

MOTHER'S DAY BANQUET AND WINE FEST

Score major points with wine-loving moms Sunday by taking them to Aquarelle in the Watergate. Serious menu, plus an impressive wine selection. Noon to 6 p.m., 2650 Virginia Ave. NW. Tickets are \$75 (\$65 if purchased by noon Friday). Call 202-265-0477 or visit www.dcdiningsociety.org.

SCOTT GREENBERG *Vine Guy*

Some wines a mother could love

It's 3:00 in the morning, and I am lying in bed, wide awake, staring at the ceiling. It struck me about 20 minutes ago that I had not picked out a present to give my wife for Mother's Day. Talk about a rude awakening.

Now with precious little time left until the weekend, my mind is racing through all the possible items she would like to have — and I keep coming back to wine.

The good news is, she is easy to please in that department. So to make it a little more interesting (and just slightly easier on the wallet), I decided to build on a theme. Instead of buying her flowers, diamonds and candy — after all, that's so cliché — I decided to buy her an assortment of wines based on the aforementioned categories.

Here are a few wines that every mom would enjoy this Sunday. Retail prices are approximate.

FLOWERS

Georges Duboeuf Julienas Flower Label, Beaujolais, France (\$14 at Total Wine and More in McLean)

Beaujolais are young, fresh, fruit-driven wines, and this example from renowned producer Duboeuf delivers loads of black cherry, raspberry and dark strawberry fruit on a medium-bodied chassis. The plush and refreshing finish would line up well with roast chicken or pork.

2005 Miner "Rosato" Rosé, Mendocino, Calif. (\$16 at MacArthur Beverages in the District)

This rosé is made from 100 percent Sangiovese and produces a wonderfully unique blush wine featuring notes of strawberry and earthiness on the delicate nose. Fresh flavors of red cherry and pomegranate are kept in balance by abundant acidity, resulting in a crisp, refreshing finish. Serve well-chilled alongside grilled or chilled shrimp.

1996 Perrier Jouet Champagne, Flower Bottle, Reims, France (\$130 at Schneider's of Capitol Hill in D.C.)

No Mother's Day celebration is complete without a little bubbly from France, and this vintage Champagne is an elegant way to start the day or end the evening. Made from a blend of chardonnay and pinot noir, the wine delivers pretty notes of green apples, pears and brioche with finesse and grace. Perfect alone or with oysters Rockefeller.

DIAMONDS

2003 Ramey Wine Cellars Diamond Mountain District Red, Napa Valley, Calif. (\$85 at the Wine Specialist in D.C.)

Made from a blend of cabernet sauvignon, merlot, cabernet franc and petit verdot, this proprietary red packs a lot of fruit into this massive wine. Blackberries, cassis and black plums dominate the palate from front to back while notes of mocha and coffee blend in on the long, full finish to provide complexity and heft. If Mom is a meat eater, this is her wine to enjoy with a New York strip.

2003 Lokoya Diamond Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley (\$133 at MacArthur Beverages)

This is pure cabernet sauvignon, full of black currant and rich plum scents on the nose — a characteristic trait of Diamond Mountain fruit. Rich flavors of blackberries, black raspberries, black plums and espresso coat the entire tongue and lead to a long, stylish finish. A simple plate of artisanal cheeses is all you need.

2003 Diamond Creek Cabernet Sauvignon, Red Rock Terrace, Napa Valley (\$150 at MacArthur Beverages)

The Red Rock Terrace vineyard is considered the warmest of the four small vineyard sites on this Diamond Mountain property. The rich soil translates into a sweet perfume of black cherries and rich earth on the nose. While the tannins are prominent, they support the ripe flavors of black fruits, cassis liqueur and mushrooms on the full body beautifully. Whispers of mint on the big, tannin-fueled finish make this a wine in search of a rack of lamb.

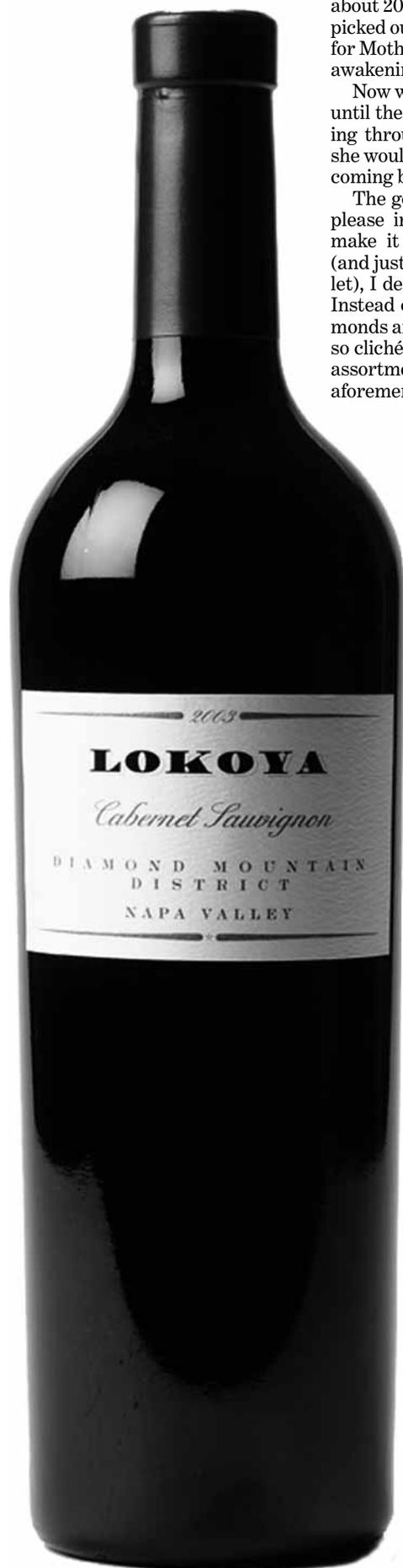
SOMETHING SWEET

1997 Chateau Suduiraut Sauternes, Bordeaux, France (\$35/half bottle at Total Wine and More in McLean)

This tiny part of France's fabled wine region produces some of the world's greatest dessert wines thanks to a phenomenon known as Botrytis Cinerea — or "Noble Rot." Botrytis is a unique fungus that causes late-harvest grapes to lose water, leaving the shrunken fruit with a higher-than-normal concentration of natural sugars. The resulting precious nectar produces remarkable sweet wines. This example provides hints of orange marmalade and honey on the aromatic nose and flavors of caramel, coconut and apricot nectar on the light-but-long finish. It's a winner with crème caramel or flan.

2000 Steindorfer Scheurebe Trockenbeerenauslese, Burgenland, Austria (\$35/half bottle at The Vineyard in McLean)

Trockenbeerenauslese — or TBA for short — literally means "dried individual grapes picked out." The late-harvest, botrytis-shrunk riesling grapes are carefully vinified into a very special, very rare dessert wine, bursting with flavors of apricots, white peaches and yellow cherries. The viscous mouth-feel contributes to a richness that defines dessert itself. Notes of mulled spices on the syrupy finish beg for an apple cobbler collaboration.



Do you have a favorite royalty of wine? E-mail me at scott@vineguy.com.

