still vintage). The latter includes a little less red wine (12 per cent for the 2006 vintage) and more Chardonnay (50 per cent) compared to Perrier-Jouët Blason Rosé, and has a light, velvety finish.

"It's a really interesting time in Champagne, with the arrival of the new generation," says Françoise Peretti, director at the Champagne Bureau UK. "It is also a great time for women winemakers. Whereas previously you might see three or four widows pottering around, now there are some tremendous women coming to the fore."

When Séverine Frerson takes over from Hervé Deschamps at Perrier-Jouët in the coming years, she will become the first female cellar master in the history of the house. In fact, the maison was started by a woman – Rose-Adélaïde Jouët, who founded it with her husband Pierre-Nicolas Perrier in 1811.

And then there are the grower houses. Back in the day, they would have sold their grapes to the big houses. Now, they keep a larger proportion of grapes in reserve to make their own Champagne. It's here where you will find the highest concentration of biodynamic producers creating *rosé de saignée*, made by macerating the grape must with the black grape skins, rather than by blending red and white wine like most rosé Champagnes.

The new wave of 'bio-chic' growers includes Charles Dufour, a rising star from Landreville, a small village located in Côte des Bar, southern Champagne. A relative newcomer in the world of rosé Champagne, the 36-year-old took over the reins of his family wine-growing business in 2010 and has been single-handedly producing sell-out Champagnes

Red grapes, often Pinot Noir, are added to the predominant white varieties to produce rosé





ever since. The trailblazing winemaker's Le Champ du Clos and Champagne Bulles de Comptoir rosés are especially interesting as they are 100 per cent organic.

Larmandier-Bernier in the village of Vertus also produces a wide range of austere, more terroir-style wines, that are reflective of the individual vineyards from which they come. Then there is Champagne Leclerc Briant, an old house that is doing new things thanks to Hervé Jestin, a passionate advocate for biodynamic viticulture, at its helm. Recently, approximately 500 bottles of Leclerc Briant Abyss Vintage 2013 brut zero Champagne were stored in a metal cage and placed in deep-sea waters, off Brittany. This dark, cold environment, apparently provides optimal ageing conditions.

"I suspect the quality of premium grower rosé Champagne has risen over the years, which might be a key factor in its current popularity," says Christina Holzer, responsible for buying, logistics and private client manager at independent wine merchant, The Sampler. "Also, rosé looks pretty in the glass and on Instagram, which I'm sure is a factor with certain consumers."

Which brings us on to those discerning millennials; after all, weren't they the first to coin the term 'Millennial Pink'? No wonder they are taking to pink fizz like ducks to water. And, as every good Champagne brand knows, the best way to speak to this generation is via social media.

MILLENNIALS THINK PINK

As part of a series of savvy marketing initiatives held over the summer of 2018, Laurent-Perrier invited 150 fashion bloggers and influencers to celebrate the aforementioned 50th anniversary of its iconic Laurent-Perrier

Cuvée Rosé, at London's Mondrian Hotel. This modern-thinking Champagne house was also keen to highlight its 'green' credentials – 100 per cent recyclable packaging, bottles and non-invasive herbicides – to swathes of new 'followers' at the Taste of London food festival.

Another storied Champagne house trending now is Dom Pérignon, which recently announced a collaboration with musician and actor Lenny Kravitz as its first ever creative director and photographer. As this rock 'n' roll pairing goes to show, there's more to this once frivolous fizz than meets the eye. 

"The new wave of 'bio-chic' growers includes Charles Dufour, a rising star from Landreville"