



The Queen of Champagne

BY KIMBERLEY LOVATO

Elise Losfelt, the youngest winemaker for Moët & Chandon, talks holiday pairings, forgetting flutes and the proper way to serve Champagne

Legendary fashion designer Coco Chanel once said, “I only drink Champagne on two occasions. When I’m in love and when I’m not.”

That’s a statement that will forever ring true to all Champagne lovers, including Elise Losfelt, winemaker for luxury Champagne house Moët & Chandon. “There’s really no reason you can’t drink it every day,” she says.

Losfelt, 29, is the youngest of 10 winemakers at Moët & Chandon, and she grew up on her family’s vineyard in Grès de Montpellier, France, where both her mother and grandmother were also winemakers. She earned a master’s degree in engineering, as well as viticulture and oenology, and refined her skills at wineries in Australia, Spain and other regions of France before joining Moët & Chandon in 2012.

Needless to say, Losfelt knows libations, and she says we’ve been serving Champagne all wrong: The larger bowl of a white-wine glass opens up the aromas and complexities. And how to quickly chill a bottle? Not in the refrigerator. Use a bucket of ice filled with one-third water for a 20-minute chill.

When not working with Moët & Chandon’s chief winemaker, Benoit Gouez, in France, Losfelt creates food-and-wine pairings with their in-house chefs. Losfelt says the usual suspects (caviar, lobster, oysters) are always crowd-pleasers, but you can also shake up your menu with more casual fare too.

“Our 2006 rosé pairs well with green curry or white pizza with blue cheese. Champagne also goes well with fried chicken, truffle French fries and hamburgers,” she says.

The house’s flagship bubbly, Moët & Chandon Imperial Brut NV, is a blend of pinot noir, pinot meunier and chardonnay grapes created in 1869, and it’s still a best-seller today. The blend makes an excellent hostess gift, according to Losfelt, especially this time of year.

“Imperial Brut pairs really well with a number of holiday dishes like ham, turkey, mashed potatoes, carrots and the most American of holiday dishes, green bean casserole,” she says.

Which confirms what Champagne lovers — and Coco Chanel — have known all along: Every day is a celebration.

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