

# Urbanization, Taxes, Specialization, and England: One Opportunistic Monk in Champagne

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## Urbanization

Rising urban populations required more wine. Henri IV permitted Parisians to import wines from outside Île-de France.

## Taxes

Louis XIV (1638-1715) increased taxes on the peasants to pay for his wars.

Agricultural prices fell in seventeenth century. Ultimately, farmers saw wine as more lucrative.

## Specialization

Wine regions began to specialize in a specific style of wine in this period of French History.

Champagne uses the same grape species as Burgundy, but is too far north to make quality red wine. Therefore, the *Champenois*, specialized in white wine. The bubbles were a byproduct of the weather.

## England

After the restoration of the English throne in 1661, Charles II made it his goal to revamp court life. French wine became even more prestigious.

The English traditionally like sweet, sparkling wine; which led to them importing a great deal from Champagne.

England also made glass bottles strong enough to allow shipping carbonated beverages for the first time.



**Left:** Statue of Dom Pérignon Outside Moët & Chandon Headquarters

**Below:** Abbaye Saint-Pierre d'Hautvillers



## Dom Pérignon

(1638-1715) Son of a government official, he joined the Benedictines at eighteen, and after several years was transferred to the burgeoning Abbey of Hautvillers.

He was *procurer* of the Abbey until his death. Responsible for Hautvillers's finances, he saw the changes occurring in the wine industry and set about making a superior champagne to those on the market.

Dom Pérignon was extremely careful of the grapes he pressed, and how the pressing was conducted.

This allowed for more controllable bubbles and truly white wine.

His tediousness is now used by all champagne makers.

Dom Pérignon's wine was incredibly popular due to its quality, despite being four times as expensive as his competitors.

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*Le Dejeuner des Huitres*, Jean François de Troy, 1735