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## **Champagne maintains its sparkle according to Britain's oldest wine retailer**

### ***Berry Bros. & Rudd reports strong year for Champagne sales despite economic woes***

Champagne has lost none of its fizz this year with sales the strongest for three years, according to Berry Bros. & Rudd, the 300 year old wine merchants and Vintners to the Queen.

Sales of Champagne this year are up almost 17% by volume and 41% by value on 2010, giving a clear sign that despite a mood of austerity, people haven't been swapping Champagne for Cava. Sales of Sparkling Wines have remained relatively consistent across the same three year period with just a small rise experienced.

The latest Berry Bros. & Rudd statistics mirror an industry-wide trend. Recent numbers from the Champagne Bureau show that Champagne shipments to the UK increased by 16.3% in 2010 with over 35.5 million bottles imported into the UK from France last year.

Simon Field MW, Buyer at Berry Bros. & Rudd said:

"The sales of Vintage and Deluxe Champagnes are often the first to take a dive in tough times but also the first to make a recovery. The fact we've seen an increase in sales this year after a drop last year may indicate that there could be more to celebrate in 2012 than the economic pundits would have us believe.

"People have been spending more and this is partly due to a number of our discerning customers appreciating the quality of the 2002 vintage which many top Champagne houses have released over the past year or so. Many of our customers have been woo-ed by this extraordinary vintage from the big houses such as Dom Perignon and Bollinger to the lesser-known but increasingly fashionable growers such as Pierre Peters, Paul Bara and R&L Legras."

"Also, these latest figures don't take into account Christmas trading – a time of year when we always see a spike in sales of Champagne and Sparkling Wines as families enjoy the festivities together as well as welcoming in the New Year. Early signs indicate that there will be a lot of corks popping across the nation throughout the month of December".

Champagne isn't the only fizz to be seeing a surge in popularity. Figures from Berry Bros. & Rudd also show Prosecco to be a rising star. Sales of the fashionable Italian sparkling wine have been

steadily climbing over past years but soared in 2011 by 28% in terms of volume and by 37% in value on 2010. And the predictions are that this trend is set to stay.

Simon Field MW continues:

“The British continue their love affair with Italian Prosecco this year. Our Prosecco Asolo Extra Dry, Bele Casel, Veneto, priced at £12.95 has been a real best-seller as the grape becomes an acceptable alternative to serving Champagne at dinners and parties”.

Berry Bros. & Rudd sells over 157 different Vintage and non-Vintage Champagnes across both its stores and on the website. Prices start for as little as £25.95 for great value favourites such as Berry's UKC Champagne Grand Cru Société de Producteurs-Mailly, rising to as much as £1,850 a bottle for investment purchases such as Krug, Clos D'Ambonnay.

Champagnes and sparkling wines to watch out for in 2012, according to Simon Field, MW are:

**1. 2002 Champagne, R & L Legras Presidente, £39.80**

An excellent cuvee from the outstanding 2002 Vintage, which makes it extremely good value for a Champagne of this quality. The slightly smoky and flinty taste is balanced by a toasty and honied touch; and it deftly combines tropical and citric notes with a delicate, lacy texture and an almost savoury finish. A beautiful medium-bodied example of this vintage.

**2. 2002 Bollinger Grande Année (in gift box), £70.00**

This intense wine has been created from the produce of 16 Premier and Grand Cru villages, and the results are exceptional. This rich, round champagne has a complex palate that is utterly compelling and wonderfully fresh. Strong nose of orchard fruit with undertones of honey, sherbet and grilled almond. A spectacular wine that will only blossom further with aging: making it a brilliant investment.

**3. 2002 Pierre Peters, Chétilons, £57.00**

Originating from a small vineyard located to the north of Le Mensil-sur-Oger, this Pierre Peters is a sublime wine and worthy ambassador of both winemaker and vintage. The wine is starting to develop and unveil itself after almost a decade, as the aromas of spring flowers cede to gentle tropical fruit with hints of citrus. The beguiling palate maintains these themes with a fine, soft bubbles and a lacy mousse complimenting an extraordinary felicitous coda which subtly blends fruit alongside the famed sterner mineral notes of this village.

**4. Prestige Grand Cru Champagne, Bonnaire, £34.95**

Bonnaire's vast 17 hectares of Grand Cru has yielded this fine, medium-bodied Champagne: a prestigious wine boasting a deep palate and a strong personality of stone fruit whilst maintaining its buttery core. This wine should be savoured over the next few years rather than stored.

## 5. Jacquesson Brut Cuvée 735 Champagne, £35.95

The 735 has aged beautifully over time and is richer, rounder, and more immediate than its predecessor the 734. A stunningly fleshy wine laced with radiant fruit amongst notes of spices, white flowers and crushed rocks. With a round, creamy finish, this Champagne is deep and satisfying.

## ENDS

### Contact

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### Simon Field MW, Wine Buyer at BB&R

Simon joined Berrys in 1998, having spent several misguided but lucrative years working as a Chartered Accountant in the City. His passion for opera and travel is well suited to buying trips down the Rhine and into the darker recesses of Andalusia. In addition to buying the Spanish and fortified ranges, Simon is also responsible for purchasing wines from South America and England. His three favourite areas of responsibility, however, are the Rhône Valley, Languedoc and Champagne. He gained his Master of Wine qualification in October 2002.

### About Berry Bros. & Rudd

Over 310 years ago, Berry Bros. & Rudd opened its shop at 3 St James's Street, opposite St James's Palace, where it still stands today. Berry's now has shops in Hong Kong and Basingstoke, as well as a business in Japan and duty free presence in Dubai.

Berry's range comprises over 3,000 wines and services include The Wine Club, The Cellar Plan, Fine & Rare Wine Advice, comprehensive Wine Tastings, Fine Dining and Wine School. The cellars and Pickering Place at Berry's are available for corporate entertaining, cocktail parties and wine tastings. Berry's award-winning website [www.bbr.com](http://www.bbr.com) is a one-stop shop online and includes expert advice from Berry's own wine advisors.

For further discussion on this and other topics with Berry's experts please visit Berry's Wine Blog. To keep up-to-date with the latest wine news from Berry's as it happens, follow [@berrybro Rudd](https://twitter.com/berrybro Rudd) on Twitter. It only takes a few seconds and it's free. Become a fan of Berry Bros. & Rudd on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/berryswine](http://www.facebook.com/berryswine).