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## Wine for the Holidays



As the holidays draw near, so do the endless cocktail party invitations, the flocks of visitors and the countless elaborate meals and complex recipes. What is often the common thread between all of these holiday festivities? Wine. But with so many variables like brand, flavor, type and vineyard location, it can be difficult to pick a wine that will please the palates of all of your holiday guests. Peter Strazzo, wine consultant/manager at Casbah Wines Downtown, shared with us a few tips for choosing a suitable wine for every occasion you encounter in the next few months.

Holiday meals incorporate such an assortment of textures and flavors, how do you select a wine that complements them all?

People often follow the old rule of thumb: Serve white wine with fish and poultry; serve red wine with red meat. However, the turkey isn't always the star of the show, Peter said. Pick any wine, and it is almost guaranteed to match at least one of the flavors on your dinner plate. Peter recommends a chardonnay or pinot noir.

As friends and family visit the area or drive through town during their travels, you can expect several visitors to stop by unannounced or at a moment's notice. What is a good wine to have on hand to serve to this unexpected company?

Peter recommends keeping a diverse selection of white and red wines to accommodate wine drinkers of all varieties. Cabernets and merlots are two popular red wine types, and chardonnays are a common choice for white wine drinkers. "But really," Peter joked, "if they're stopping by without notice, they better like what you give them."

Just as friends will visit your home, you will likely be invited to others' homes to celebrate the holidays. What wine makes for a good host gift?

"Anything with bubbles," Peter said. Although champagne is often people's first thought when it comes to a bubbly beverage, moscato and prosecco wines are two light and airy alternatives. Their sweetness makes them great gifts for hosts to serve at the gathering or save for another occasion.

On the topic of bubbly, how do you pick a good champagne to kick off 2014 on New Year's Eve?

"With champagne, you want the most bang for your buck," Peter said. Because it is the drink for celebration, champagne can be a bit pricy. Talking to the store's sommelier is the best way to pick a











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champagne that will please your taste buds and your wallet. There isn't a particular champagne that's better than another, because everyone has different tastes, he said.

Whatever the holiday, Peter stresses one rule when it comes to picking the best wine for the occasion. "There are two kinds of wine: wines you like and wines you don't. If you like it, then it's a good choice."

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