

Summer Party Wines



A couple of days ago, a business associate sent me an email and asked me for a few wine recommendations. He said, "I need a reasonably priced red and white wine for a party I am having. Any suggestions?"

Of course, my first question was, "define 'reasonably priced'." My second question was, "Are you having 'wine people' over or just people who like wine?"

He explained that the party was to celebrate his daughter's graduation from college and that the crowd would be a mix of wine drinkers and wine lovers. "But," he continued, "I still want to keep it under \$20 a bottle for the white wines, and preferably under \$30 for the reds."

After giving it some serious thought, I came up with a list of wines that I would like to have in my glass if I were at the party. Furthermore, I developed two categories for his consideration; a "value-driven quaffable" list and a "hey, this is pretty good wine" list. After I was done, it occurred to me to share this with listeners and readers since these wines would be perfect for engagement parties, wedding receptions as well as neighborhood get-togethers and backyard barbeques.

Value-Driven Quaffable List

White Wines

2011 Maimai Chardonnay from New Zealand - A delightful unoaked Chardonnay, it is crisp and clean with bright flavors of pineapple, orange and golden mango. The delicious finish offers a hint of vanilla. A mouthwateringly fresh squeeze of acidity makes everything bright and clean. **\$15**

2013 New Age White Wine from Argentina – one of my favorite summer white wines – serve it over ice with a wedge of lime (yes, lime) and it is one refreshing, fun wine cooler. I drink this a lot in the summer... **\$6**

Red Wines

2012 Gnarly Head Old Vine Zinfandel from Lodi, California – a fun, juicy red wine with loads of blueberry, cherry and raspberry fruit on the front of the palate and spicy, peppery notes on the finish. Perfect with burgers or ribs. **\$11**

2010 Navarro Correas Cabernet Sauvignon from Mendoza, Argentina – Easy drinking Cabernet with flavors of blackberry and dark cherry supported by complex notes of tobacco leaf and cedar wood. The medium-bodied finish is straight forward and tasty. **\$12**

This is Pretty Good Wine List

White Wines

2011 Jeff Carrel Morillon Blanc from France – a rich and buttery Chardonnay from the Languedoc This is an elegant wine where beautiful fruit flavors of peach jam, white nectarine, and tropical notes of pineapple and mango dominate the front of the palate. A creamy mid palate showcases the wine's partial French oak treatment, adding gentle touches of buttered toast and vanilla notes on the pretty finish. **\$20**

2011 Matanzas Creek Sauvignon Blanc from California - This wine exudes summer in a glass! It is intense and vividly focused, with plenty of peach and nectarine fruit flavors up front and juicy gooseberry and kiwi notes on the back of the tongue. It has a nice bright citrusy finish thanks to the abundant acidity. Refreshing on its own and wonderful with shellfish. **\$16**

Red Wines

2009 Bodegas Muga Rioja Reserva from Spain – a delicious wine with aromas of vanilla and spice box, with a touch of red cherry on the bouquet. The lighter-styled wine offers pretty notes of red cherry, black plums and a dollop of red licorice on the medium-bodied frame. **\$26**

2011 Stolpman Syrah Estate Grown Santa Ynez Valley, California – spicy, rich and full-bodied featuring aromas of blackberry, bright raspberry, and vanilla on the nose and flavors of rich, dark cherry and blackberry fruit on the palate. It finishes off with notes of cracked black pepper supported by sweet tannins on the chewy finish. Delicious with lamb or burgers. **\$27**