



THE COUNTY OF CHESTER



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Ring in the New Year with locally grown Chester County sparkling wine

West Chester, PA_ Whether you only purchase sparkling wine for New Year's Eve or you like to enjoy a glass or two on a regular basis, don't miss out on the delicious local vintages produced in Chester County.

Although many are familiar with the fine sparkling wines coming out of France, not everyone may be aware of two Chester County wineries, J. Maki Winery in Elverson, Pa., and Stargazers Vineyard and Winery in Coatesville, Pa, that are producing excellent sparkling wines in their own right.

"Champagne was our big love in the 1970's when Janet and I first started making wine in our basement," says Jim Haldy, cofounder of J. Maki Winery. "It has such an undeniable mystique. It took us twenty years to make a good one."

Winemaker Janet Maki, Jim's wife and cofounder of the winery, was honored with the gold medal for champagne and sparkling wine at the the Vinales Internationales wine competition in Paris in 2001. "No one expected us to beat the French at their own game," recalls Jim Haldy fondly.

At the opposite end of Chester County, John Weygandt also produces stellar sparkling wines at Stargazers Vineyard and Winery, which he cofounded with his wife Alice in 1979. He encourages customers to appreciate sparkling wine all year long, not just for special occasions.

Calling attention to one of the benefits of drinking locally made sparkling wine, Weygandt says: "Unlike the major champagne houses in France that aim for consistency from vintage to vintage, our grapes have already developed some character by the time they are picked. With our sparklers, it won't be exactly the same from vintage to vintage since we like to adjust the blend, especially with our rosé. Our rosé is my 'desert island' wine if I were stranded somewhere and given the choice of only one kind to drink for the rest of my days."

It will come as no surprise that New Year's Eve tends to be one of the biggest occasions for champagne and sparkling wine purchases. According the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board, December (especially the days leading up to New Year's Eve) is an extremely profitable time of year for the sales of spirits and wines. Regionally, Philadelphia and Centre County's state-run Fine Wine and Good Spirits retail stores report Champagne and sparkling wines as their top selling wine category all year long. Chardonnay is the most popular type of wine sold in Chester County.

Sparkling wine is an umbrella term that covers many different wines. For instance, Champagne is a particular type of sparkling wine that is produced to specific standards from a particular region in France, which has secured naming rights protection to differentiate itself from similar wines made using the same process and type of grape.

This is why you often see comparable wines produced in other parts of the world sold under different names like Cava and Prosecco, or simply sparkling wine, as many U.S. producers favor.

For more information about local wineries and addresses for these and other vineyards, visit the Chester County Guide to Local Farm Products: www.chesco.org/agdev/farmguide.

About the Chester County Agricultural Development Council

The Ag Council raises awareness of the economic impact of the local farming industry and promotes excellence in farming. This outreach assists county farmers market their businesses, helps create an environment to attract new farmers, and informs residents and municipal officials about the importance of local agriculture. We also partner with other organizations to address agricultural issues. For more information, visit us at www.chesco.org/agdev, [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages.