

HAUTE LIVING

James Bond's Bubbly Of Choice: An Intimate Look At Bollinger With 6th Generation Legacy Cyril Delarue



Haute Living had the pleasure of sitting down with sixth generation **Bollinger** family member **Cyril Delarue** on Nov. 12 to taste several of the Champagne house's best bubbly, learn about the brand and its relationship with James Bond (on what would have been the day of *No Time to Die* — the 25th Bond film's — release. Check out our VIP tasting below and learn a bit more about this family -owned house (one of only three in the region) as well as its long-standing "gentleman's handshake" agreement with 007 below.

ALL ABOUT BOLLINGER



Bollinger is an icon in Champagne, all the more remarkable because its reputation rests entirely on the quality of its extraordinarily distinct Champagnes. Its vineyards cover 405 acres, most of which are classified as Grand or Premier cru, and provide roughly two-thirds of the house's needs. Decades ago, the brand wrote a quality charter that stated their own vineyard must account for at a minimum 60% of their production. This reflects their approach to always focus on quality, and not quantity. Secondly, no producer is as associated with a single grape in Champagne as Bollinger with Pinot Noir. The most demanding grape variety to grow in the region, it forms the backbone of this high-end champagne's luscious style, making up around 60% of plantings and always 60% or more of each Champagne. Thirdly, it is the only remaining producer in the region with its own cooperage, and keeps a stock of 3,000 oak barrels for fermenting the base wines for its Non Vintage and Vintage wines. Fourthly, Bollinger stores its reserve wines to blend into their Non Vintage cuvées in magnum bottles, an incredibly labor-intensive process that no one today undertakes. It requires opening by hand all the magnums to blend into the Non Vintage wines, crazy work that takes a team of seven a full month to complete every year. Lastly, all Vintage wines are aged under cork, and not under a crown capsule (like a soda capsule). This requires that every vintage bottle is hand-riddled, and then hand disgorged.

WHO IS CYRIL DELARUE



Cyril Delarue is a sixth-generation member of the Bollinger family and has worked in the wine industry for the last 14 years. He holds a Master's degree in oenology and worked as a "flying winemaker" in top wineries for 3 ½ years in the US, South Africa, and New Zealand. In the US, he worked with Andy Erickson at Ovid, Jonata, Hartweel and Arietta. In 2007, he moved back to France, where he worked as vineyard manager and winemaker in the Loire Valley at Langlois-Chateau, also owned by the Bollinger family. Then, convinced that making good wines was not enough, he decided to focus on the commercial side. He started his own business, AOC Conseils, a consultancy specializing in the wine industry; he worked for four years with estates in the Bordeaux and Loire regions to help them organize their offers and increase their turnover. In 2014, convinced of the potential of Champagne Ayala on the US market and aligned with Bollinger's strategy for the reinvigorated brand, he joined the family business to be the US Commercial Director for Champagne Ayala. He has since expanded his responsibilities, and now also oversees the US business for Bollinger, Domaine Chanson, and Langlois-Chateau.

BOLLINGER X BOND: THE 007 CONNECTION

For more than 40 years, Secret Agent 007 has touted his love of “Bolly,” as the Brits call it, making the spy and sparkler collaboration one of the longest and most successful of its kind. Since Roger Moore ordered Bollinger on-screen in 1973’s *Live and Let Die*, the bubbly has been featured in 14 Bond films. In fact, following a very Bond-like gentleman’s handshake agreement between the Bollinger and **Broccoli** (producers of Bond) families, the brand has remained the international man of mystery’s preferred champagne of choice since 1979’s *Moonraker* without any money ever exchanging hands.

KEY QUOTES FROM THE BOLLINGER X HAUTE LIVING CHAT



How did the Bollinger/Bond relationship come to be?

This story started with a handshake and a gentleman's agreement. In the books that **Ian Fleming** wrote there's mention of a few champagnes, [including] Bollinger. Bollinger was first mentioned in *Diamonds Are Forever*...**Albert Broccoli**... decided to seek out the brands that were in the books... He came to the winery and he had a beautiful dinner with my uncle, **Christian Bizot**, the uncle of the current CEO of the company. The dinner went pretty well. Champagne Bollinger became the official, favorite Champagne of James Bond. This is how it started in the 70s.

How has the relationship evolved?

Pretty well! We've been following the trend of James Bond, which is a beautiful business. What I found extraordinary is that you can watch it with multi generations... It goes over time. This is what we like with Champagne Bollinger. Time is one of our pillars. I think it works pretty well. More recently we started to do a limited edition with the movie release, so it's specific bottling that we've dedicated to James Bond. Bollinger is always about quality first. It's a beautiful wine. We can play with packaging, have some fun with the packaging.

What are your favorite Bolly moments in Bond films?

Live and Let Die – **Roger Moore** – orders some Bollinger later in the movie. In *Moonraker*, there's a mention of of Bollinger '69. But my favorite is *GoldenEye* with **Pierce Brosnan**. He's in the car with a beautiful girl, of course, and he stops the car, opens up a little box and there is a beautiful bottle of Bollinger ready to be poured.

WATCH OUR FULL “BOLLY” CHAT WITH CYRIL DELARUE BELOW!

