

Girls Just Want to Have Wine



Once in a while, I get an idea for an article from the most unique sources.

Recently, my wife was out with several of her friends for dinner and, of course, she was charged with bringing the wine. Now, when it comes to providing and pairing wines with dinner, Cindy considers it her obligation to bring wines that she knows will provide a memorable experience. On this particular evening, her friends were thrilled with the result... that is until they began to ask her about where they could get some of the wines and how much they cost.

Cindy, with a little bit of hesitation, explained that some of the wines were older and therefore hard to find and others were tipping the scales at over \$50 (generally a price point beyond the group's comfort level).

After her disclosure, one of her friends turned to her and said, "Cindy, why don't you have that adorable husband of yours write an article on affordable wines that I can find at the local wine store to drink with my girlfriends. I don't necessarily want to have food with them... I just want to sit, sip and chat." By the way, I may have taken some artistic license with the "adorable" adjective...

And so there you have it. We all want to have the ultimate food and wine experience, but in actuality it's just not always practical. First of all, the wines are expensive. Secondly, who has the time between work, school and schlepping the kid's to their activities to hunt them down? Third, not all of us have the culinary skills/resources necessary to whip up a meal to pair with say, an '82 Mouton.

So, being the devoted husband that I am, it was began to assemble a bunch of wines and begin my research (it's a tough job, but somebody has to do it) to find some readily available, affordable (\$20 or less) 'sit and sip' wines for "The Girlfriends".

The following wines were selected for their sipping-on-their-own potential. While they may be food friendly as well, I specifically tried them without the benefit of any food. Most importantly, they have met the demanding standards as set forth by Cindy and approved by her recent gathering of wine-loving friends. Best of all, it turns out that these wines are non-gender specific since my friends like them too!

There are as many styles of Sauvignon Blanc as countries that make them, but the clay and limestone terroir found in the Loire Valley region of France seems to give the **2013 Domaine de la Chezatte Sancerre** a particularly light and bright crispness. It is a very fresh wine that has gobs of grapefruit, nectarine and lime flavors built on a frame of minerality and bright acidity. **\$16**

The Garganega grape from the Veneto region of Italy is used as the basis of Soave. The **2012 Monte Tondo Soave Classico** has an intensely aromatic nose, with prominent scents of rose petals and acacia on the bouquet and flavors of apple, almond, spice, lemon and basil notes on the crisp finish. This is a wine in search of a lounge chair. **\$17**

I said at the beginning of the year that Spain is one of the up-and-coming countries to pay attention to in 2015. The **2012 QUO Old Vine Grenache** from the Campo de Borja region is one reason why. It is a rich, supple red wine filled with cherry, spice and raspberry notes on the front of the palate and charming notes of red currant and pepper on the smooth finish. **\$15**

And what would a Girlfriend wine review be without a pretty Pinot Noir? The **2013 Kim Crawford Pinot Noir** from the Marlborough region of New Zealand is the perfect companion for a glass and good conversation. It is both elegant and refined with black cherries and red currants on the nose and on the palate. Underscored by ripe tannins and oak nuances, this delicious pinot is well balanced and features a smooth, velvety finish. **\$17**