

Wine selecting for dummies: What you should know



ELEGANCE ON THE CHEAP

TRAVIS GENY
 You're at the supermarket. You glide through the aisles looking for that complete recipe that says that you are the gourmet cook that you have been telling your significant other that you are.

Everything is perfect. Fresh vegetables? Check. Fresh bakery bread? Check. Fixings for a truly delectable entrée? Check. Wine? What, no wine?

So you didn't make it to the vineyard this week. Who can? Not everyone has the means or the will to drive that extra half-hour to the country to find just the right bottle, but there is hope. The supermarket can be a veritable cornucopia of wine value if you know what you are looking for.

First, let's talk about what you are eating. The general rule is: Whites are for seafood and pasta with white sauce, along with white meats; red wines are for red meat and pasta with red sauce.

But let's look at the logic and taste behind this. You don't want your dish to overpower your wine nor do you want the opposite; so balance is the key. When choosing a wine, consider your food. Is your food going to be rich with a complex palette or light with simple flavors? For simple, light food, go white. Whites tend to be light and easier to drink.

Pinot Gris and Chardonnay as well as a white table wine will do well in this category. Table wines are blends that are made for everyday consumption. We'll get to that in a minute.

For richer and more complex foods and red meats, you will want a red like a Merlot or Cabernet. And yes, there are also red table wines.

However, there are always exceptions to the rule. Sauvignon Blanc is a white but tends to be more complex than some reds.

When selecting wine, it is very easy to be overwhelmed. At most of

the big chain stores, there will probably be no one who can assist you in your selection, but at some of the smaller, independent markets, there will be wine staff. If you find yourself at a supermarket, there are a few things to look for that will make your selection easier.

First, look to see if the wine is a blend or a varietal. Remember, a varietal is a wine made from one kind of grape. These tend to be of higher quality than some of the blends.

Second, look for the origin of the wine. It is a pretty safe bet that a local wine will be more satisfying than something from a larger out-of-state vineyard.

Third, look at packaging. Most quality vineyards will use the traditional cork and foil combination on their bottles instead of clear plastic and plastic corks. Also check the vintage. Most whites will be younger, while most reds will be older. A young Cabernet or Merlot may not be the best choice.

A safe bet is to go with French table wines. These are wines produced in France for everyday consumption. The upshot is that they tend to be inexpensive and of exceptional quality. These wines will be grouped together and tend to have fancy, rustic-looking labels. Also, look for the words "Appellation Controlee," this tells where the wine was made as per French law.

For reds, I have found that wines made in the Cotes du Rhone and Beaujolais regions tend to be very good. Also, a Chardonnay that I found from Macon-Lugny was also quite good.

Remember that the French are typically quite strict about the quality of their wine, so most of the

time you can't go wrong here.

If you don't care about impressing, boxed wine is acceptable for a tight budget. These wines are unimpressive as far as taste, but they do the job for everyday use. Not only are they fine for just everyday sipping, but they are a good substitute for cooking wine. These wines come from the big vineyards in California where output is measured in the millions of gallons, not by the barrel. As with cheap beer, these companies have turned the production of this wine into a precise science, so don't go looking for great works of art.

Also on this side of the wine aisle, you will find jug wine. The less that is said about these the better. When considering a wine like this, consider what your dinner may taste like on the way back up and possibly how badly you really want that headache the next morning, but you get the drift.

Finally, there is always the crapsheet method of choosing a wine. Stand in the middle of the aisle and point at a random bottle and go with it. You never know, you might luck out. Realistically, if a product has shelf space at a major supermarket, then chances are it has some merit.

Don't sweat your wine selections. In the end, a little adventuring with your taste buds never hurts; so maybe random selection isn't such a bad idea. Just remember, whatever you choose, drink in moderation, never drink and drive, and always have a designated driver.

Travis Geny is a senior pre-journalism major. He advocates safe and responsible drinking.



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THE WEEK IN MUSIC

Thursday, Nov. 9

8 p.m. — **The Paper Boys** (Celtic folk). WOW Hall, 291 W. Eighth Ave. Doors open at 7:30 p.m. \$11.50 advance, \$13 at the door.

9 p.m. — **Danny Barnes** (from the Bad Livers). Sam Bond's Garage, 407 Blair Blvd. \$5 cover.

9 p.m. — **Nina Gordon with PALOALTO** (rock). Wild Duck, 285 E. Fifth Ave. Doors open at 8 p.m. All ages. \$15 advance, \$17 at the door.

9:30 p.m. — **Sleeper Wave** (alternative rock/costume party). Black Forest Tavern, 2657 Willamette St. Free.

9:30 p.m. — **Jazz Jam Session**. Jo Federigo's, 259 E. Fifth Ave. \$5 minimum per person.

10 p.m. — **Ominous Seapods** (jam rock). Taylor's Bar and Grill, 894 E. 13th Ave. \$6 cover.

Friday, Nov. 10

9 p.m. — **Eclectic Open Mic Fridays**. The Buzz Coffeehouse. Free. Until midnight.

9 p.m. — **Ramona the Pest** (indie/folk/pop). Sam Bond's Garage, 407 Blair Blvd. \$3-\$5 cover.

9:30 p.m. — **The U-Genie Band** (ambient groove). The Tiny Tavern, 394 Blair Blvd. No cover.

9:30 p.m. — **Lazoo** (acoustic). Jo Federigo's, 259 E. Fifth Ave. \$3 cover, \$5 minimum per person.

9 p.m. — **Jolly Mon, Moth and That 1 Guy** (heavy rock/CD release). WOW Hall, 291 W. Eighth Ave.

9:30 p.m. — **Jentzu & The Alter Egos** (rock). Black Forest Tavern, 2657 Willamette St. Free.

9:30 p.m. — **Sector 9 with DJ Sexton** (jam/funk). Wild Duck, 285 E. Fifth Ave. Doors open at 9 p.m. 21 and over. \$8 cover.

Saturday, Nov. 11

8 p.m. — **Rex Hobart & The Misery Boys** with Deanna Varagona & Pig Iron (roots rock). Sam Bond's Garage, 407 Blair Blvd. \$4 cover.

8 p.m. — **Michael Rose** with Apple Gabriel, Rocker T, Papa's Soul Kitchen and Big B & Ras Cool (reggae). Top of the World, 1-5, Exit 199.

9 p.m. — **King Black Acid, Helio Sequence and MountainCon** (psychedelic). WOW Hall, 291 W. Eighth Ave. Doors open at 8:30 p.m. \$8 cover.

9 p.m. — **Wait** (folk rock). The Buzz Coffeehouse. Until 11 p.m. Free.

9:30 p.m. — **Lazoo** (acoustic). Jo Federigo's, 259 E. Fifth Ave. \$3 cover, \$5 minimum per person.

9:30 p.m. — **Skip Stones** (keyboard boogie). Black Forest Tavern, 2657 Willamette St. Free.

9:30 p.m. — **David Nelson Band** (rock). Hollywood Taxi, Main Street, Springfield. 21 and older. \$12 advance, \$14 at the door.

10 p.m. — **Mojo** (original rock). Taylor's Bar and Grill, 894 E. 13th Ave. \$4 cover.

Sunday, Nov. 12

4 p.m. — **Faculty Musicale** (various musical artists). Beall Hall. \$4 University students, \$7 adults.

8:30 p.m. — **Diva Bands**. Sam Bond's Garage, 407 Blair Blvd. \$4-\$7 cover.

9 p.m. — **Mark Alan** (acoustic). Jo Federigo's, 259 E. Fifth Ave. \$3 cover, \$5 minimum per person.

9:30 p.m. — **Open mic night**. Black Forest Tavern, 2657 Willamette St. Free.

Monday, Nov. 13

7 p.m. — **The X-ecutioners and Souls**

of **Mischief** (hip hop). WOW Hall, 291 W. Eighth Ave. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. \$14 in advance, \$16 at the door.

9 p.m. — **Funky Monday open mic**, featuring Freedom Funk Ensemble (jazz). Jo Federigo's, 259 E. Fifth Ave. \$5 minimum per person.

10 p.m. — **DJ TekNeek** (dance). Taylor's Bar and Grill, 894 E. 13th Ave. \$1 cover.

10 p.m. — **I.A.M.** (jungle, trip-hop). John Henry's, 136 E. 11th Ave. Women, no cover; men \$2.

Tuesday, Nov. 14

8 p.m. — **Ysaye Quartet & Piano** (chamber music). Beall Hall. Tickets \$10-\$25.

8:30 p.m. — **Barbara Dzuro** (jazz piano). Jo Federigo's, 259 E. Fifth Ave. \$5 minimum per person.

10 p.m. — **Ekoostik Hookah** (jam legends). Taylor's Bar and Grill, 894 E. 13th Ave. \$8 cover.

Wednesday, Nov. 15

Noon — **Eugene Symphony Concert Preview**, Hult Center: Studio One, Seventh Avenue and Willamette Street. Until 1 p.m. Free.

8 p.m. — **Art Maddox and Joan Benson** (piano/clavichord). Beall Hall. \$4 students, \$7 general public.

9:30 p.m. — **The U-Genie Band** (ambient groove). Black Forest Tavern, 2657 Willamette St. Free.

9:30 p.m. — **Dark Star Orchestra** (Grateful Dead show re-creation). Wild Duck, 285 E. Fifth Ave. Doors open at 8:30

Non-musical events

For a more extensive listing of this week's entertainment, visit Pulse online.

on the web
www.dailyemerald.com