

Putting the bubbles into champagne

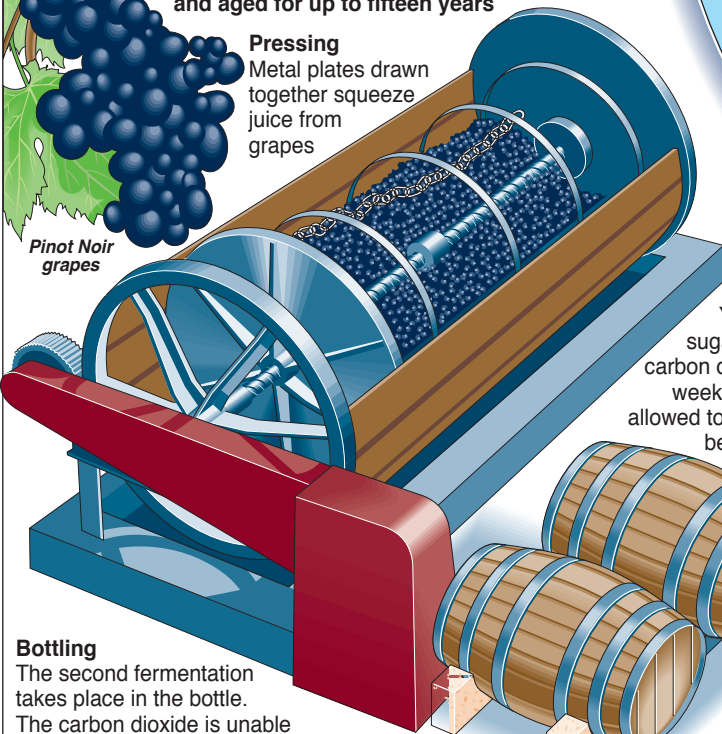


Pinot Noir grapes

Black grapes picked in September are pressed as soon as possible to produce a sparkling white wine without a trace of colour. The juice, or 'must', is taken from the vineyards to the champagne towns where it is fermented, bottled and aged for up to fifteen years

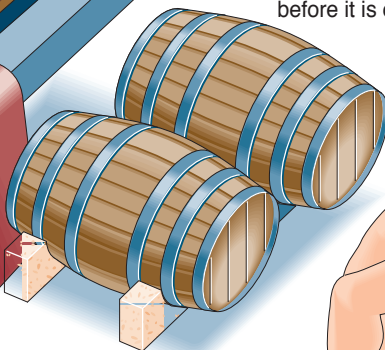
Pressing

Metal plates drawn together squeeze juice from grapes



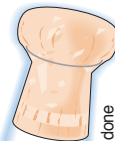
The first fermentation

Yeast converts the sugar into alcohol and carbon dioxide. After three weeks the winter chill is allowed to stop fermentation before it is complete



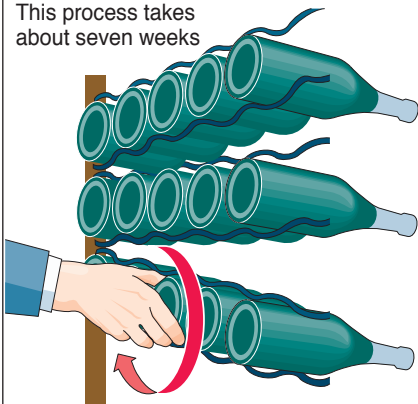
Making the cuvée

After tasting, the raw young wines are blended before bottling



Bottling

The second fermentation takes place in the bottle. The carbon dioxide is unable to escape – the pressure increases – and the wine becomes sparkling champagne. This process takes about seven weeks



Removing the sediment

The bottle is now stored with the neck pointing down. Every day each bottle is given a gentle shake and twist until all the yeast sediment settles on the cork. After about ten weeks the bottle neck is frozen and the cork removed – the gas pressure expels the frozen yeast deposit. The bottle is topped up and a new cork is wired in before being aged. **Champagne must be aged for at least one year**

