

### Valentine's Day Wines that Enhance Romance



Valentine's Day is looming large on the love horizon and by now, many of you have either made reservations at a favorite restaurant, bought chocolate or ordered flowers. Maybe you even did all three. After all, romance is what the day is all about and you can never do too much wooing.

But this year, Valentine's Day falls on a Sunday, so it's technically a "school night." And even though we catch a break with a President's Day holiday the next day, work and kid's schedules are close at hand, and could get in the way of a relaxing night out. So my suggestion is to bring the restaurant to her. Consider making her favorite meal or arrange to have dinner from her favorite eatery brought home to heat up. And, just to be safe, make sure that love is not only in the air, but in the bottle – wine bottle, that is.

But the big question is which wine to grab. Since the wine that enhances romance might be a bit different for every couple, I decided to solicit opinions from random wine lovers I have met over the years to see what wine they plan on sharing this Sunday to tip the scales of love in their favor for a romantic encounter.

Cindy and I were recently at a wine and chocolate tasting at the Blue Duck Tavern as part of the Masters of Food and Wine series where we met a lovely young couple. Brandon S., an economic analyst from Canada, plans on wooing his new school teacher girlfriend, Rachel N. with a sparkling rose wine. I recommend the **Non-vintage Mumm Napa Brut Rosé** from Napa Valley, California. Made from 85% Pinot Noir and 15% Chardonnay, this lovely blush-tinted wine has delicious flavors of raspberries, strawberries, gingersnap cookies and vanilla lemon custard, with the bubbly froth and tart yeastiness of a fine sparkling wine. **\$18**

My friend Neil is strictly a beer man, but he knows that his wife Lynn loves an ever-so-slightly sweet white wine, like the **2012 Dr. Heidemanns Graacher Kabinett** from Mosel, Germany. This off-dry Riesling has a fragrant floral bouquet featuring aromas of orange blossom, honey and gardenias. The beautifully integrated flavors of apple and lemon-lime are enhanced by underpinnings of mineral notes. The slightly sweet traces are kept fresh by bright acidity that makes it a wonderful aperitif and makes Lynn happy. **\$19**

Barry understands investments, so when he's looking for a return of love on his wine, he knows that Caren is a pushover for pinot noir. So on Valentine's Day he makes an effort to hunt down one of her favorites, the **2012 St. Innocent Temperance Hill Vineyard Pinot Noir** from the Eola-Amity Hills region of Willamette Valley in Oregon. Caren really likes the perfumed nose of wild flowers and black cherries. Bright flavors of strawberry, cherry and vanilla glide over the tongue but stay in balance thanks to the delicate tannins. The slightly spicy finish holds its own against grilled fish like salmon or tuna. **\$40**

Our friends Lisa and David discovered wine and each other a little later in life, but that hasn't slowed them down from jumping in to love and Bordeaux with gusto. On special occasions, David knows to splurge on a bottle of **2012 Chateau Grand Puy Lacoste** from the Pauillac region of Bordeaux, France. Lisa loves the layers of dark plums and blackberries on the front of the tongue and notes of lead pencil on the long, supple finish offered up in this fifth-growth estate. It's drinking great now, even if it is a little young – just like Lisa and David's love. Enjoy it with steak frites and soft cheeses. **\$55**