

Is there a perfect Thanksgiving wine?

In a word, "no." There are so many wines to choose from, and most everyone has different tastes. In addition, the wide diversity of flavors on a typical Thanksgiving table can be a daunting sight. Thanksgiving, a time to celebrate with friends and family, can also be fraught with the stress of menu planning, grocery shopping, and cleaning the house. Choosing the wine for your feast should not add to your stress.

By understanding the type of wine that will best match what you'll have on the table, you can also guide guests when they ask what to bring. When choosing wine to pair with food, look at the dish holistically, seasonings and sauces included — not just the prime ingredient. Look to the most intense spice to help you decide which wine might work best. That way, for example, you'll know to pick Sauvignon Blanc for plain green beans versus Chardonnay for green beans in a mushroom or cream sauce.

Thanksgiving dinner is a tough one when it comes to matching wine with the varied foods and tastes presented. For the variety of flavors on the Thanksgiving table, sparkling wines are a no-brainer. Bright acidity, fruit and yeasty undertones make bubbly extremely food-friendly. Especially good are Brut Rosé and Blanc de Noir, which can take you from the hors d'oeuvre to the vinaigrette salad, right through the turkey and onto the pie.

The Pinot Noir grape, from which many sparkling wines are made, provides body, some tannin for texture, red-fruit character, complexity, and acid balance. The bubbles from the natural carbonation in concert with the wine's acidity help cleanse the palate for the next flavor.

Whites

White wines with lively fruit and acidity and little to no oak are so versatile. With its aromas and flavors of citrus, apple and pear, and zippy acidity plus herbal notes, Sauvignon Blanc pairs with everything from butternut-squash soup to green salad to turkey with dressing. Even notoriously tough-to-pair Brussels sprouts will sing with Sauvignon Blanc. Here are



By Frank LaPere

a few other white varietals and appropriate food matches:

- Riesling — with its tropical fruit, citrus, green-apple, pear and mineral notes, works with almost any Thanksgiving dish except cranberry sauce and desserts.

- Chardonnay — the less oak the better — has similar versatility and its full body makes it appropriate for creamed dishes.

- Uncommon Whites — As a general rule, wines that are fruit-driven or contain some sugar will fit the Thanksgiving flow. Sweeter wines like Moscato d'Asti — a fun, mildly effervescent wine — can bookend your meal, starting as an aperitif and finishing up with a dessert that is not too ragingly sweet. Two of the five "V" wines also work well in this area. Look for a semi-sweet Vouvrey or Viognier, either domestic or from across the pond, for a refreshing change of pace.

For very sugary desserts, tawny port, fine cream sherry, or a desert wine such as a late-harvest Riesling work great, as long as the wine is as sweet — or sweeter — than the confection. This is important because a-less-sweet

wine will taste thin, even bitter.

Light Reds & Rose

- Pink Sparklers — have the same kind of versatility as their white cousins. But make sure it's a serious, dry rosé made from Pinot Noir, Syrah, or Mourvedre grapes or a blended rosé. They have enough acidity and usually sport structure and a long finish with light tannins. California's Roederer Estate Brute Rosé and Tavel Cotes de Provence Rosé are two good choices.

- Syrah and Zinfandel-based Blends have the spice, dark fruit and berries to bring out the best in cranberry sauces as long as the wine has soft tannins and ripe, forward fruit and the sauce is balanced — moderately tart and not too sweet.

Dark meat will also benefit from these reds.

- Beaujolais Nouveau — The third Thursday of November is an important day in the Beaujolais wine region of France. For centuries it has been the day that wine makers introduce the new vintage to the world. In America, Beaujolais Nouveau is presented just in time for Thanksgiving. It is fun and makes a nice complement to a Thanksgiving meal, since it is light in body and has almost no tannins.

- Pinot Noir — the ultimate single wine to choose for Thanksgiving. If I had to choose one wine varietal to serve with my Thanksgiving meal this would be it. Pinot Noir is a versatile varietal that has tangy red fruit of

strawberry and cherry, with nice acidity balance, and low levels of tannin. With elegance and a touch of earthiness to lend complexity, Pinot Noir will subtly support most tastes on the Thanksgiving table without overpowering them. Cranberry sauce and dessert are again exceptions, with the sauce too tart and the dessert too sweet. Those who know me understand that I am a huge fan of pinots from the Willamette Valley in Oregon. The cool nights make for a long growing season, which gives the grapes more "hang time," result-

ing in a noticeably full-flavored, but not overpowering, wine.

With a diverse meal and family and friends, holiday parties are an ideal time to try out multiple wines. Uncork a variety of bottles to suit the various goodies on the menu, and then let everyone mix and match for themselves. You'll discover some new wines and pairings, and everyone will have fun.

By living in Jamestown, we have more reasons than most to be thankful. Cheers!

Women's center needs help for holiday season

As the holiday season approaches, the Women's Resource Center of Newport & Bristol Counties prepares for seasonal drives.

Each year the Thanksgiving Day Program runs from October through Nov. 21. Donated goods are provided to families in need. Participating in this drive puts the giving back in Thanksgiving and services families deserving of celebration. Donations of gift cards for turkeys, rolls, stuffing mix, canned gravy, and any fixings that make for a delicious Thanksgiving meal would be appreciated.

A second program that services victims of domestic violence and their children is the Adopt-A-Family program. Each year the Adopt-A-Family program runs from late October through Dec. 19. This program is designed to match donors with clients and their families in order to meet family needs during the holiday season. Clients provide a "wish list" and donors help make the holidays brighter by providing materials needed.

Clients who participate in this program are of the Women's Resource Center and their names are kept confidential.

To help the Adopt-A-Family program this year, donors can sponsor a client or a family in need by dropping off a bag of food to our center, such as a "holiday meal" package, providing unwrapped gifts from a client or family wish list and/or gift certificates to stores or local restaurants.

To participate in the Thanksgiving Day Program or the Adopt-A-Family program, contact Constance Vergowven at 846-5263.

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