



Sixth-generation Champagne Bollinger proprietor Cyril Delarue presented the 2008 R.D. Extra Brut and eight additional wines at The Progress in San Francisco, CA.

DORIS VEINER/REVO/REX USA/ALAMY

A Bolly Good Time

CHAMPAGNE BOLLINGER CELEBRATES THE RELEASE OF ITS 2008 R.D. EXTRA BRUT IN SAN FRANCISCO by Deborah Parker Wong

In May, Cyril Delarue, a sixth-generation proprietor of Champagne Bollinger who oversees the producer's U.S. interests, celebrated the release of the **Bollinger 2008 R.D. Extra Brut** (\$300) at San Francisco restaurant The Progress.

Delarue collaborated with The Progress chef-owner Stewart Brioza in creating a six-course menu that was paired with nine wines ranging in age from the nonvintage **Special Cuvée Brut** (\$150) in magnum to the oldest wine of the evening, the 2002 **La Grande Année** (\$250). The wines were ordered such that the 2002 and 2008 **La Grande Année**—the cuvée that is selected in superior vintages to become R.D., which stands for “recently



The first vintage of the R.D. cuvée was made in 1952 and released in 1967.



The Champagne Bollinger NV Special Cuvée trackside at the Ferrari Challenge.

disgorged”—were tasted first.

The first vintage of the R.D. Extra Brut was made in 1952 and released in 1967; today, it continues to be highly sought after by collectors for its longevity. The 2008 R.D. Extra Brut is a blend of 71% Pinot Noir and 29% Chardonnay from 18 crus and simultaneously shows exuberant freshness and development with

toasty aromas, dried stone fruits, and distinct truffle notes that were mirrored in a course of roasted Wolfe Ranch quail with morels and cherry sauce.

Debbie Zachareas, owner/partner of Ferry Plaza Wine Merchant, had this to say about the tasting: “Special Cuvée is and has always been the ‘basic’ wine that feels like luxury every time you open a bottle. The 2008 R.D. had just enough baby fat to balance the structure and focus of the wine, which has just a hint of brioche. All the wines give you a perspective of the quality of the house.”

Three nonvintage wines—the aforementioned Special Cuvée Brut as well as the **Brut Rosé** and the **PNVZ16 Blanc de Noirs**—were poured from magnums, which, as the preferred format for optimum bottle aging, showed them to their best advantage. The 2008 R.D. was also poured from magnum as well as from a 750-milliliter bottle to provide further proof that the larger format slows the wines’ development.

The final wine of the evening, the **2014 La Grande Année Rosé**, was playfully paired with a dessert course of yogurt-elderflower floating island with rhubarb sorbet and strawberries.

Champagne Bollinger, nicknamed “Bolly” by fans worldwide, is unique in several ways: It relies on its 403-acre estate for the lion’s share of its grapes and its iconic style is defined by Pinot Noir, which forms the backbone of all of its blends.

Bollinger is also known for sponsoring the Ferrari Challenge North America, a single-make race in which every driver competes in a Ferrari 488 Challenge Evo. In July, more than 80 amateur drivers from across the country competed in the five-day event, held at the Sonoma Raceway in California. My visit to spectate the fifth round of the Challenge included a leisurely test drive of a 2024 Ferrari Roma—just the second V-8-powered front-engine coupe by the maker—that was both exhilarating and demanding. After spending time behind the wheel of a car called a “rolling sculpture” by *Car and Driver*, what better way to wind down than with a visit to the Champagne Bollinger Lounge for a glass of NV Special Cuvée?