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What's new in the Grapevine this week?

- **How much wine do I need?**
- **12 days of Christmas**
- **Great gift ideas**
- **Mulling over mulled wine**

How much wine do I need?

This is the time of the year that we are all planning parties and trying to figure out just how much wine to buy. I have a few rules of thumb that may help you do your calculations. Get out your pencil and paper or your pocket calculator and let's go to work:

As a rule of thumb, each 750 ml bottle of wine holds about five 5-oz. glasses. On average, your guests will drink two glasses of wine in the first hour and one glass per hour after that.

For most parties, the ratio of consumption of red wine to white wine is about 2:1. That ratio may vary based on the menu, but for most buffets or passed hors d'oeuvres, it is pretty close.

If you also are serving beer, soft drinks, and/or mixed drinks, figure that 2/3 of your guests will drink wine.

For instance, let's say you are hosting an office party for 24 people. If you have a full bar, you can guess that 16 people will be wine drinkers. Of the 16 wine drinkers, five or so will be drinking white wine and 10 or 11 will opt for red. If each person is at the party for 3 hours, you can figure you will pour 64 five-ounce glasses. That will require about 13 bottles minimum.

If I were planning the party, I would buy 12 bottles of red and 4 bottles of white. That provides a good cushion in case the party goes a little longer. When entertaining, it is better to have a bit too much rather than a bit too little. If there is a bottle or two left over, there is always the extra present for Uncle Albert's girlfriend or a hostess gift for Christmas dinner.

All that aside, you know your friends and relatives better than I do. If your friends are like mine, post an armed guard at the cellar door. If they are more refined and genteel, you may end up with some delicious leftovers. In any case, remember that

wine is to be enjoyed in moderation and winter roads are not at all friendly to drunk drivers.

As always, if you are planning a dinner or a party, please feel free to call us or send an e-mail to bozemanwinegallery@gmail.com. We are more than happy to suggest food and wine pairings or helping to gauge the right amount of wine to have on hand.

Great gift ideas

Normally the week or so after Thanksgiving is a slow time in the wine shop as most shoppers are out looking for the best bargains on toys and clothes at the big stores. I was pleasantly surprised to welcome a lot of shoppers who were looking for wine related and gourmet items for holiday gifts.

One of the easiest and longest lasting gifts is the **Wine Gallery Wine Club**. Sign up for 3, 6, or 12 months and be prepared for your sister, client or spouse to be pleased for months after Christmas. Come in and check out your options!

If you are looking for some good stocking stuffers, we have plenty of the **Haley's Corkers** in stock. I call it the Swiss Army Knife of wine gadgets. The soft plastic makes it easy to push into the neck of a wine bottle. There is a handy drip-free pouring spout, an aerating snorkel, and a fine mesh screen to catch sediment and tartrates. The Haley's corker also has an attached stopper that is tight enough to seal the bottle for spill-proof side storage in the refrigerator. The plastic is FDA approved and imparts no aroma or flavor to the wine. Just put it in the dishwasher to clean it and reuse it as many times as you wish. We have lots of them in stock at just **\$6.95**. The Haley's Corker is proudly made right here in the USA.

If you want to really knock your man's socks off, buy him a **Gwynne Knife Works** corkscrew! Made right here in Montana, these sturdy and manly corkscrews will never wear out. They are offered with a variety of wood or horn side plates and a foil knife that you could use to carve your Christmas turkey. Choose from a wide range of inlaid symbols including: elk, trout, golf, fishing fly, eagle, bison and wine glass. We throw in a solid maple presentation box free with each purchase. **(\$59.95)**

One other gift that makes sense for wine lovers is our one bottle accessory kit. It is a beautiful wooden box set for the gift wine of your choice. The lid holds a full tool set including a rosewood corkscrew, and aerating spout, drip ring and re-sealing plug. **(\$39.95)**

Tiffany has also done a great job of bringing in a full array of Riedel crystal stemware. We must have 15 different styles of wineglasses for different varieties of grapes plus stemless glasses, Champagne flutes and decanters. (If you hear the full story about the Riedel Coupe Champagne glass, you will probably find yourself toasting the New Year with some Champagne bubbling away in one. Ask Tiffany how cool and elegant they are.) We also brought in some bonus packs of several sizes where you can buy 6 and get two glasses free. It is a very nice way to set up some nice couple with 8 Riedel wine glasses without breaking the bank.

We also have a wall set aside for wine accessories and gadgets. Check out the wine tools section, our aerators, bottle accessories, wine preservers, and wine bags.

Pay special attention to the wine/picnic backpacks. These come with corkscrew, glasses, tablecloth, napkins, plates, silverware, as well as salt and pepper shakers. Some have a generous insulated pocket for food and a padded sleeve for wine. What a great way to pack a winter picnic or bring along refreshments for an outdoor concert on a summer night! We have a wide range of packs from **\$29.95 to \$49.95**.

To really thank a great client or to find a great gift for the wine lover on your list, we again have the wooden gift box of the **Longshadows** wines from Washington State. Each of these wines is made under the supervision of world renowned wine makers like John Duval, Michel Roland and Randy Dunn. I peeked into this year's box and found the **2014 Pedestal Merlot (95 Wine Advocate)**, the **2015 Sequel Syrah (94 Wine Advocate)**, the **2014 Feather Cabernet (93 Wine Advocate)**, the **2014 Chester Kidder Red and the 2015 Saggi (94 Wine Advocate)**. These world class wines come packaged in a beautiful wooden box. The individual wines themselves would retail for over \$400 but the collection can be yours for **\$369.95 (includes the box!)**

If you can't decide on a wine or a gift or a gift basket, one of the best presents for someone on Santa's list is a **Wine Gallery Gift Certificate**. You can choose the denomination and let your giftee choose the wine she likes. It eliminates the guesswork for finding the right wine or the right gadget. Remember, a Wine Gallery gift certificate never expires!!

Mulling over Mulled Wine

Coming up with something unique to serve your guests over the holidays can be a challenge, especially when it comes to concoctions to stave off the chilling bite of winter. Of all the options, mulled wine is a favorite. It's a classic wine-based drink that can be easily made ahead of time and served by the glass when family and friends pop over. Remember, as with any recipe, the real fun is in the interpretation so feel free to take the notes to add or create your own version. Don't forget to record the plans for your final concoction because once your guests take a sip they'll be dying to know how to make it themselves. Before you get started there are a few mulled wine rules.

- 1. Any red wine will do**, and you don't have to spend much money, after all you're going to alter the taste considerably. Try a wine from Spain, Australia, Italy, or Chile. The one thing they typically have in common is a deep full fruit flavor and lots of rustic structure - perfect for mulling.
- 2. Never let the wine boil.** If it's boiled it's spoiled. The flavor of the wine/spice combination will deteriorate if the mixture reaches the boiling point, so keep an eye on the stove. Actually, microwaving mulled wine by the glass or mug full is a better choice. The microwave process concentrates the flavor elements that can dissipate when mulled wine is made on the stove in an open-mouthed pot. I usually find that one-minute on high heat works best but get there in 20-second increments to ensure the mulled wine doesn't reach the boiling point.
- 3. Sugar is included** in my ingredients list, because some find that added sugar soothes the tangy flavor the mulled wine can express after being warmed up. Some

prefer diluting the mulled wine with herbal or citrus tea. Tea (especially citrus or herbal oriented varieties) not only softens the flavor but it adds subtle elements that the mulled wine doesn't have on its own. If tea or sugar isn't to your liking, try balancing the flavor by adding a little water to the blend before pouring.

4. **Garnish** with a cinnamon stick or candy cane. The candy cane is better if you use the clove or cinnamon flavored rather than the peppermint kind.

If you e-mail us, we will give you our traditional recipe or you can buy a bag of mulling spices for just **\$3.50**

Twelve Days of Christmas Raffle

In the old days St. Nicholas gave gifts to the poor and on the twelfth day of Christmas, the Wise Men brought gifts to an infant in a stable. Neither St. Nick nor the Magi went shopping at midnight on Thanksgiving Day. They gave gifts to the poor and helped the hungry and homeless. This year the Wine Gallery will again have a raffle whose prizes extend for twelve days. In actuality, we hope the Gallatin Valley Food Bank will be the big winner. You see, all cash and in kind donations for the raffle go to the Food Bank to feed the folks who struggle with hunger in the dead of winter.

In that spirit The Wine Gallery will observe the true Christmas season by awarding a special gift for each of the **Twelve Days of Christmas** to lucky raffle ticket holders. We won't be awarding leaping lords or swimming swans but we have some really fun gifts to celebrate the Season. Each day the prizes get bigger and better so keep buying tickets, you will just get better prizes if you win and more people will be fed.

How do you purchase tickets? There are two ways: Cash or In-Kind. For cash (check or credit card) purchase of tickets, the more you buy the better your odds.

- \$1 each
- 6 tickets for \$5
- 12 tickets for \$10
- 25 tickets for \$20.

For in-kind donations we will give you a ticket for each item of canned or other shelf stable product you donate to our collection box located in the front of the store.

In the past we have given away a wine aroma kit, a picnic backpack, three different magnums of wine, a 3.0 liter bottle of a wine that is on the Top 100 as well as wines donated by our suppliers. This year the prizes are even better ranging from wine gadgets to more great bottles of delicious wine. Buy as many tickets as you want!!

Call us at 586-8828 or send an e-mail to bozemanwinegallery.com (Wine Club members may charge tickets to the credit card on file.)

Our first drawing will be on December 26 and we will pick a winner each day until January 6th.

***** No Grapevine next week. Santa's elves will be in the workshop building baskets and spreading cheer. Watch for the next edition on December 27.***