

WINE ENTHUSIAST

The Best Sparkling Wines from Napa and Sonoma to Buy Now

BY [VIRGINIE BOONE](#)



End-of-year gatherings and get togethers are good excuses for stocking up on bubbles, both foreign and domestic. Dozens of new releases from [Napa](#) and [Sonoma](#)-based producers—many of whom are pioneers who devoted themselves to [sparkling wine](#) production—prove that there are choices beyond Old World options.

[Schramsberg](#) in [Calistoga](#) owes its present-day success to the visionary risk-taking of Jack and Jamie Davies, who bought the historic property in 1965 with the express aim of making world-class traditional method sparkling wine from [California](#) grapes. The winery continues to refine its grape sourcing and is making vineyard-designated and vintage-dated wines that impress. That includes the [2016 Hyde Vineyards Blanc de Blancs](#) from the coveted [Carneros](#) site. Like so many of the non-

sparkling [Chardonnays](#) that come off of that property, the sparkling version is focused and linear, with deep, rich stone-fruit flavors.

[Iron Horse Vineyards](#) in the [Green Valley](#) AVA, a sub-appellation of the [Russian River Valley](#), has been owned by the Sterling family since 1976 and makes estate-grown bubbles that get better and better each year. A slew of 2017 vintage cuvées prove this point, offering diversity in style and outstanding value.

These are radiant and well-made wines that show a true understanding of site and the pillowy texture that is commonly found from wines grown on [Gold Ridge](#) soil, which Iron Horse's 160-acre vineyard has in abundance.

A devotion to precision viticulture across those acres takes form in the glass. New Iron Horse Winemaker Sofian Himeur joined Winemaker Emeritus David Munksgard in 2020. Himeur is the grandson of New Mexico based [Gruet Winery](#) Founder Gilbert Gruet.

Sparkling wine producers in Napa and Sonoma are aiming ever higher to both farm and source from the right sites to make sparklers of great finesse and complexity. The dividends are in the glass.



Iron Horse 2017 Classic Vintage Brut Estate Bottled Sparkling (Green Valley)

Iron Horse 2017 Classic Vintage Brut Estate Bottled Sparkling Wine (Green Valley); \$48. Made from 70% Pinot Noir and 30% Chardonnay, this stunning sparkler offers layers of stone fruit, hazelnut liqueur and marzipan. Mineral-driven and sharp in acidity, it stays fresh and focused in citrus and oyster shell flavors.

RATING

97

POINTS