

Wine Resolutions



Well, another year has come and gone, and another list of resolutions has passed into my personal history book with mixed success. There were a few personal promises that I kept and more than a few that fell into the “maybe next year” category.

But making and keeping my resolutions isn’t as arduous as most. After all, when you’re a wine writer, resolutions generally revolve around the concept of drinking better wine, attending more tastings or trying new varietals. Not a high bar, so to speak.

However, in the interest of the annual tradition of promising to make a fresh start or search for personal improvement, I did jot down a few new resolutions for 2015, with the hope that I will be able to pin more of my objectives in the success column by the end of this year.

I know every year I claim that I am going to drink more varietals but this year I will clarify that statement by trying to drink more wines from Spain and Portugal.

I think that these two countries are going to be the “It Girl” of the wine world in 2015 – and I will be spending more time going in depth on specific recommendations in future segments.

Grenache is one of the most ubiquitous grapes planted in the world. It’s used as a main component in many French red wines from the Rhône region as well as Spanish reds, where it is known as Garnacha, like the **2013 QUO Grenacha** from the Campo de Borja region of Spain. This wonderful red wine has scents of spice box, cherry and plum aromas on the nose and soft flavors of cherry, dark strawberry and black fruits in the mouth. Notes of baking spices linger on the mid-bodied finish. A remarkable value at **\$10**.

The thick-skinned, low yielding Touriga Nacional is one of the famous red wine grapes used in the production of Portugal’s Port wine. However, it is also the main component of the **2009 Quinta do Casal Monteiro** red table wine from the famed Douro Valley of Portugal. With the addition of small amounts of Touriga Franca, Cabernet Sauvignon, Tinta Roriz, this wine has an intense ripe fruit aroma offering up scents of red plums and cigar tobacco. Juicy and fresh on the palate, it has a firm structure that support flavors of plum, dark cherry and cassis. The long and persistent finish has a spicy note of black pepper at the end. Another remarkable value at **\$10**.

Every year I vow to drink more Champagne. And every year I fall woefully short. Champagne isn’t just for special occasions; although I am sure many of you had your fair share a couple of nights ago. It can be enjoyed on its own or with a wide variety of foods. Unfortunately, once you open a bottle of Champagne, it should be consumed within a short period of time in order to maintain the integrity of the bubbles and the freshness of the wine. So a full bottle of Champagne may not be an option for everyday consumption.

Enter the “quarter-bottle” option. Many Champagne producers now offer their wines in 187ml bottles, which is a quarter of a regular bottle of Champagne. Not only is this a sensible way to enjoy a glass of Champagne, but it is economical as well.

Here are four examples of Champagne fun at a quarter of the size:

Non-vintage Nicolas Feuillatte "One Four" Blue (187ml) Wherever you are when you drink it, it will whisk you away to the atmosphere of the trendiest evenings, with its touch of effortless chic. **\$12**

Non-vintage Laurent-Perrier Brut (187ml) Laurent-Perrier Brut style is defined by its very high proportion of Chardonnay which provides a natural purity, freshness and elegance. **\$13**

Non-vintage Moet & Chandon Imperial (187ml) Moet & Chandon Imperial is the classic representation of the Moet & Chandon house style. **\$14**

Non-vintage Moet & Chandon Nectar Imperial Rose (187ml) is a rich, luscious and vibrant rose. It is the perfect accompaniment to a summer’s afternoon picnic or a romantic evening meal by candlelight. **\$21**