Thoroughly recommended champagne guide

18 Apr 2011 by Jancis Robinson

I've come across a really excellent, attractive, up-to-the-minute guide to the champagnes currently on the market. You might assume it would be written by one of the accredited champagne specialists based in France, Britain or Finland but in fact it's written by Tyson Stelzer of Australia, whom I more readily associate with that country's pro-Stelvin campaign.

Stelzer must have suffered badly from screwcap deprivation when he installed himself in Rheims to write this detailed guide to some of the world's greatest sparkling wine. But he must have got used to the land of mushroom corks because he has produced that rare thing: a publication on wine that is as useful as it is beautiful. Stelzer designed it himself and claims that the design of the earliest of the dozen books he has self-published left a great deal to be desired, but he certainly seems to have got the hang of things now. *The Champagne Guide 2011* is extremely elegant.

Despite the annual-sounding name, this is the first edition of this book, available both as an e-book and a paperback, and was published at the very end of 2010 so as to make his comments on cuvées as current as possible.

You can order both e-book (Aus$24.95) and paperback (Aus$29.95 + postage) from www.clearaboutwine.com.au.

Below is his own description of the contents.

- Independent assessments of almost 200 champagnes by Tyson Stelzer; no marketing spin and no advertising
- Honest profiles of 52 champagne houses, from the smallest grower producers to the largest houses
- Classification of champagne houses from 1/10 to 10/10
- All the champagne bargains of the year, from just Aus$40
- Assessments of all the legendary prestige cuvées of every worthy house
- The Champagne Guide 2011 Awards featuring the best houses and top champagnes of the year
- Detailed Australian retail directory
- Frank commentary on all the current issues facing Champagne: Global warming, expanding boundaries, excessive yields, antiquated cru system, and so on
- How to avoid corked, stale and lightstruck champagnes
- A name-and-shame list of faulty champagnes on the shelves this year
- Everything you need to know about how to buy, open, serve and store champagne
- How champagne is grown and made
- Glossary of champagne language
- More than 180 A4 pages packed with information and hundreds of photographs and bottle shots

All for less than the price of a glass of decent champagne!