



All That Fizz!

What's your unique Champagne personality? Perrier-Jouët is offering 100 people the chance to find out—and to bottle it | *By Maria Hunt*

It's barely 8AM as I settle into the back of a sleek black Benz to enjoy a breakfast of Champagne and macarons. My only aspiration at the moment is to keep from spilling my wine as the driver speeds northeast from Paris en route to Épernay, a 90-minute jaunt that concludes on the area's famed Avenue de Champagne.

A long, green carpet leads into Perrier-Jouët's ultra-exclusive private residence, Maison Belle Époque, a 19th-century mansion that pays homage to all things Art Nouveau, done up in shades of pink, mauve and green. I'm here because Perrier-Jouët, known for its iconic bottles adorned with white and gold anemone flowers, is offering 100 epicures the opportunity to create their own bespoke bottling—for \$75,000 a case—specially crafted to each buyer's individual taste, something that has never been tried before. And, really, once you've popped a few magnums of Cristal Rosé, sipped your way through a few allocations of Salon or had your fill of Krug's Clos d'Ambonnay '95, what else is left?

The singer Marianne Faithfull and actresses Sophie Marceau and Gong Li have already jumped at the



THE RIGHT QUAFF
Clockwise from top left: Perrier-Jouët's "By and For" bottle; Russian ballerina/actress and Perrier-Jouët patron Ize Liza; singer Marianne Faithfull's bespoke vintage; cellar master Hervé Deschamps; the vineyard in Épernay, France.

Of course, as particular as Perrier-Jouët's bespoke experience might be, some clients are perhaps too accustomed to having their every whim indulged,

and truffles, clients return and taste their own creation. Deschamps and the client both sign the labels for the 12 unique bottles, which are then locked away and aged for one year.

Of course, as particular as Perrier-Jouët's bespoke experience might be, some clients are perhaps too accustomed to having their every whim indulged. "I had one client ask if it would be possible to have the aroma of her perfume included in the dosage," Deschamps says, shaking his head. "I had to say, 'Madame, even at \$75,000 a case, some things are not possible.'" 

chance to create their very own Perrier-Jouët, as have French celebrity chef Anne-Sophie Pic and fashion designer Nicole Farhi. Frédérique Baveret, the brand's hospitality director, welcomes me to the Maison, and we adjourn to the library to meet winemaker Hervé Deschamps, who shows me how my preferences would play into my very own creation. He guides me through a sensory interview that helps him divine my "Champagne personality." He shows me a series of images and asks me to choose which ones I find most pleasurable: a golden sandy desert, waves crashing on rocks,

a sunset or a snowy mountain. Next, the Taj Mahal, a pagoda, an ornate Italian church or the Alhambra. After that, a single red peony, orchids, a cactus flower or cherry blossoms. There are no wrong answers. "It all depends on your image of pleasure," Deschamps says. "And your image of pleasure is not the same as your image for the good life or good times."

Next we taste from four glasses, different versions of the same Blanc de Blancs, identical except for the dosage—that final addition of wine and sugar that decides how dry a Champagne will be. And after assessing my responses, Deschamps gives me a warm and slightly inscrutable look and then—as if he were a cross between Freud and a tea-leaf reader—quietly says he can tell that I feel close to nature, and that I like elegance. He announces that my favorite wines are soft and full with no aggressiveness. I think he knows me better than my lover does.

Following an exquisite lunch of lobster