

### Wines for a Warm Reception



Summer has arrived in Washington, bringing with it a bounty of charity events, graduation ceremonies, and weddings. Unfortunately, these events are likely to feature standard “Reception Wine.” Ugh. Need I say more? Unless attending an official wine tasting event, the wine served at most large-scale functions (25+ people) is pedestrian at best, making most wine lovers cringe at the thought of drinking characterless juice.

Typically, little thought goes into the wine selected for large-scale events and accordingly, the wines proffered are usually out of balance and one-dimensional.

But take note! Not every event has to fall into this trap. Here are a few recommendations for affordable, versatile, tasty “reception wines” that will pair well with a variety of foods and will make you look like a sommelier. Best of all, many of these wines are easy on the wallet.

Rosé wines are both festive and versatile wines. The pretty pink color of the locally grown and produced **2012 Boxwood Topiary Rosé** shines in the glass and in the mouth. A delicious rosé wine made from a blend of Malbec, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon grapes grown and processed in the traditional style at John Kent Cooke's historical estate in the Middleburg, Virginia. It offers bright flavors of strawberry, red cherry and ripe peach that coat the tongue. Its generous mouthfeel and crisp acidity makes it easy to drink in summer heat or under a tent. **\$16**

Sauvignon Blanc is a very versatile varietal. It is produced in major wine-growing regions all over the world and flavors can range from grass and hay to gooseberries and guava. The **2014 Kim Crawford Sauvignon Blanc** from the Marlborough region of New Zealand is a definite crowd pleaser due to its refreshing scents of citrus, grapefruit and grass on the aromatic nose. Flavors of peach and nectarine show well upfront while notes of lemon and lime buoy up the crisp finish. It has great acidity and balance that would pair well with a variety of passed hors d'oeuvres. **\$12**

It's hard to find a good value in pinot noir, but the **2012 Leyda Pinot Noir** from the Leyda Valley in Chile has it all, including a lovely nose of red cherry, bright strawberry, vanilla and a touch of tea. The vibrant texture offers loads of cherry, plum and strawberry flavors. Hints of orange rind and toasty oak fill in on the soft, medium-bodied finish. This is a very versatile wine that would pair well with grilled salmon, chicken or pork. **\$14**

For the big red wine lovers in the crowd, turn to Spain for some wonderful choices, including the **2008 Bodegas Franco-Españolas Rioja Bordón Reserva**. This supple red blend from the Rioja region in Spain is full of red berry and dried spice scents on the fragrant bouquet. Expressive flavors of red cherry, dark plum, and dried herbs are carried through to the supple finish by soft tannins and lively acidity. This lovely wine can be enjoyed with a many dishes, including roast duck, grilled meats, and soft cheeses. **\$15**