

SUNDANCE WINE CELLARS

World's Largest Selection of Oregon Pinot Noir



Nicolas Feuillatte Brut Champagne

"Rich and creamy – citrusy acidity provides an elegance to this refined Champagne."
92pts. *Wine Spectator*

Reg. \$45.95 , NOW **\$29.95**

Nicolas Feuillatte Brut Rosé Champagne

"Elegant, with a silky texture & lingering aftertaste of dried berry & spice."
92pts. *Wine Spectator*

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Free Tastings 5 to 7 pm

Fridays: *Mario's picks!*

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12/15 Feuillatte & other sparklings

12/21 Wines from Oregon

12/22 Palm Bay, Importer

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12/29 Sparkling Wines

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THE GIFT OF WINE

Memories are made of this

Election's over and Santa sent Artie back to Cave Junction with a lump of coal, also Gov. Poopiehead back to Ogden or wherever, so we're ready to red-line the jolly-meter, even if it's mostly pretend (the Refumblicans are still dangling America's economy over the fiscal cliff). Folks who know me are aware that this time of year I morph into sap mode; I get giddy with giving gifts.

This year, we decided to crack the problem of gifting wine. Here's the kernel inside the shell of this nut: Most of us want to give gifts that somehow endure and keep giving, keep buzzing the giftee with pleasures. But what happens when we proffer, say, a tasty pinot noir? Giftee is gonna yank the cork and quaff the juice, right? The gift lasts long enough to get through dinner, then — tink — the empty bottle drops into recycling. What's left?

Memories: If you're thinking of showing some love to the wine-goof on your gift-list, you probably already know that the beloved goof can recite *ad nauseam* every great bottle she/he ever glugged—the when, the where, the menu, the weather, what socks they wore.

It's a lesson I learned from Maestro Chris Tsefalas, owner of Portland's great Perfume House: Like the profound "memory perfumes," designed to evoke exquisite recall, fine wines touch those deep aroma-centered cortices and lock in narratives that sometimes outlast the onset of senility — we might forget our kids' names but still remember slurping that '61 Mouton-Rothschild.

The gift of wine will endure. Next nut: Which wine, of the 5,000 or more available? If you know your goof or have been given their wish-list, problem solved, sorta. There's still the matter of budget; fact is, there's almost no upper limit to the amount you could spend. Of course, if you're a hedge-fund billionaire and price is no object, drop six large on the '82 Petrus and get the free wrapping. If you're a normal person, shake your piggy bank and set your limits.

As for selection, ask, confer, consult with experts. That's what we did, went to wine shops and such and asked, "If you were going to give a wine that would make a memory, which would you choose?" Answers follow, with prices:

Larry Malmgren, widely respected in wine-world and certified pinot-head, chose **Foris 2009 Pinot Noir**, a sale bargain at \$14, largely because pinot-philes rarely expect good pinot-juice from the Illinois Valley. Larry says the Foris has "lots of body and wonderful fruit finish."

Gavin McComas, owner of Sundance Cellars, Oregon's largest wine shoppe, selects Italian, **Travaglini 2006 Gattinara** (\$29), "just oozing personality" or Spanish white, **1996 Lopez de Heredia Vina Cordonia** (\$43), "just distinctive" with "sherry-like qualities."

Steve Baker, owner of Authentica Wines in the Smeed, lovingly caresses a cherished bottle of **Clerico 1988 Barolo Ginestra**, rare and wonderful (\$105, actually a bargain), "Just incredible nose," Baker says. "Barolo is one of those wines I can linger over."

Ryan Stotz, ever-effervescent manager of Marché Provisions, fires back his response: "Champagne. Good Champagne, without a doubt." His fave, **Vouette et Sorbée Fidele** (\$68). Clarke Schatz, deeply experienced wine-rep adds, "Dom [Perignon] and Krug."

Champagne, good Champagne also gets the nod from Angus James at Oakway's Broadway, "because that's my thing. It's extremely versatile, goes with all foods. It changes people's minds." Angus likes **Vilmart et Cie Brut** (\$100). Erica, Angus's assistant, chimes, "Bubbles are always memory-makers."

Jennifer Hilliard knows wines. She's partnered with Ray Walsh (Capitello Wines) and manager of Ox and Fin (formerly Sfizio). She sizzles with views: "Anything from **Stoller Vineyards** ... Wines from Temperance Hill vineyard ... **Evesham Wood** ... very memory-evoking ... **New Zealand sauvignon blanc** ... the memory of those grassy hills, the sea breeze. It drives away the winter blues."

Craig and Morgan Broadley, father/son combo at Broadley Vineyards, agree: "The 2010 Claudia's." They refer to their own **Broadley Vineyards 2010 Pinot Noir Claudia's Choice** (\$50), superb wine, one of Oregon's best, by consensus.

These are just a few opinions, of course, and tastes vary. Shop around. Taste (often free or at nominal cost) to find your own preferences. Too, chances are the giftee might share the gift.

Hanukkah/ Kwanzaa/ Christmas/ Solstice, whatever term you give for this happy season, we wish you the best. May your memories linger long after your corks are pulled. ■



December Food Drive



For the month of December any individual or business who donates three or more cans of food at the Ninkasi Tasting Room (272 Van Buren in Eugene) will not only receive a sassy Ninkasi Holiday Ornament, but will also have their name featured on a keg sleeve that will go on the Ninkasi Tasting Room Holiday tree! Perpeutate Better Living and help us give the gift of nourishment with the help of our friends at FOOD For Lane County.



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