

FOOD & WINE

Scott Greenberg » **The Vine Guy**

The Vine Guy's annual Thanksgiving wine review

Every year, Cindy and I look forward to Thanksgiving with a mixture of excitement and dread. It is by far and away our favorite holiday, because we get an opportunity to spend the day with family and friends and celebrate with great food and wine. But the problem is that the traditional Thanksgiving dinner includes so much variety that different dishes end up competing for space on both your plate and your palate at the same time. This can provide a challenge when it comes to pairing wines on Turkey Day, since most people don't have the time to find the perfect bottle that'll work with everything. It's even hard for us to agree on the right wine to serve.

Well, this year we decided to enlist the aid of the people who know more about food and wine pairings than anyone else in town — sommeliers. We asked four top wine experts what wines they recommended pairing with this year's holiday feast. Evidently, Riesling is this year's "little black dress": Three of the four connoisseurs know it goes with everything.

» **NADINE BROWN, WINE DIRECTOR, CHARLIE PALMER STEAK**

2006 Domaine Jean-Louis Chave, St. Joseph "Offerus," Rhone Valley, France (\$30)

The Chave family has been making wine in northern Rhone since the 15th century. Vintage after vintage, this wine delivers. One hundred percent syrah with a spicy nose of ripe cherries and inviting green herbs and pepper. Great balance of earth and bright fruit makes this a great food wine to pair with turkey, ham or steak.

2001 Fritz Haag, Brauneberger, Riesling, Auslese, Mosel, Germany (\$60)

A great auslese can be profound, leaving you wondering, "How do they do that?" What is key here is the Pradik level (Auslese) and the vintage. Find something with at least five years bottle age if possible. Only time provides the very complex hedonistic flavors of ripe peaches, sweet tangerines, apricots, spices, roasted nuts and a touch of botrytis. These wines force us to slow down and reflect on all we are thankful for.

» **ANDREW MYER, SOMMELIER, CITYZEN**

2007 Willi Schaeffer, "Wehlener Sonnenuhr," Riesling Spaetlese, Mosel, Germany (\$60)

This is a low-alcohol wine; 10 percent roughly. And let's face it; you're going to be drinking all day. You know it, I know it and your mom knows it, too. This wine is for the long haul. It doesn't hurt either that its combination of cantaloupe, melon and juicy apple flavors will work with all the trimmings while the gorgeous minerality, relatively high acid and mild, residual sugar will cut through the

overcooked turkey perfectly. Yeah, I know, it's got some sweetness and you don't like sweet wines, but give it a shot; it's delicious and you can always tell your mom that you're actually just drinking delicious fruit juice.

2002 Vina Alberdi, "Reserva" Tempranillo, Rioja, Spain (\$60)

I bet your crazy aunt or hipster brother will be bringing a bottle of pinot noir; so try something that's a bit different: rioja. It has the weight of a good pinot and the same comfortable fruitiness, but it's a bit more Sweet Tart meets Juicy Fruit gum. Bright red cherries and berries and a tart dill-meets-sorrel greenness will complement the cranberries and make the turkey more mouthwatering. "Reserva" just means it was aged for three years with one year in an oak cask, which provides tasty green notes.

» **RAMON NARVAEZ, WINE DIRECTOR OF ADOUR BY ALAIN DUCASSE**

2006 Domaine Ehrhart, Gewuerztraminer "Rosenberg," Alsace, France (\$22)

This amazing wine is rich and multilayered. It offers hints of orange confit, stewed mangoes, litchi, geraniums and pineapple marmalade. A vibrant streak of fresh acidity keeps the palate alert and ready for more. A great accompaniment for the bird, cranberry sauce and candied yams.

2006 Witness Tree Vineyard Estate Bottled Pinot Noir, Willamette Valley, Oregon (\$28)

This velvety pinot gives a generous mouthfeel of dark berry fruits (i.e., Bing cherries) and brown spices. It's more robust than its French counterparts and more complex than California pinots. The pinot will pair well with the turkey (I will be having dark meat and crispy turkey skin on my plate), stuffing, rich gravy and even pumpkin pie.

» **KATHY MORGAN, SOMMELIER/WINE DIRECTOR, MICHEL RICHARD CITRONELLE**

2008 Willi Schafer Riesling Kabinett, Wehlener Sonnenuhr, Mosel, Germany (\$30)

Riesling's unique combination of high acidity with high intensity gives it the ability to stand up to the heaviest dish without overpowering the light ones. The iconic Willi Schafer expertly balances his wines with just a tiny bit of sweetness — for the sweet-tart cranberry sauce.

2006 Jean-Luc Colombo, "Les Barmelles," Chateauneuf du Pape, France (\$40)

Everyone loves Chateauneuf du Pape. You will be the family hero if you put one on the table. This supple version's moderate alcohol, as well as its juicy fruit and spice-box flavor profile makes it a versatile companion for everything at the holiday table — even the yams.

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