

Wines For Your Easter Basket



Easter Sunday is usually a day that begins with an egg hunt for the kids and ends with a wine hunt for the adults. Searching for the right wine to serve with Easter dinner can make you as crazy as forgetting where you hid the last Easter egg – until the smell reminds you a week or so later.

It seems like every family has their own main course tradition, ranging from ham to turkey to spring lamb. And with all of the side dishes competing for space on the plate, making room on the palate can be a challenge.

Versatility is the name of the game this Easter. Start with picking out a wine that will play well with your main course and then refine your selection based on a few key side dishes. For example, if you plan on having ham, consider a wine that will support the richness of the meat while counter-balancing the saltiness. Or if turkey is the centerpiece of your holiday table, grab a bottle that will liven up the mild flavors of the bird. Here are a few wines I plan on putting in my basket when I hop over to dinner this Sunday.

Easter ham can be rich and salty, so a nice, delicately sweet Riesling would be a great match, but it requires enough acidity to cut through the fat of the ham while providing a counterpoint to the saltiness at the same time. My recommendation is the **2014 Chateau St. Michelle Riesling Eroica from the Columbia Valley in Washington State**. It displays kumquat and white floral characters on the nose and bright, zesty flavors of melon, peach, and lemon/lime notes in the mouth. The crisp acidity keeps the pitch-perfect sweetness in check as well as cleansing the palate after each sip. **\$18**

Another excellent choice to pair with ham for Easter dinner is the **2013 Nobilo Pinot Noir Icon** from the Marlborough region of New Zealand. This pinot has an intense nose showing attractive aromas of sandalwood, minerals and bright berry fruit. In the mouth, the wine displays good concentration of herb-tinged red berry fruit that can stand up to the flavorful meat. The finish is well-balanced, showing notes of dark cherry and a touch of violets. The hint of cinnamon on the tail end of the finish will pair nicely with sweet potato casserole. **\$22**

If your plans call for a turkey this Easter, serve something a little different; **2014 Latour Beaujolais Village** from the Chameroy region of Burgundy, France. This relatively lighter-styled Gamay wine features classic aromas of bright red cherry and flavors of rich red fruits, blueberry syrup and bright strawberry jam that seems to dance on the palate. Notes of violets linger through pretty finish. **\$17**

Spring lamb is a popular center piece on many Easter tables, and a flavorful Grenache is always a good choice for a variety of palates. Add a Spanish flair with the **2013 Alto Moncayo Veraton Garnacha (grenache)** from the famous Campo de Borja appellation of Spain. The lush frame features spicy dark plum and black cherry flavors on the front of the palate while hints of roasted meat and coffee round out the complex, balanced finish. **\$30**