



What to bring?

Grappa is the new Chardonnay for queer party gifts

BY TIMOTHY KRAUSE

Before you RSVP for another holiday soiree, do you know what you'll bring your host or hostess? Yes, a bottle of wine is a perfect choice, but how do you know which one to select? Even if you know what you like, consider these tips from *vino* aficionado Woody Clarke of Portland queer wine bar Crush.

Playing it safe: Zinfandel. "Most people say they like a dry red wine, but they really like the Zinfandels because they have a lot of sugar and probably the highest alcohol content—which always makes for a good party," chuckles Clarke. California Ravenswood is a good choice at an economical \$10 or so.

Going into the red: Pinot Noir. "Pinot Noir is the thing Oregon does—and does fantastically!" exclaims Clarke, who suggests local varieties make especially great gifts for out-of-staters. With bottles around \$35, Clarke recommends local vineyards Elk Cove, Andrew Rich and Cameron.

Wetting your white whistle: Pinot Gris. Oregon's own Big Fire winery offers a little white wine for about \$15. For the wine snob, Clarke's tip is a "gorgeous" California Camus Conundrum, setting you back about \$24.

Holiday hazard: Chardonnay. Overzealous U.S. consumption has made this *vino* a no-no. In other words, Clarke says, out of fashion.

Wine opine: Riesling. Sweet enough for a beginner, complex enough for someone who knows grapes. About \$16.

Erudite effervescence: sparkling wine. Hard to find at the market, but available at places such as Crush is Italy's new Villa Teresa from Prosecco Veneto. "The only decent organic wine," notes Clarke. And only about \$10-\$12.

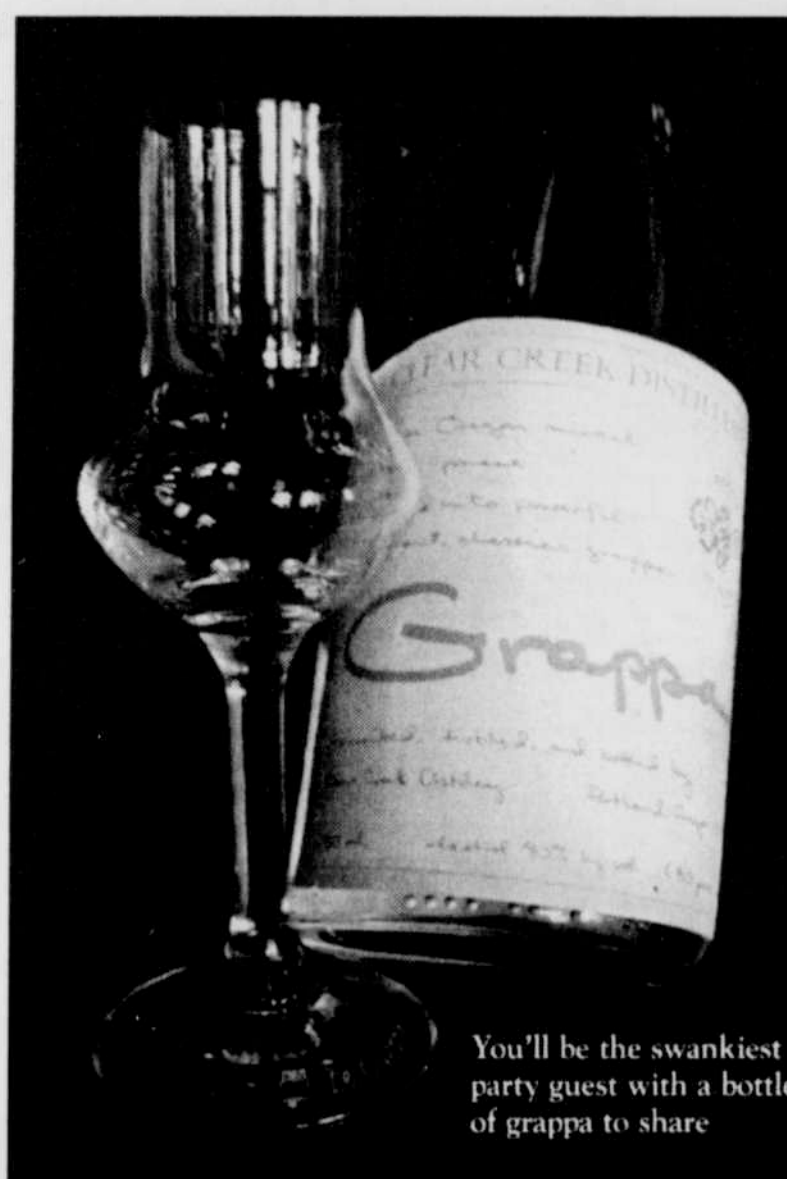
Trendy and smart: grappa, baby, grappa.

"For the fag who knows what's new and wants to look sophisticated," remarks Clarke of the clear, brandy-like libation made from leftover grape skins and seeds. Very dry and very high alcohol content—a bottle is going to last a long time and therefore makes a perfect treat for your someone special to savor long after the party's over. About \$29 gets you a bottle of Clear Creek grappa produced right on (go figure) Northwest Trendy-third.

Complement compliments: cheese, please. For a special touch, bring along cheese. Any kind, says Clarke, though his favorite is locally produced Juniper Grove.

The bottom line: listen up. Personal recommendations are a great way to choose wine, says Clarke, who is happy to offer suggestions over the phone. And for the casual consumer, ignore the year. "Old does not necessarily mean good," he says. "Often old just means old—and no one's going to be checking."

Then he adds, laughing, "Sometimes it boils down to just whatever the cute guy is drinking." ☐



You'll be the swankiest party guest with a bottle of grappa to share

Stop your wining

OK, maybe you or your party-throwers don't drink wine. ("It's graping on your nerves.") Or maybe you're just looking for something unique to take to a special dinner. In either case, Wild Life partners Larry Whitacre and Steve Pickering have lots of suggestions for "Shirley Temple" party presents.

Potluck good luck. Why not present your signature dish in a special vessel that you leave behind as a gift? Throw your homemade bread into a rustic rattan basket lined with a pretty tea towel, together for \$15.50. Or dress up store-bought nibbles by sharing them in Japanese Kotobuki dishes—four small, multi-colored, flower-shaped dishes for \$24.

Settle for petals. Make a tried-and-true flower arrangement a little fancier with an aluminum ring vase from Simply Designs. This \$14.99 shining beauty is retro-chic.

Effervescent presence. From margaritas to martinis, bubbleglass stemware from Global Amici creates sparkling party conversation. Each glass costs \$6.99-\$11.99 and comes in various colors. Check out the matching pitchers, too.

Post-party wind-down. If your party pal has everything in hand, why not offer that gracious goodie help winding down after the big to-do? Try Confetti Bubblebath from European Soaps. A \$3.99 pack is enough for two soaks. ☐

CRUSH offers bottles of wine to go, including many prewrapped selections, at 1412 S.E. Morrison St., 503-235-8150. WILD LIFE offers home furnishing and décor at 3962D S.E. Hawthorne Blvd., 503-236-3862.

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