

THE FINE ART OF *Sabrage*



BY CARON LE BRUN

PUBLIC RELATIONS, MARKETING CONSULTANT
BASED IN BOSTON

The ultimate celebratory flourish began as Napoleon's cavalry historically opened Champagne bottles with their sabres in Madame Clicquot's vineyards prior to riding off to battle. Today, the art of sabrage continues at polo matches in VIP tents and luxury tailgates throughout the country.

Since 1830, Christofle has been the unrivaled name in silver. Now, whether glistening on board the Orient Express or the lavish lairs of modern day Maharajas, their luxuries continue to make an impact. In an effort to introduce the brand to a new clientele, the company recently started invite-only sabrage events at its boutiques. The company's CEO, Nicolas Krafft, demonstrates to guests how to sabrage with an elegant silver sword—priced at \$15,000—expressly created by Christofle's Haute Orfèvrerie workshop in Normandy, France. Attendees are then invited to learn for themselves and are later presented with certificate of mastery.

"As if fine Champagne was not festive enough, the panache of sabering Champagne takes it to a higher level" according to David Handy, a popular event designer and planner in New York City, Boston and Newport, RI. (www.davidmhandy.com), "It enhances an intimate dinner with friends, a charity gala and weddings but especially at the outdoor, bucolic setting of polo." Lillian Najarian, who heard of David Handy sabering Champagne at Newport

Christopher Rule, *The Quarterly Review of Wines*, sabrages a bottle of champagne at a David Handy polo event.

Daniel Doke Photography and David M. Handy Event Design and Planning

Polo, requested he create a birthday event around the art for her husband, Richard, in the garden of Vanderbilt Grace Hotel in Newport.

“I use it to add a memorable flair” says Handy. It must be done by someone who knows sabrage for safety. My favorite Champagnes to use, because of their high bubble content, are Veuve Clicquot, Perrier-Jouet and Moët. The bottle MUST be very cold (45 to 48 degrees F), refrigerate at least 4 hours and then covered, especially the neck area, with ice in a Champagne bucket. My preferences are any Christoffle silver bucket (www.christoffle.com) or Mariposa’s String of Pearls (www.mariposa-gift.com) double bucket so that the bottle can be submerged on its side.”

Having learned the craft at an event at Christoffle, Boston, several guests have already christened Napoleonic Infantry swords they ordered from www.kultofathena.com . Robert Mitchell from Harvard University is framing his certificate with the cork and attaching two hooks on the bottom where the sword can rest on display.

While the thundering hooves and athleticism of polo’s majestic beasts continue on, Napoleon’s words are as relevant now as when he instructed his cavalry years ago... “Champagne! In victory, one deserves it; in defeat, one needs it.” **M**



Roger Farrington photography

Christoffle’s CEO, Nicolas Krafft, and Robert Mitchell from Harvard University sabraging a bottle of Veuve Clicquot with a \$15,000 silver sword at Christoffle’s Boston store.



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