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WINE



Greg McLeod, co-owner of Simply Bubbles in Sutter Creek, shows off some of his sparkling selection.
PHOTO BY ALLEN PIERLEONI

Make every day a celebration

Simply Bubbles in Sutter Creek specializes in sparkling wine

Strolling along Main Street in Sutter Creek – the appropriately nicknamed “Jewel of the Motherlode” – you might wonder why a stream of bubbles is wafting across the sidewalk in front of you.

Follow the trail to an alleyway, then follow the white footprints painted on the sloping driveway and you’ll come to Simply Bubbles. It’s the only wine-tasting room in Amador County devoted to champagne and sparkling wines.

Those bubbles floating up the alley are from a bubble-making machine, a clever piece of marketing guaranteed to attract passersby. But don’t make the mistake of thinking Simply Bubbles is about gimmicks. Anything but.

It’s the 12th and newest tasting room in town, offering flights, glasses and bottles of champagne, along with sparkling wines from Italy and the Napa, Sonoma and Anderson valleys. There’s even a trio of sparklers from Amador County wineries. (Reminder: For a sparkling wine to be classified as “champagne,” it must originate in the Champagne region of France.)

Simply Bubbles’ recent grand opening saw “standing room only from 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.,” said Greg McLeod, co-owner with his wife, Karen McLeod.

Few beverages are drenched in as much mythology and ritual as champagne. That includes the ongoing controversy over the ideal shape of the champagne glass. While the traditional flute is tall and narrow enough to keep the wine’s effervescence going, the narrow mouth discourages its aromas from opening up. The other traditional glass — the shallow, wide-brimmed “coupe” — releases aromas, but the wine soon loses its bubbles. Which begs the question: Why would you take so long to drink it?

Simply Bubbles has the solution with crystal glasses that are wider at the bottom and top than a flute, but still preserve the bubbles and, gratefully, allow the rich smells through.

While champagne has traditionally been a special-occasion drink, there’s a growing movement to indulge whenever and wherever. “With champagne, every day is a celebration,” McLeod said.

And why not? As Mark Twain advised, “Too much of anything is bad, but too much champagne is just right.”

BY ALLEN PIERLEONI

Simply Bubbles, 35A Main St., Sutter Creek; 209-560-3015; www.simplybubbles.net; on Facebook @simplybubblesuttercreek.

UPCOMING EVENT

March 7 and 8: Behind the Cellar Door will feature wine-food pairings, seminars and winery tours, with 40-plus Amador County wineries participating. Details and tickets: www.amadorwine.com