



"Entertaining Wine for the Holidays"

The season is upon us once again. Let the festivities begin with that holiday fare and fill my glass won't you please. After spending years working in restaurants I still love to cook. Now my job revolves around the world of wine but is closely related to cuisines of all types. We all know food and wine go hand and hand and to really know wine one must have a vast understanding of many types of cuisine. This time of the year you find many traditional foods and also a lot of non-traditional fare. Entertaining can be quite fun when you mix it up a bit. Trying a new recipe or serving a dish from a completely different culture can put a refreshing spin to the holidays and excite the palate. I'm a sucker for Asian spices and sauces with my hors d'oeuvres. This is one way to change it up a bit without doing a whole lot of work. Finding some fun twists also with different wines can make your table more exciting and festive. I have thrown in a Pinot Gris from New Zealand that would make an Alsatian wine lover salivate. I also have a new Rhone wine that will blow your mind and palate at the same time. To round out the list I have included three morsels that way over deliver and all for under 30 bucks a bottle. During the holidays you don't have to open the most expensive bottles. As long as they have tons of flavor, character and are food friendly that's the ticket. These five wines will compliment many foods from appetizers to your main course. If you need any wine pairings or have any questions of what to serve with your special meal feel free to call me at the Waite Park store.

1) Gruet Blanc De Noirs - This domestic sparkler is made in New Mexico by a French family. Gilbert Gruet had been making

Champagne in France since 1952, but after a trip to the states he decided to do it here in the USA. This is one of the finest values in bubbly and is served even at the Bellagio in Los Vegas. Quite impressive for a sparkler under 20 bucks. Aged for a minimum of two years this bottle has the complexity of wine triple the cost. Beautiful salmon color with intense mousse. Aromas and flavors of raspberry, cream and a hint of toast complete the package. A real winner for the holidays! Pair with a wide array of hors d' oeuvres and great with quiche.

2) Astrolabe Pinot Gris - Marlborough, New Zealand 2010 - Simon Waghorn's winery is one to watch for some incredible values for Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Gris. This New Zealand Pinot Gris is one of the finest I've ever tasted from this region. The wine has impeccable balance and finesse that you usually find in French Alsace bottles. Aromas of fresh citrus, peach, vanilla and cardamom explode out of the glass. Mouthwatering flavors of pear and apple float seamlessly on the palate. Nice crisp acidity and superb finish. Pair with chicken, scallops and pasta dishes in cream sauces.

3) The Federalist Chardonnay - Russian River 2010, California - I taste a lot of Chardonnay during the year and this one is fantastic with tons of richness and flavors well beyond its price tag. The grapes are coming from the famous Russian River Valley that grows some of the greatest Chardonnay in our country and can many times cost a pretty penny. This wine was aged 9 months in barrel which gives it a nice round richness and great complexity. Heady aromatics of buttered toast, peach and a hint of smokiness keep me wanting another whiff. Full flavors of peach, pear and cinnamon with butter coat the mouth with a long finish. This wine is a superb example of what we now are doing in our own California with Chardonnay. Definitely world class! Pair with rich seafood dishes, lobster, soft cheese or just sip.

4) Cercius Cotes Du Rhone 2011 - France - Eric Solomon is a name to watch for on the back label of some fine Spanish and French gems on the market today. This guy is importing some fabulous bottles from small family producers and at prices too good to be true. The wine is 85% Grenache and 15% Syrah and sourced from 80+ year old vines. Michel Gassier and Philippe Cambie together made this wine and definitely nailed it. The wine radiates a deep ruby/purple color with intense aromas of cherries and black raspberries and spice. Full fruit flavors of more sweet raspberries,

cherries, licorice and pepper explode in the mouth. A fabulous Rhone wine for under 20 bucks! Pair with pork tenderloin, steak tartar, grilled ribs and Manchego.

5) Hilary Goldschmidt Cabernet Sauvignon 2009 - Oakville Charming Creek - Nick Goldschmidt makes wine all around the world, but now calls home California. This all estate wine comes from the Charming Creek vineyard in the famous Oakville appellation. These same grapes used to be sold to other wineries that charged 70 to 100 dollars a bottle for their wines. This wine sells for 30 bucks. The 2009 vintage was a great one for California cabs and this is a must try for all cab lovers. The wine has a dark ruby color that shimmers in the glass. Incredible aromas of blackberry, black cherry, cassis, chocolate and vanilla fill the air. Super complex flavors of more dark fruits, black cherries and a hint of toasty oak fill the palate. Nice lengthy finish with the pedigree of a 75 dollar wine. Just a baby yet so decant before you savor. Great gift idea! Pair with prime rib, porterhouse, roast leg of lamb or some aged hard cheese.

Happy Holidays!
Jeffrey S. Anderson
Sommelier

Westside Liquor
45 Waite Ave N, Waite Park, MN
(320) 253-9511
Check out our website at
www.westsideliquor.com