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NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Champagne helps unlock the secrets of bubble formation

“I am drinking the stars,” Dom Perignon, the monk credited with inventing champagne supposedly proclaimed upon taking his first sip of the bubbly wine. Scientists in France report one of the most comprehensive explanations for those stars — the bubble trains that rise with that graceful sensuality from each fluted glass, which led poet Lord Byron to muse, “Champagne with foaming whirls, as white as Cleopatra’s melted pearls.”

The study, conducted by the University of Reims’ Gerard Liger-Belair and colleagues, explains that the bubbles begin with minute cylindrical fibers deposited on champagne glasses from the air or towels used to dry the glasses. (For an extra bubbly experience, wipe the glass vigorously with a towel before pouring, the scientists advise. For fewer bubbles, avoid towel drying and keep the glass turned upside down.)

The report, which appeared in the Oct. 4 issue of the biweekly *ACS Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry*, describes how interactions between tiny gas pockets near the fibers influence the bubble trains. The scientists state that their observations in a champagne glass could have broader applications in food processing, medicine and other fields where undesired bubbles form.

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