

An overhead view of three chocolate cakes, each with a Harrods logo, served on different styles of gold plates. The top-left plate has a textured, bubble-like pattern. The middle-right plate is smooth. The bottom-left plate has a mottled, metallic finish. A silver fork with a gold handle is placed next to the top-left cake. Green leaves are scattered around the plates, and a glass is partially visible on the right.

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CHRISTMAS 2020

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For many of us, that special pilgrimage to Harrods at this time of year is all about The Food Halls. This much-loved destination gives a reassurance of quality, service and – above all – taste. The fact that each room is chock-full of supreme produce is no accident. Everything we source comes from experts who have done their due diligence – seeking out the finest suppliers from around the world, buying in the highest-quality seasonal fare, as well as securing exclusives and tracking down the rare and the prized. And at the heart of it all is our troupe of innovative chefs who work tirelessly in our kitchens, not only hand-making every beef Wellington, every lobster roll, every Paris-Brest, but also constantly learning, developing and, of course, tasting. We celebrate their expertise in these pages. What's more, you can have all of their expertise – courtesy of our broad array of chef-prepared dishes – delivered direct to your door for an unforgettable feast, whether it's for Christmas, a birthday or just because. Let your taste buds be the judge. The proof really is in the pudding.



Easy does it...

Scan the QR code and it will take you straight to our Food to Order page, where you can browse our mouthwatering selection of chef-made dishes and ingredients – and have them delivered direct to your door.

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FOOD & ENTERTAINING

From mouthwatering canapés to turkey with all the trimmings and decadent desserts, our team of expert chefs will bring Christmas straight to your door



On the cover, food
 Chocolate and salted-caramel baubles £8 each.
Homewares, from top
 THOMAS FERGUSON tablecloth £525; RICHARD BRENDON Champagne coupe £90; L'OBJET Aegean Gold 27cm dinner plate £220; VILLEROY & BOCH forks, part of Ella partially gold-plated 30-piece cutlery set £379; WEDGWOOD Vera Wang Castillon plate, price on request; WATERFORD Elegance Champagne Trumpet flute £60 for set of two; L'OBJET Alchimie Gold 27cm dinner plate £140

Opposite page, food, canapés on three-tier cake stand, from top, left to right
 Tuna and wasabi canapés £2.50 each, cottage pie tartlets £2.50 each, cep mushroom tartlets £2.50 each and mini beef Wellingtons £2.50 each; *on glass cake stands, from top, left to right*
 Mini prawn cocktails £3 each, mini rainbow salads and tartlets from a selection; *on white serving plate*
 Mini sausage rolls £2.50 each; *on small*

plates, from left
 Asparagus cigars in filo pastry £2.50 each, tuna and wasabi canapés as before and cep mushroom tartlets as before; *sharing plates and platters, from top*
 Tuna and cucumber sandwich platter £35, coronation chicken sandwich platter £35, salt beef sandwich platter £40, Faroe Islands smoked salmon sandwich platter £40, pork-free charcuterie platter £45 and honey-and-soy-glazed salmon £40.
Homewares, clockwise from top left
 WATERFORD Elegance Champagne Trumpet flutes £60 for set of two; THOMAS FERGUSON tablecloth £525; GEORG JENSEN Alfredo Étageère three-tier cake stand £175; LSA INTERNATIONAL Serve cake stands £85 and £45; JOHN BOOS Block wooden platter £129; WEDGWOOD Signet Platinum 20cm soup plate £28; saucer, stylist's own; VILLEROY & BOCH fork, part of Ella partially gold-plated 30-piece cutlery set £379, and Modern Grace platters £49,90 each; GEORG JENSEN Bernadotte serving plate £160



This page, food, clockwise from above
 Courgette, confit tomato and pesto tarts £6 each; mini crab pots £3 each; lobster cocktail £15.
Homewares, above, from top
 THOMAS FERGUSON tablecloth £525; L'OBJET Perlée Platinum oval platter £259; RICHARD BRENDON Line small dip bowl £25; napkin, stylist's own; VILLEROY & BOCH knife and fork, part of Ella partially gold-plated 30-piece cutlery set £379; L'OBJET Aegean Gold 27cm dinner plate £220; *far left, from top*
 RIEDEL Vinum Riesling Grand Cru/Zinfandel glass £45 for set of two; napkin, stylist's own; THOMAS FERGUSON tablecloth, as above; platters, stylist's own; *left*
 Cake stand, stylist's own; forks, as above; THOMAS FERGUSON tablecloth, as above



Food, clockwise from above Gillardeau No.4 oysters £40 for 12; huso huso beluga caviar £4,200 (serves 10); Faroe Islands mild smoked salmon, sliced 900g, £52 and mini blinis 135g, £6,50, Homewares, clockwise from above Bowl and plate, stylist's own; BERNARDAUD Rouge Empereur tray £147; THOMAS FERGUSON tablecloth £525; STUDIO WILLIAM fork, part of Tilia satin gold 24-piece cutlery set £380; L'OBJET Corde Gold 27cm dinner plate £140





LOUIS XIII

Rémy Martin
COGNAC GRANDE CHAMPAGNE



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FINE WINES & SPIRITS, LOWER GROUND FLOOR



Food, above CINCO JOTAS Celebration Gift Set, including 6-7kg acorn-fed 100% ibérico ham, half-piece acorn-fed 100% ibérico loin (not pictured) and Arcos professional carving knife, £1,200, above right Everyday Cheese Platter £35 (serves 12); right Pork-free charcuterie platter £45 (serves nine), Homewares, above THOMAS FERGUSON linen double damask tablecloth 274cm x 274cm, £995; above right, clockwise from top left Dip bowls, stylist's own; RIEDEL Veritas Cabernet/Merlot glass £55 for set of two; cheese board, stylist's own; right, from top RIEDEL Veritas Cabernet/Merlot glass, as above; THOMAS FERGUSON tablecloth, as above; JOHN BOOS Block maple chopping board £115; napkin, stylist's own; VILLEROY & BOCH forks, part of Ella partially gold-plated 30-piece cutlery set £379; plates, stylist's own





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Food PEACH CROFT

FARM free-range brown
Hockenhull turkey
5-10kg, £110-£175;

Christmas gravy £4.50.

Homewares, from top
RIEDEL Vinum Riesling
Grand Cru/Zinfandel
glasses £45 for set of two;
THOMAS FERGUSON linen
double damask tablecloth

274cm x 274cm, £995;

JOHN BOOS Block black
walnut chopping board
£239; VILLEROY & BOCH

knife and fork, part of
Ella partially gold-plated

30-piece cutlery set £379;

L'OBJET Aegean Gold
23cm dessert plate £190;

gravy boat and napkin,
stylist's own





Food, left Luxury fish pie with prawns, salmon, smoked haddock and cod £50; above Aberdeen Angus rib of beef, French-trimmed £215 (serves 10). Homewares, left, clockwise from top left L'OBJET Corde Gold 22cm dessert plate £115; THOMAS FERGUSON linen double damask tablecloth 274cm x 274cm, £995; RIEDEL Vinum Riesling Grand Cru/ Zinfandel glass £45 for set

of two; napkin and casserole dish, stylist's own; WEISSFEE Siena antique gold placemat £71.95; VILLEROY & BOCH fork, part of Ella partially gold-plated 30-piece cutlery set £379; above White plate, stylist's own; RIEDEL Veritas Cabernet/ Merlot glasses £55 for set of two; L'OBJET Corde Gold 27cm dinner plate £140; knife and fork, as above; RICHARD BRENDON Line small dip bowls £25 each

ANDY COOK *Executive head chef*

Prior to joining Harrods two years ago, the aptly surnamed Cook worked for Gordon Ramsay, starting at Claridge's in London before heading up his venues in Tokyo, New York and West Hollywood. His number one passion? Produce.

What made you become a chef?

Honestly, I didn't want to be a chef! I wanted a career in film, but I started working for a friend in a small restaurant and fell in love with cooking. I went through college, and studied and worked relentlessly to get my qualifications.

What's your culinary USP?

In Japan and the US, I learned the most important thing about food is the quality – never mind how pretty it looks. It's about the taste and experience.

What would the other chefs say about you?

I might be a bit grumpy sometimes, but I hope my team sees that when a dish really works, it's difficult for me not to get excited!

What's your signature dish?

Squab pigeon and foie gras (*right*). When I was a young chef at Claridge's, ingredients like foie gras blew my mind, so I wanted to revisit it for nostalgia.

Your Christmas must-have from The Food Halls?

I plan to be super-indulgent with the charcuterie.



Harrods Ultimate Festive Feast, including all food items pictured, \$1,000 (serves eight). Items can also be purchased separately; *starters, sharing plates and canapés* Free-range pigs-in-blankets (left) £10; Armagnac-soaked devils-on-horseback (right) £8, on L'OBJET plate from a selection; braised red cabbage with cinnamon and orange zest £8.50; beef Wellington with truffled mushroom duxelles and all-butter puff pastry £160 (serves eight); lobster cocktail with lobster mayonnaise and

caviar £15; Faroe Islands mild smoked salmon, sliced 900g, £52, on plate, stylist's own; mini blinis £6.50 for 30, on BACCARAT Mille Nuits 26cm plate £320; beluga caviar from a selection; *platters* British cheese platter £55, on LINLEY cake board from a selection; HARRODS Boxing Day chutney £8; *mains* PEACH CROFT FARM free-range brown Hockenhull turkey 5-6.49kg, £110, on L'OBJET Alchimie plate from a selection; free-range Sussex ham with honey-and-mustard glaze £80, on VILLEROY & BOCH platter

from a selection; Brussels sprouts with bacon lardons and chestnuts £8.50, on BERNARDAUD Rouge Empereur 21cm coupe plate £46; bread sauce £3; potato and truffle gratin with Comté cheese £12, on VILLEROY & BOCH Manufacture Rock Blanc 26cm coupe plate £19.90; free-range pork stuffing with cranberry and chestnuts £10; cranberry sauce £3; cauliflower cheese with Godminster Vintage Cheddar £4.50; duck-fat roast potatoes with sage and garlic £10; heritage carrots with

pistachio crumb and pickled cranberries £8.50; honey and wholegrain-mustard roast parsnips £8.50; *desserts and cheese* Decadent Christmas pudding £24, on L'OBJET Alchimie Gold 27cm dinner plate £140; brandy butter £5; grand-cru chocolate and salted-caramel bauble £8; HARRODS Scottish oatcakes £4. *Homewares, from top* Vase, stylist's own; WEISSFEE Siena antique gold tablecloth £1,119; L'OBJET Carrousel candlesticks from a selection







ANDREW WARD *Senior head chef*

Having worked for Nigel Platts-Martin and Marcus Wareing, Ward is known for classical skills combined with a respect for British produce. From ultra-rich terrines to decadent salmon en croûte, his dishes are must-haves at The Deli in the Fresh Market Hall.

What made you pursue a career in food?

Growing up on a farm and cooking with my gran. At a young age, I started a weekend job at a Michelin-starred pub in Yorkshire, and the rest is history.

What do you love about your job?

I get to eat lots and be creative; I love the teamwork and teaching less-experienced chefs.

What would the other chefs say about you?

I'd like to think they would say I'm fair.

What's your culinary USP?

Back in the day, I was called the Rocher master.

What's your signature dish?

The Harrods beef Wellington (*left*), with beautiful Aberdeen Angus fillet and a mushroom duxelles – mostly made with Portobello mushrooms for their rich earthy flavour, then finished with tarragon, chicken mousse and, of course, black truffle... because, why not? It's our luxury version of a classic.

Your Christmas must-have from The Food Halls?
Cheese – lovely ripe Epoisses.



Food Beef Wellington with truffled mushroom duxelles and all-butter puff pastry £150 (serves eight).

Homewares, clockwise from top right L'OBJET Porlée large oval platter £605; tablecloth, stylist's own; knives, fork and plate, stylist's own; VILLEROY & BOCH Manufacture Rock Blanc 22cm salad plate £18,90 and 27cm dinner plate £19,90; wine glass, stylist's own



Food, left Half dressed lobster with Dorset crab and confit tomatoes £25 and chicken and foie gras pâté en croûte £100; *above* Faroe Islands salmon en croûte £100 (serves eight). *Homewares, left, from top* Candlesticks, stylist's own; WEISSFEE Siena antique gold tablecloth £1,119; L'OBJET Alchimie Gold medium 44cm x 20cm rectangular platter £250, Carrousel nickel-plated salt and pepper shaker £180 for set of two and 24kt-gold-plated salt and pepper shaker £300 for set of two, and Corde Gold 27cm dinner plate £140; platter, stylist's own; *above, clockwise from top right* Platter, stylist's own; LOBJET Corde Gold 22cm dessert plates £115 each and 17cm bread and butter plate £85; WEDGWOOD Arris 17cm side plates £26 each; forks, stylist's own

GARRETT KEOWN *Senior head chef*

Think about a dish you love, then consider how it could be more luxurious. Garrett Keown is already there, and this indulgent approach to food is at the heart of Harrods' menus. A UK San Pellegrino Chef of the Year finalist in 2015, Keown brings experience from The Bell Inn in Horndon on the Hill and the Tate Britain's Rex Whistler Restaurant.

What do you love about your job?

I love that the whole team is dedicated to the pursuit of perfection.

What's your culinary USP?

Being classically trained in French cookery, I have an unhealthy love of all things butter.

What would the other chefs say about you?

Alistair Birt has been known to refer to me as Mr Decadence for the reason above.

What's your signature dish?

Lobster ravioli (*right*). I butter-poach the tail, use the claw meat and trimmings in a mousse for the ravioli, and use the shells to create an unctuous sauce. Pickled fennel cuts through the richness, and sea herbs and flowers lift the flavour.

Your Christmas must-have from The Food Halls?

Harrods Christmas pudding – with brandy butter, of course!



Food, clockwise from top
Russian honey cake £70,
vanilla rainbow cake £70
and red velvet cake £70.
Homewares, from top LSA
INTERNATIONAL Serve
cake stands £56 and £45;
WEISSFEE Siena antique
gold tablecloth £1,119; cake
stand (on right), stylist's
own; GEORG JENSEN

Bernadotte serving plate
£160; WEDGWOOD Arris
17cm side plate £26;
L'OBJET Aegean Gold
23cm dessert plate £190;
VILLEROY & BOCH fork, part
of Ella partially gold-plated
30-piece cutlery set £379;
WEISSFEE Siena antique
gold napkin £43.95; napkin
ring, stylist's own





MARKUS BOHR
Executive pastry chef

A paternal figure on the team, German-born Bohr worked across the globe, from Queensland to Kuala Lumpur, before arriving at Harrods in 2008. He's especially skilled at reworking classics. Case in point: his take on apple pie at The Tiffany Blue Box Cafe, moulded into the form of a perfect red apple.

What made you pursue a career in food?

I'm genetically predisposed – my father was a pastry chef, and I grew up around the family business.

Can you tell us about your training?

I did a three-year apprenticeship in Germany and spent five years as a journeyman before returning to school and earning a Master's degree in pastry.

What would the other chefs say about you?

To my face or behind my back...?

What's your culinary USP?

Always looking for the new.

Your signature dish?

The Harrods Signature grand-cru chocolate and praline pâlet (*left*). It's perfectly balanced.

The one ingredient you couldn't live without?

Vanilla.

Your Christmas must-have from The Food Halls?

The beef Wellington.

Food, below Decadent Christmas Pudding, £24; *right* apple pie, £36.
Homewares, below Napkin, napkin ring, tablecloth, plate, bowl and placemat, stylist's own; *right* L'OBJET Corde Gold 27cm dinner plates £140 each; napkin, stylist's own; THOMAS FERGUSON tablecloth £525





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Food, from left Strawberry fraiseiros £8 each; lemon meringue tarts £8 each. Homewares, left, from top RICHARD BRENDON Champagne coupe £90; LE JACQUARD FRANÇAIS Tivoli tablecloth £295

and napkin £21.95; table decorations, stylist's own; L'OBJET Perlée 27cm dinner plate £259; spoons, stylist's own; THOMAS FERGUSON tablecloth £525; WEDGWOOD Signet Platinum 20cm soup plate £28

ALISTAIR BIRT *Head pastry chef*

A supremo when it comes to chocolate, Birt is known for playful patisserie with intricate designs and a clever balance of flavours. After honing his skills as head chocolatier for William Curley, he won the UK and Ireland World Chocolate Masters competition in 2015 before joining Harrods.

What made you pursue a career in food?

I always enjoyed cooking for my loved ones. The more I did it, the better I got; the better I got, the more praise I received – and who doesn't like praise?

How did you start out in the field?

After I heard being a chef meant low pay and unsociable hours, I had a place at university to study HR management. Luckily, before I started, a job opened at a friend's restaurant, and I went to join the best industry there is.

What's your culinary USP?

Classic techniques with a modern aesthetic.

What's your signature dish?

The grand-cru chocolate and salted-caramel tart (*right*) – a chocolate pastry shell filled with salted-caramel crème brûlée, salted caramel, chocolate crémeux and milk-chocolate Chantilly cream.

Your Christmas must-have from The Food Halls?

All the cheese and some of Andy Ward's terrines.



Food Grand-cru
chocolate bûche £45,
Homewares L'OBJET
Alchimie Gold medium
44cm x 20cm rectangular
platter £250; THOMAS
FERGUSON linen double
damask tablecloth
274cm x 274cm, £995





PHILIP KHOURY *Pastry sous chef*

Thanks to the three years he spent working for pâtissier Adriano Zumbo (aka the Sweet Assassin), Khoury is an Instagram sensation in his homeland of Australia. He joined Harrods in 2018, where he's paving the way with vegan patisserie alternatives.

What made you pursue a career in food?

Food was the language my Lebanese family spoke, and we spent a lot of time together in the kitchen.

How did you become a chef?

While at university, I had a job in advertising and baked at the weekends. A boss at the company suggested I take up baking professionally; I didn't know if it was a compliment or if he thought I was no good at design! I then started an apprenticeship at Quay in Sydney, run by chef Peter Gilmore.

What's your culinary USP?

I'm trying to make patisserie plant-based. A lot of people have a negative perception of this, but I'll present a dessert without saying it's plant-based to see what the feedback is.

Signature dish?

Vegan afternoon tea (*left*).

Your Christmas must-have from The Food Halls?

I love the Nocellara olive sticks!

Food, below, from left
Grand-cru chocolate and
salted-caramel tart £30;
tropical fruit tart £30.
Homewares, right, from
top VILLEROY & BOCH
Manufacture Rock
Blanc gourmet plate
£3190; CHILEWICH Bloom

round gilded placemat
£14.95; napkin, stylist's own;
WEDGWOOD Arris 17cm side
plate £26; VILLEROY & BOCH
fork, part of Ella partially
gold-plated 30-piece cutlery
set, £379; *below* Plate,
stylist's own; CHILEWICH
Bloom placemat, as above





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Food, clockwise from left
36-month Comté 500g, £40, Cropwell Bishop whole baby Stilton 2kg, £50, Pecorino Moliterno with black truffle 500g, £30, Cropwell Bishop Stilton wedge £14, white Stilton and cranberry wedge £20 and cave-aged Cheddar truckle 1.7kg, £45.
Homewares, from top
LINLEY Good Turn cake stand from a selection; JOHN BOOS Block black

walnut chopping board £239; cake stand and tablecloth, stylist's own; RICHARD BRENDON Line small dip bowls £25 each; L'OBJET cheese knife, part of two-piece serving set from a selection

The Food Halls, Ground Floor; Home, Third Floor; and harrods.com

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OFFICIAL PARTNER

An OFF-PISTE *feast*

Don't stop at turkey and Christmas pudding, says Jimi Famurewa. Yuletide fare is way more fun if you mix it up



All families have their own strange customs and peculiarities, but few can match the unusual, sacrosanct specificity of other people's Christmas eating and drinking traditions. My in-laws, for instance, get misty-eyed at the mere mention of Boxing Day 'turkey cakes' made from leftover poultry and mashed potato. An old friend and his dried-fruit-hating family have long forgone pretending to enjoy Christmas pudding in favour of tucking in to Yuletide slabs of a 1980s brand of shop-bought layered ice cream. And in my own household, for at least the past 15 years, warm homemade Scotch eggs have long been the thing we can't be without at Christmas time; they are the immensely satisfying porcine heart of our festive season.

I think, if memory serves, it all began with my mother trying to find a creative way to use up a surfeit of sausage meat one year. But the precise story behind this particular culinary foible is unimportant. What matters is that, like so many beloved elements of the holiday dining experience in all our houses, the Famurewa Scotch eggs – perfectly imperfect golden-fried boulders generally served as a pre- or post-dinner snack – earned their place at the table by being undeniably delicious. And it's rare that my mum serves up a Christmas meal for the wider family (or, to be honest, any celebratory meal throughout the year) without someone nervously asking exactly when the Scotch eggs are coming out.

What's more, there's probably something fitting about the fact my Nigerian family's mythical festive dish is a quintessentially British picnic mainstay, purportedly invented as an 18th-century snack for well-heeled coach travellers. Ours is a polyglot, multifaceted approach to winter feasting. And, broadly speaking, the only gastronomic rule at a Famurewa table at Christmas is that anything and everything goes. In practice, this means that a burnished turkey with all the trimmings will happily sit next to a big vibrant pot of steaming jollof rice, a fiery stew thick with >



Clockwise from top Jimi Famurewa, a firm advocate of Christmas excess; live Canadian lobster £60 per kg; customers are spoilt for choice in the Fresh Market Hall; Maran eggs (brown) £3.25 for six, Araucana eggs (green) £3.25 for six, quail eggs (spotted) £3.75 for six and CACKLEBERRY FARM Arlington White Cacklebean eggs (white) £3.25 for six



Clockwise from left
Sourdough loaf 600g, £4;
Jack's Creek Wagyu BMS
9+ striploin £250 per kg;
Vietti Barbaresco Masseria
2013, £78; Paris-Brest from
a selection; British cheese
platter £55 (serves 16)

from The Food Halls' in-house vegetable butcher. And given that the Christmas cheeseboard, I'd also take my time at the cheese and charcuterie section (backed by The Guild of Fine Food), loading up on nettle-wrapped Cornish Yarg and ripe, buttery Vacherin.

That would, of course, call for something celebratory to drink from the oenophile Shangri-La that is the Fine Wines & Spirits rooms. A robust Italian Vietti Barbaresco Masseria 2013, perhaps. Finally – what the hell – some sweet contrast via a giant sharing-size Paris-Brest from the patisserie counter. No, it's not traditionally Christmassy, but festive eating is really about shared pleasure, largesse and ignoring the constraints of what's considered correct or proper. It's about creating our own traditions, whatever makes us happy. Come the big day, you'll find me raising a Scotch egg to that sentiment. □

Jimi Famurewa is a London-based journalist, podcaster and food critic

Fine Wines & Spirits, Lower Ground Floor; The Food Halls, Ground Floor; and harrods.com

meltingly tender beef, or maybe some Lagos-style meat pies. Then, at an unaccountably late hour, there'll be a few pancakes fried up to eat with scoops of vanilla ice cream. Yes, it's a hefty, somewhat haphazard array of dishes. But it's an expression of the West African tendency to feed everyone to the point of bursting, and it tends to work with the grazing buffet-style serving approach that is the preferred mode whenever my mum is in charge.

So how, over the years, have my days of Christmas eating generally panned out? And, if I were able to wander through the high-piled cornucopia of Harrods' Food Halls and grab anything I wanted, courtesy of the 150 in-house chefs, what would I go for? Well, the first thing I'll say is that I'm firmly in favour of a proper breakfast on the 25th. For some people – generally those who sit down for their Christmas lunch promptly at midday and subsist on Champagne and a few salmon-draped blinis until then – the idea of preparing anything too involved before the main event is unthinkable. But, in my house, we have always eaten our actual turkey dinner quite late, and, as discussed, we're not big on restraint. So my first port of call would be the butchery and meat counter in the Fresh Market Hall, where I'd pick up the day's turkey and grab extra pigs-in-blankets to be snaffled alongside scrambled Cacklebean eggs and a toasted slice or two of personalised sourdough from The Bake Hall. Oh, and as someone who has two young kids – and is often blearily roused at 6am on Christmas morning – a coffee fix would be in order, so I think my nose would take me to the glass-walled Roastery for a couple of bags of 'bean whisperer' Bartosz Ciepaj's heady and complex Knightsbridge Roast.

Of course, the central meal on Christmas Day generally means meat (at least for those who eat it), and I don't think I could resist stopping off at Harrods' butchers for a couple of fat-roped Australian Wagyu steaks for Boxing Day (and maybe a hand-selected live native lobster for my shellfish-loving family members). But my vegetarian relatives have helped me appreciate the sort of kaleidoscopic festive meat-free options now available





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Special ONES

Singular in name, but definitely not in nature... Champagne's myriad varieties and vintages put it in a league of its own

By GUY WOODWARD

Champagne, as anyone will tell you, is not just any wine. Not simply because it has bubbles in it, or is served in a different shaped glass; not even because it is universally, uncontestedly understood as the ultimate symbol of celebration. No, it is Champagne's many, many formats that ensure a diversity that marks it out as unique in the vinous world. No other wine has such a variety of renderings – vintage, non-vintage; blanc de blancs, blanc de noirs; prestige cuvée, grower Champagne...

Take perhaps one of the most famous Champagne marques of them all, Moët & Chandon, whose mass-produced, entry-point non-vintage fizz has become shorthand for the letting down of the locks. As well as being arguably the most recognisable brand on the planet, it is also one of the oldest. And since launching its first in 1842, Moët & Chandon has released 74 more vintage Champagnes (each individual house makes a decision every year as to whether or not to declare a vintage, depending on the quality of the grapes available).

At Moët & Chandon, however, there are also Grand Vintages – vintage wines that have, after bottling, gone through an extended period of maturation in the house's cellars. So whereas a standard vintage fizz goes through five to seven years ageing in bottle, Moët & Chandon's Grand Vintage Champagne rests for at least 15 years on the lees – the wine's yeasty deposits – lending it more of that creamy, complex character so prized by aficionados. And Harrods' Fine Wines & Spirits houses no fewer than 16 white and rosé cuvées from the Grand Vintage Collection, spanning 12 different vintages – and including the latest additions to the range, the 1962 and 1995.

It was Bollinger that initiated this category of Champagne, with its Recently Disgorged (RD) bottling – Champagnes that undergo extended lees ageing are then 'disgorged' (the process of removing the yeast build-up) before release. Since then, other brands have followed suit, leading to (among others) Louis Roederer's



Above, from left DOM PÉRIGNON P2, 2000, £395; KRUG Clos du Mesnil 2004, £1,025; SALON Champagne Salon 2008, part of case comprising magnum and six bottles £7,995

Cristal Vinothèque, Ruinart's La Réserve, Laurent-Perrier's Les Réservees Grand Siècle and Gosset's Les Célébrissimes.

Arguably the most high profile, however, is Dom Pérignon, another from the LVMH cohort – so, a sister brand to Moët & Chandon. Dom Pérignon is essentially Moët's prestige cuvée: always a vintage bottling, made only in exceptional years. And the P2 release (previously known as the Oenothèque series) is another extra-aged Champagne, kept on its lees for an extended period.

Now, Dom Pérignon has collated three of its P2 releases – the 1998, 1999 and 2000 vintages – into a Trilogy gift box. It's an unusual collection, comprising consecutive vintage releases, each with its own distinct characteristics. The 1998 shows a creamy nose, with a rich, mature palate of coconut, pear drops, toffee and vegetal touches. The 1999 has toastiness, ripe pear, gooseberries and white flowers, with delicate and fine

aromatics. Meanwhile, the 2000 brings a fresher character, its reserved nose – with a hint of toasted sourdough – leading to a palate of pastry and zesty lemon.

While most Champagnes are blended from grapes taken from a host of different sources, the region is also home to an elite band of single vineyard bottlings. Arguably the most renowned of these is the Clos du Mesnil from yet another LVMH brand, Krug. This is an exceptionally rare release, made only from grapes harvested within a walled vineyard or *clos*, with the current vintage the nicely evolving 2004.

Not far from Clos de Mesnil is the fabled Salon, that most exclusive, word-of-mouth, non-advertised brand, which makes its (only) wine solely from grapes grown in the village of Le Mesnil-sur-Oger. It has just released a special case containing two bottles each of its 2004, 2006 and 2007, and a magnum of 2008 – supposedly its greatest vintage, hence the larger-format bottling.

Whereas most Champagnes are a blend of white and black grapes, Salon is made only from chardonnay, a bottling known as blanc de blancs. The ‘black’ equivalent, a blanc de noirs, harnesses only pinot noir or pinot meunier. Among the most high-profile exponents of both styles is the Jay-Z-owned Armand de Brignac, which, like Salon, deals only in the prestige-cuvée, occasional-vintage end of the market.

At the other end of the scale are the so-called ‘grower’ Champagnes, beloved by purists. Whereas most of the grandes marques buy in a majority of their grapes, with a focus on the winery rather than the vineyard, ‘grower’ Champagne houses both cultivate the grapes and make the wine – usual practice in

“There has been a recent surge in ‘grower’ Champagnes, with some houses taking on cult status”

most wine regions, but still something of a rarity in Champagne. In recent years, there’s been a surge in interest – and quality – in the category, with several houses taking on cult status.

Laurent Hostomme is a fifth-generation family producer based in the grand-cru village of Épernay. The grower has produced Harrods’ own-label Champagnes for more than 25 years, with all the grapes for the various bottlings coming from its own grand-cru vineyards. The range spans an array of styles: the Blanc de Blancs Grand Cru Grande Réserve, from 100 per cent chardonnay, is elegant yet structured with rich, generous flavours; the Blanc de Blancs Vintage (current release 2008) boasts a balance of richness and delicacy, a chalky touch offset by honey, liqueur and coffee; the rosé – a blend of pinot noir and pinot meunier – shows refreshing blackcurrant and raspberries; while the non-vintage Brut offers floral notes of hawthorn and jasmine combined with aromas of banana and citrus fruits.

It’s this sort of variety that makes Champagne such an intriguing wine – always new styles to discover; new vintages to assess. If you thought it was merely about popping a cork and clinking glasses, think again... □

Below, from left SALON Champagne Salon 2008, 1.5L, part of case comprising magnum and six bottles £7,995; ARMAND DE BRIGNAC Blanc de Blancs £660

Fine Wines & Spirits, Lower Ground Floor; and harrods.com



KEY CHAMPAGNE STYLES



Non-vintage: Made from a blend of different years, intended to consistently showcase the house style

Vintage: Made with grapes from a single year – generally only the better ones – intended to show off the character of that particular year

Prestige cuvée: A house’s very finest release, only made in exceptional vintages

Recently disgorged: A vintage wine that has undergone extended ageing on its lees before a later release

Blanc de Blancs: Made from white (chardonnay) grapes only

Blanc de Noirs: Made from black (pinot noir or pinot meunier) grapes only

Grower Champagne: Made by a producer that grows its own grapes

The ULTIMATE

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The Tiffany Blue Box Cafe, Lower Ground Floor



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CHAMPAGNE



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