



## Wine

Selecting the perfect wine for a holiday party or gift can be daunting, so here are a few good tips to remember:

1) When searching for a wine to pair with food, **don't** make the common mistake of **over thinking** it. Few things in food and wine pairing are certain. In general, if your meal is big and hearty, like roast beef, pick a bigger wine like Cabernet or Shiraz. If it's a lighter, more delicate meal like lamb, go for a more subtle wine like Pinot Noir. **The bottom line is that pairing is largely about personal preference.** For example, I can drink Pinot Noir with just about anything, be it lighter, heavier, salty, or sweet. Sure there might be better options, but if **YOU** enjoy it, then that's what counts. **If you are still unsure**, by a few different inexpensive wines, instead of one medium or higher priced wine, so that your guests can decide for themselves!

2) For gifts, try to **know the varietals the person will enjoy**. If you don't have this info, then it is very handy to know whether the person you are buying for drinks red/white, heavier/lighter, or sweet/dry. Knowing these three things will make the search **much** easier.

3) **I've said it many times before and I'll say it again:** When in absolute doubt, just grab a **Riesling!** It's arguably the most versatile food wine there is, and it's generally a crowd pleaser at parties and as a gift.

For this issue I went through the wine room and thought about what I would recommend to customers for dinners and gifts. Below are wines I would likely be recommending this holiday season.

### Dinner:

(I tried to stay under \$15 here since you may have to serve multiple bottles. All of these are great values and easily paired with a wide variety of foods.)



**Penfolds Koonunga Hill Shiraz Cabernet:** Received 94pts from The Wine Advocate, and for good reason. Lots to like in this fruit-forward, slightly chocolaty, medium bodied wine from down under. **\$9.99**

**Alamos Malbec:** This was one of my favorite Malbecs this year. Very lively raspberry flavor, with a jammy and velvety texture that leaves a long finish and keeps you coming back. **\$9.99**

**Pedroncelli Russian River Valley Pinot Noir:** A Russian River Pinot for \$15 bucks? Sign us up! This Pinot Noir is delicious for the price, and is a slam dunk with lamb and ham. **\$14.99**

**Perrin Reserve Cotes du Rhone:** Of French wines, Cotes du Rhones are usually my favorite. Of those Rhones, Perrin Reserve is an excellent value. Nicely rich with fruit, but with a good bit of acid for balance. **\$11.99**

**Dao Grilos:** If you are unfamiliar with the Portuguese grape Touriga Nacional, and you like big, meaty wines with dried cherry, mocha and spice notes, give this a try. **\$12.99**

**Razors Edge Shiraz Grenache:** Pretty intense dark fruit flavors, backed by spice, and hint of chocolate and well balanced acidity. Great bang for your buck here. **\$10.99**

### Gift:

**Faust Cabernet Sauvignon:** Big and tannic. If you enjoy chewy, rich and intense black fruit flavors, then this one's hard to beat. This will also reward several years of good cellaring. **\$49.99**



**Domdechant Riesling Kabinett:** Nicely balanced apricot and citrus zest notes, with an old world mineral back bone. This one also works well in the "dinner" list above. **\$19.99**

**Tait "The Ball Buster":** Huge wine. Heavy bodied and intensely fruitful. If they have a good sense of humor, then this wine makes a great gag gift for the boss or significant other! **\$19.99**



**Ken Wright Single Vineyard Pinot Noirs:** We have several of Ken Wrights' single vineyard Pinots. They are called "single vineyard" because all of the grapes in each wine comes exclusively from one small vineyard. This allows you to see how the same grape can change just based purely on where it's grown. These wines are fairly **hard to find**, so they make great gifts for collectors. **\$49.99**



Looking for organic wines? Look for these brands: Benziger, Bonterra, Cono Sur, Emiliana, Frogs Leap, Jean Bousquet, Organic Vintners, and Sobon.

## Spirits

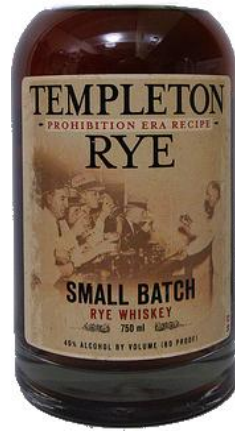
Most of the questions we get about spirits in the holiday season are about whisky. When shopping for a whisky gift it's important to know 3 things:

- 1) Do they drink Bourbon, Irish, or Scotch?
- 2) If they drink Scotch, do they prefer blended or single malt?
- 3) If they drink single malt, do they have a region preference? (Regions make a big difference in flavor with Scotch. For example: Islay Scotches tend to be the most acquired of the regions with their iodine, salty, and intense peat smoke flavors. Highlands are in the opposite end of the spectrum, and tend to be considered the smoothest of Scotches.)

If you come prepared with answers to these three questions, finding the perfect whisky will be a snap!

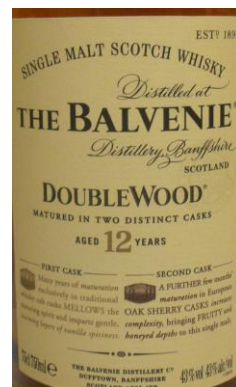
If you're still unsure, here's a few whiskies that will please many palates:

**Willett Family Pot Still Reserve:** The presentation of this whisky alone makes it gift worthy. The bottle is a beautiful decanter shape that is clear as crystal, and really lets you see the true color of the bourbon within. A bourbon on the sweeter side, it has vanilla and ginger notes as well as cinnamon spice. **\$39.99**



**Templeton Rye:** One of my favorite whiskies of the year. If legend is to be believed, then this whisky distillery was a personal favorite of Al Capone. Full of ginger spice and silky smooth, this whisky gets better with each sip. **\$37.99**

**Jameson Gold Reserve:** Typically priced around \$80, Jameson Gold Reserve is a steal priced at **\$49.99**. If you've got an Irish Whisky drinker to buy for, this would be an excellent choice.



**Balvenie Doublewood:** Scotch drinkers are some of the toughest people to buy for because of the wide array of acquired tastes that Scotch whiskies bring. The Balvenie Doublewood is a great Scotch that can please most Scotch drinkers' palates. Very smooth and quite complex due to its bourbon and sherry cask finishing. A sure bet for any Scotch enthusiast. **\$49.99**

## Beer

**Schlitz** is now available in its original 1960's recipe. While this beer is before my time, this current offering was fairly tasty. Nice and malty. **\$5.99/6-pack**



**Shiner Holiday Cheer:** Unique. Slightly sweet with a tropical fruit nose and a peachy taste. **\$6.99/6-pack**

**Duvel 4pack W/ Glass** A terrific, full bodied Belgian beer with a very nice glass specifically meant to bring out the aromas in the beer. **\$11.99**



**Ommegang 3pack of 1pint 9oz bottles W/ Glass** Three terrific Belgian influenced beers with a very attractive glass to drink them from. **\$19.99**