

Wine Down with Spec's Episode: Holiday Wine Picks!

by Collin Williams

Each year we are asked to give suggestions for wine gifts and help select those perfect bottles of wine for your friend, relative, or co-worker. Often, the inquiries are very typical; "Do you have any Cakebread?" or "Where's the Moscato D'Asti?" or even "I just need a good Chardonnay under \$10". These are the easy ones to which we are always happy to assist our customers. But it's interesting questions that really get our wine-hamsters running.

These inquiries are usually more intrinsic and are between individuals who are trying to impress the other with their gift. These individuals will usually know intimate details about their gift recipient for which they are trying to pick the right wine to match that person's buying habits or consumption tendencies. For these types of wine picks, I will often turn to two rules of thumb that will lead my decision making:

1. Don't pick a wine for your recipient that is way over their head.

a. By this I mean, if your gift recipient is used to drinking BV Coastal Chardonnay a classic old world Sancerre or Alsatian wine will probably not be the right selection.

b. Also, you probably will want to stick to the same grape varietal when selecting a wine for these individuals.

2. If you want to impress your recipient or offer a new idea, try offering a wine from another great wine producing region that makes similar wines.

a. For instance, if they are the adventurous type you may want to suggest another great "new world" Chardonnay producing area like Australia, Washington, Argentina, or Chile. The flavor profile of the wines produced here will be more in-line with what they are used to drinking.

Those are just a couple of tips to use if you're in a bind on your gift-giving selections. However, we do highly recommend consulting with your local Spec's Wine Stewards to help pick the perfect wine.

Check out the latest Episode of Wine Down with Spec's where we discuss some of these tips as well as recommend three wines in different price categories that are sure to be winners for your gift – giving holidays.

Around \$25 Bucks

Casajus Vendemia Seleccion 2006 (Ribera del Duero) \$21.79 cash

91pts robert parker- The 2006 vendimia seleccionada is a bit more expressive aromatically with floral and mineral notes than the 2005. However, it is less dense and structured. It will evolve for 1-2 years and drink well through 2020. It is an excellent value in age-worthy Tempranillo.

Between \$25 - \$50 Bucks

Chateau Pontac Lynch 2007 (Bordeaux) \$33.24 cash

Pontac Lynch touches Ch. Margaux on the north, Palmer and d'Issan on the south and Rauzan Segla on the west. This wine completely over delivers for the price and competes against the best Margaux has to offer. While not part of the initial Classification of 1855, this wine has been noted as a premier wine for centuries due to endorsements from the likes of Thomas Jefferson! Supple, rich, with a lot of complexity and layers of berry flavor, Pontac Lynch will impress even the savviest collector.

Over \$50 Bucks

Fourteen Appellations 2007 (Napa) \$69.89 cash

Sourcing fruit from fourteen of the most prestigious vineyards in Napa Valley, Fourteen is the compilation of one amazing idea from four pioneers in the Napa Valley. Oscar Renteria, Steve Reynolds, Kristi Seitz, and Sean Thomas have all had success within their own projects and wineries. A wine concept as ground breaking as Fourteen allows consumers around the world to view Napa Valley in its sheer beauty and distinct flavor profiles. Fourteen is a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot, and Malbec each playing its part to bring forth a wine full of boldness, originality, and utter brilliance.



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