

ANNUAL THANKSGIVING WINE RECOMMENDATIONS



The wine you pour for your Thanksgiving celebration should be as joyous as the occasion itself. But searching for the right wine to serve with the main event can make you as crazy as your well-intentioned in-laws telling you how to carve the turkey. The problem is that many tables will be laden with a wide variety of dishes, ranging from goose and turkey, to cranberries and stuffing. In addition, a long lineup of side dishes can end up competing for space on the plate and the palate. Picking versatile wines that pairs well with the main attraction as well as the accompanying dishes is the key to success for any Thanksgiving meal.

Here are a few useful suggestions that will pair well with an assortment of dishes on your Thanksgiving table. Hopefully, this will give you one less thing to worry about for the holidays. I can't help you with the in-laws.

Chenin Blanc is not the first grape that comes to mind when thinking of sparkling wine, but this incredibly versatile varietal shines even brighter with bubbles in the **Non-Vintage Jean-Marc Gilet Domaine de la Rouletiere Vouvray Brut** from the Loire Valley region of France. The bouquet is filled with scents of toasted bread, ripe pear, white peaches and roasted almonds. Medium-sized bubbles carry flavors of lemon meringue, crisp apple and a touch of strawberry over a creamy frame. The fresh finish is clean, soft and long, leaving the impression of delicate tangerine flavors on the back of the tongue. A wonderfully versatile wine that can kick off dinner on just that right note. **\$20**

Garnacha is the king of the Compo de Borja region of Spain, and its soft tannins and bright fruit makes it a delicious choice for the Turkey Table. **2010 QUO Gastiago Garnacha** from Campo de Borja. Made from very old vines (over 60 years), this spectacular Grenache is full-bodied wine reveals aromatics of blackberry, tobacco and dried herbs. Complex flavors of spicy fruit, including black cherries, red plums and dark cherries mingle with notes of lead pencil and tobacco across the entire palate. Prominent notes of black pepper add power and depth on the long, structured finish. **\$25**

I think that dry Riesling wines can be turkey's best friend. The tangy acidity keeps the palate refreshed throughout the meal. The **2011 Heimberger Riesling Vieilles Vignes** from the Alsace region of France is a fresh, dry Riesling that displays concentrated flavors of zesty pear, white flower, and wet stone undertones throughout the palate. Crisp acidity provides wonderful focus, purity, and balance. **\$15**

Turkey is actually two meats in one bird: The rich dark meat and the more mild white meat. Pinot noir is a wonderfully versatile wine, capable of complimenting both parts of the bird. A delicious choice is the **2012 Barrique Cellars Pinot Noir** from Sonoma County, California. The dark color of this pinot belies its delicate nature. The perfumed nose is full of strawberry, raspberry and red plum scents. The wine has a bigger feel in the mouth thanks to fruit driven flavors of red cherry, dark plum and black raspberry. Accent notes of black pepper and clove pop in on the back end and make a perfect pairing with turkey - or even ham. **\$25**

Friends Dan Potter and Tim Edmond first met at Princeton University. They began brewing craft beer together as a hobby and eventually got really good at it. A circuitous route introduced the two friends to the world of hard cider and an obsession that led to the founding of Potter's Craft Cider, located in Free Union, VA. Today, nearly three years after their first commercial batch, they are barely keeping up with demand for their two styles of crisp, dry hard cider. Try the **Potter's Craft Farm House Dry Cider**, made from locally grown Virginia Winesap and Albemarle Pippin apples that are fermented to complete dryness, so there is no residual sugar. The cider's structure gives it an impression of sweetness, and the crisp apple flavors and spritzzy mouthfeel make it a fun and versatile beverage to serve with a traditional Thanksgiving dinner. **\$11**