

Second Half 2020 Sample Roundup

BY MELANIE OFENLOCH | JANUARY 10, 2021 | BLOG

It's sample time and I never knew what a challenge these would be in the time of COVID. Usually, I invite friends over and pop open a few bottles, and, if my husband is in a cooking mode, then I get to use my pairing skills. When the pandemic happened, the samples and tastings (not featured here) multiplied and for the first time. I had to change my policy of accepting samples and put restrictions on since doing this with just one other person, while safe, is not feasible right now.

I made some fun discoveries, affirmed my perceptions about others and learned a bunch in the process. In 2021, I am hoping I can make a dent in my sample closet and involve some dear friends again in the process.

Champagne Ayala

[Champagne Ayala](#) is one of the longest-established champagne Houses in existence for more than 150 years based in Aÿ by the Grand Crus of Montagne de Reims. It was acquired in 2005 by the Bollinger family and the winemaking facilities were restored. Ayala currently owns 35 acres in Champagne.

I tried one vintage year and two non-vintage blends showcasing the range of champagnes coming from this champagne house:



2013 Champagne Ayala Blanc de Blancs – this blend of 100 percent Chardonnay is 25 percent Cramant, 25 percent Cuis, 23 percent Chouilly, 14 percent Mesnil and 13 percent Vertus. This was gorgeous with notes of citrus, apple, flowers, almonds and fresh bread.



NV Champagne Ayala Rosé Majeur – this is a blend of Chardonnay (51 percent), Pinot Noir (40 percent) and Pinot Meunier (9 percent). You'll taste notes of berry, herbs, spice, flowers and stone fruit.

NV Champagne Ayala Brut Majeur — this is a blend of Chardonnay (40 percent), Pinot Noir (40 percent) and Pinot Meunier (20 percent). I tasted notes of citrus, apple, lemon curd, white flowers, honeysuckle, pepper and brioche. It's an elegant, balanced and fruity champagne.

