

Desert Island Wines



Cindy and I were recently invited over to a friend's home for a wine tasting and dinner. During dinner, one of the other guests asked me if I had a favorite wine. While I get that question a lot, it still stumps me, because my tastes are constantly evolving. In addition, I genuinely believe that enjoying a particular wine has as much to do with who I am sharing it with and the circumstances involved as it does with the quality of the wine itself. So while I have had the opportunity to enjoy many fantastic wines in my career, I prefer to think of "best" wines in terms of most "memorable" wines.

But then the guest – obviously unsatisfied with my response – asked me the same question from a different angle. "What five wines would you want if you were stranded on a desert island?"

Well, that certainly gave me pause to stop and think.

The question reminded me of an oldies radio station I used to listen to where the DJ one of the regular programs was called "desert island classics" where listeners would call in with four or five songs they would want to have if they were marooned on a desert island.

So, I started coming up with my own "desert island" wine list. It is important to note that, just like my "best wines I have ever had," my desert island wine list is not necessarily made up of the best wines I have ever had. While I have enjoyed spectacular wines, I wouldn't necessarily want to have on a regular basis since that would simply spoil the uniqueness of the experience. But, on the other hand, there are a few incredible wines I wouldn't mind being stuck with either.

I figure there is going to be a cool grotto somewhere on my island where I can store my wines, so I can take along an assortment of wines that might benefit from a little age – after all, I don't know how long I'm going to be stranded.

Or those hot days, swinging in my homemade hammock awaiting my rescue, I think I'd like to while away the hours sipping the **2013 Lake Chalice "The Nest" Sauvignon Blanc** from New Zealand. It possesses a bright clean nose featuring scents of freshly cut grass, gooseberry and green melon. This palate is juicy and refreshing, with gobs of grapefruit, melon and tropical fruit on the medium bodied frame. The mouth-watering acidity is balanced by a long, elegant, mineral-laden finish that keeps the palate invigorated. **\$15**

Back in the 19th century, seaman used semaphore flags to conveying information between ships. So it's only fitting that I would flag down a bottle of the fantastic **2011 Semaphore 7 Reserva** from Portugal. It could actually make being stranded bearable. Made from Alicante Bouschet, the firm tannins support concentrated flavors of cherry cola, black cherry and spices. Notes of dark chocolate and black pepper tantalize the tongue on the powerful finish. If there are any goats on the menu, I'll be in heaven. **\$17**

Just in case I find any beef on the island, I'll be ready with the aptly named **2010 Dry Creek Mariner** from the Dry Creek Valley appellation in Sonoma, California. This Bordeaux-inspired blend has beautifully balanced notes of blackberry, dark plum and cherry that grip the tongue up front while hints of cocoa and espresso glide in on the back. Smooth tannins add character to the silky finish. **\$40**

Of course I would hate to be marooned anywhere without a decent champagne, so I would definitely be happy to have the **Nov-vintage Bertrand Delespierre Brut 1er Cru Champagne** on one my island. A genuine Champagne from France, the elegant bubbles carry graceful flavors of grapefruit, nectarine, white peaches and minerals across the entire palate. Notes of vanilla on the crisp finish, well-balance finish adds a layer of style and sophistication. **\$50**