THE CHALK SEA

THE AROMA LEXICON

A REFERENCE GUIDE TO CHAMPAGNE'S AROMAS

1. THESE AROMAS HAVE A LIVELY FRESHNESS

Primary aromas from the fruit and the vineyard.



CITRUS
Lemon
Grapefruit
Yuzu
Lime
Orange blossom



ORCHARD FRUIT
Apple
Pear
Quince
White peach



STONE FRUIT
Apricot
Peach
Nectarine



RED FRUIT
Strawberry
Raspberry
Red currant
Cherry



FLORAL
Hawthorn
Acacia
Linden
Jasmine
Violet

2. LEES CONTACT BRINGS THESE AROMAS

Time on lees adds complexity, texture and savoury notes.



BRIOCHE
Brioche
Fresh bread
Dough



BISCUIT
Biscuit
Shortbread
Cookie



NUTS
Hazelnut
Almond
Walnut
Popcorn



CREAM
Cream
Butter
Crème fraîche
Vanilla

3. THESE AROMAS EMERGE AS CHAMPAGNE MATURES

Tertiary aromas from bottle age.



DRIED FRUIT
Dried apricot
Dried fig
Raisin
Sultana



HONEY
Honey
Beeswax
Mead



TOAST
Toast
Grilled bread
Coffee
Caramel



SAVOURY
Mushroom
Truffle
Umami
Forest floor

4. HOW PLACE SHAPES THE WINE

Mineral characteristics from Champagne's chalk soils.



CHALK
Chalk
Limestone
Wet chalk
Creaminess



FLINT
Flint
Gunflint
Smoky
Reduction



WET STONE
Wet stone
River stone
Slate
Mineral lift



SALINE NOTES
Salinity
Sea breeze
Oyster shell
Iodine

5. AROMAS THAT GIVE CHARACTER

A wide range of additional aromas.



SPICES
Vanilla
Cinnamon
Clove
White pepper
Nutmeg



HERBS
Thyme
Rosemary
Sage
Fennel
Anise



VEGETAL
Cut grass
Green apple skin
Tomato leaf
Nettle
Green tea



PHENOLIC
Tea leaf
Tobacco
Smoke
Strike match
Bitter almond

6. HOW AROMA FAMILIES DEVELOP OVER TIME

From youthful freshness to complex maturity.



YOUTH
(0 – 3 years)
Citrus
Orchard fruit
White flowers
Fresh pastry

MATURITY
(3 – 10 years)
Riper fruit
Floral notes
Brioche
Nuts

AGE
(10 + years)
Dried fruit
Toast
Honey
Savoury notes

FULL MATURITY
(15 + years)
Complexity
Integration
Tertiary aromas
Greater depth

7. EACH GRAPE BRINGS ITS OWN FRUIT

The classic Champagne varieties and their typical aromas.



CHARDONNAY
Citrus
Green apple
White peach
White flowers
Mineral notes



PINOT NOIR
Red apple
Stone fruit
Red berries
Spice
Structure



PINOT MEUNIER
Orchard fruit
Stone fruit
Red berries
Floral notes
Soft, round character

8. HERE ARE TWO TASTING HABITS

Simple practices to help you find and describe aromas.



1. TAKE YOUR TIME

Swirl gently, pause and return to the glass. Aromas unfold in layers. Try to find fresh fruit, then deeper lees notes, and finally more subtle, tertiary aromas.



2. BE SPECIFIC

Look for precise notes rather than general terms. Instead of "fruity", try "lemon" or "white peach". Specific aromas tell a clearer story about the wine.