



Grapevine

May 2019

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Ideas for How to Host a Wine Tasting at Home

The slow arrival of spring may have made waking from our social slumber a challenge, but it is time. With major holidays behind us and summer vacations before us, hosting an at-home wine tasting would be a fun way to greet the season, and the friends you may be missing.

Put out platters of charcuterie, cheeses, crackers, olives, nuts and chocolates. Set up a makeshift bar, if you can. Use a wine crate with dividers for keeping a large assortment of glasses on hand—flutes for sparkling and separate glasses for whites and reds—or fill it with empty wine bottles to hold lit taper candles. Chill bottles in a galvanized bucket and design a placard describing the wines to be tasted, and you'll have a festive wine tasting. On to the wines...

Established in Napa Valley in the late 1970s, Mumm Napa's roots can be traced back to the house of GH Mumm from Champagne, France. **Mumm Napa Brut Prestige Sparkling Wine** is made primarily from Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. Flavors of brioche and berry fruit with creamy richness and a crisp finish make it an ideal first pour. Brie or another creamy, soft cheese will balance the wine. **92 WE** \$17.99



Originally from the south of France, the Auvigue family settled in the village of Solutré Pouilly in Burgundy. The **2015 Vins Auvigue Solutré' Pouilly-Fuissé** is made from organically farmed Chardonnay grapes. With aromas of white flowers and hazelnuts, it is rich and round and would make a delicious pairing for semi-soft cow's milk or sheep's milk cheeses and Marcona almonds. **92 WS** \$23.99

One of the oldest wineries in Austria, Schloss Gobelsburg's vineyards are situated around a castle in Kamptal, less than 100 miles from Vienna. Vinification in stainless steel tanks or large casks lets the grapes' fruit and acidity develop. **Gobelsburg's 2018 'Cistercien' Rosé** from Österreich, Austria is made from Zweigelt, St. Laurent and Pinot Noir grapes. It is lean, structured

and elegant, with flavors of red berries and cherries and balanced acidity. A versatile pairing wine, it would be a great introduction for those wary of Rosé. \$13.59

Italy's southernmost region and the Mediterranean's largest island, Sicily is a microcosm of coastal sun, volcanic soils and rich agriculture centered around olives, artichokes, pistachios, almonds and grapes. Anyone from Sicily will tell you that they are Italian, yes, but more importantly, they are Sicilian. Their wines reflect the same pride of heritage and strength of personality. The **2016 Baglio di Pianetto Nero D'Avola** from Sicilia is light-bodied and dry with intense flavors of black fruit and spice. The assertive flavors would make a stellar pairing for charcuterie, making a beautiful foil for this dry, light-on-its-feet wine. Put a small

bowl of shelled pistachios next to it, and you will see the magic of food and wine. \$10.99

From Andalucía in southern Spain, the **Osborne Pedro Ximenez Very Sweet Sherry** is a beautiful wine to conclude your tasting. Pedro Ximénez grapes are dried on grass mats in the sun until their juices become concentrated and rich. They are pressed—which takes a lot of grapes, considering the low levels of moisture left after drying. Fortified wine is added and the wine is aged for six years, resulting in an intense wine ready to pair with chocolates or whatever sweet finish you choose. **94 WE** \$20.99

These are merely ideas for how to host an unforgettable wine tasting. Bring together your favorite people with hors d'oeuvres, a sweet finish and good wines, and you have a reason to celebrate. Friends and wine make a terrific pairing. Cheers. ♦

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Every Day!!!

Did you know... Tasting the wines in a certain order is an important consideration. Go with lighter-bodied and dry first. Dry sparklers make a good start, followed by whites, rosé and reds. Sweet wines should be tasted last.

Wine Tastings Fridays, 4-7 & Saturdays, 2-5

Days not mentioned will feature New Arrivals.

Fri 5/3: A Pinot Noir tasting and Margaritas for your Cinco de Mayo fête

Fri 5/10: Wines from page 1 of this newsletter

Sat 5/11: A special Mother's Day tasting with a gift for each Mom during the tasting

Fri 5/17: May staff picks...always a great tasting

Fri 5/24: Sangria and patriotic wines for your Memorial Day barbecue

Sat 5/25: American wines for National Wine Day

Fri 5/31: Spanish and South American wines

Parchment-wrapped Salmon and Asparagus

Adapted from thehealthyfoodie.com

36-40 asparagus spears, trimmed and tough ends removed
4- 6 oz thick salmon fillets, skin removed
4 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
salt and pepper to taste
1 large lemon sliced thinly
8 fresh dill sprigs plus more for garnish if desired



Preheat oven to 400°F and place a large rectangular piece of parchment paper on your work surface.

Place about 8 to 10 asparagus spears in the center but slightly off to one side of the parchment paper.

Place a salmon fillet over the asparagus, drizzle with one tbsp olive oil, season with salt and pepper, then top with 3 slices of lemon and a couple of dill fronds.

Fold parchment paper over the salmon and seal the edges by making overlapping folds all around the edge. At the end, tuck the final crease under the pouch to secure the seal. Repeat 3 more

times with remaining ingredients. Place pouches on a baking sheet.

Bake in the preheated oven for 10 to 12 minutes. Remove from oven, let sit for 5 minutes and then carefully cut open the parchment paper.

Garnish with additional fresh dill and serve immediately.

This would make a lovely pairing for a Kir Rosé cocktail or Ted's staff pick, both below.

Kir Rosé

Adapted from skurnik.com

For two elegant springtime cocktails...

8 oz your favorite dry Rosé
2 oz Giffard Crème de Pamplemousse Rose
1 oz Boodles Gin
Cucumber slices for garnish



Build in two wine glasses or easily turn into a large format cocktail, converting each ounce to cups... 1 bottle dry Rosé, 1 cup Giffard Pamplemousse and a half cup of Gin. Put first three ingredients into a shaker or pitcher filled with ice, stir and pour into wine glasses. Garnish each with a cucumber slice cut diagonally and toast to warmer days ahead.

May 2019 Staff Wine Picks

Sheila: 2016 Chamisal Vineyards Stainless Chardonnay (Central Coast) **\$11.49** (reg \$13.49) Fermented and aged entirely in stainless steel, the wine's fruit character and pure Chardonnay expression shine with ripe apple aromas, white peach and key lime flavors, crisp acidity and a clean finish. *Chicken salad and avocado in lettuce wraps

Ian: 2014 Il Fauno di Arcanum (Toscana) **\$21.99** (reg \$25.99) This Bordeaux-style blend is Merlot driven with 20% Cabernet Franc and small additions of Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot. Aromas of raspberries and lavender segue to flavors of blueberries and licorice, with balanced acidity and soft, elegant tannins. *Beef braciola and orecchiette

Brian: 2016 Il Palagio 'Roxanne' Rosso by Sting and Trudie Styler (Toscana) **\$13.99** (reg \$16.99) **92 JS** An 80/10/10 blend of Sangiovese, Merlot and Syrah, it has aromas of cherries, blackberries and chocolate, with full body, round, polished tannins and a long finish. *Thinly sliced flat iron steak and blue cheese on focaccia

Ted: 2018 Hermann J. Wiemer Dry Rosé (Finger Lakes) **\$12.99** (reg \$14.99) An 80/20 blend of Pinot Noir and Cabernet Franc, the 18-hour cold soak with the skins imparts a bright salmon hue and red fruit flavor profile to this refreshingly crisp wine. *Parchment-wrapped salmon and asparagus, see above

John: 2017 La Cala Vermentino di Sardegna (Sardegna) **\$10.19** (reg \$11.99) Made from 100% Vermentino grapes that see a lot of bright sunshine, the Mediterranean breezes carry the sea's salt in the air and impart a distinctive salinity to the wine, balancing the citrus and floral flavors. *Fettuccine with lump crab, crème fraîche and snipped herbs

Tony: 2016 Château de Parenchère Bordeaux Supérieur (Bordeaux) **\$12.99** (reg \$14.99) Made from 100% Merlot, it undergoes malolactic fermentation and is aged for 18 months in cement vats, it has elegant aromas and soft tannins. *Grilled sausages and French lentils