

Wines to Fall in Love With



If April showers bring May flowers, then October Brides get showered with colorful leaves and crisp autumn air.

According to the American Association of Certified Wedding Planners, it appears that there are a growing number of couples who are opting for fall weddings. In addition, many of these weddings are destination events, with venues as close as a couple of hours or as far away as another continent.

There also seems to be a greater emphasis on shorter ceremonies and longer receptions. With the demographic shifting towards couples getting hitched at older ages than their counterparts just a few of decades ago, there is more disposable income spent on celebrating the nuptials, including the wine.

Since one of my own friends is getting ready to walk down the aisle with her long-time partner, I thought it would be fitting to provide a few suggestions on hot wines for cool wedding receptions.

Sparkling wines are a great way to get guests into a festive mood and Proseccos are a good choice since they are light and bright and are usually in the “inexpensive-to-reasonable” price range. Try the **Non-Vintage La Tordera Cuvee di Gabry Spumante Extra Dry Rosato** from Veneto, Italy, which actually has some merlot grapes used in this unusual, but delicious blend. It’s creamy on the front of the palate, with loads of strawberry and nectarine flavors and has a pleasantly off-dry finish, which features a hint of citrus that keeps the palate clean and fresh. **\$18**

During warmer months I really enjoy a nice pinot grigio. The high acidity and low price (\$9) in the **2008 Ruffino “Lumina” Pinot Grigio from Venezia Giulia, Italy** – made from grapes grown in the Friuli Venezia Giulia region – keeps the delicious notes of pear, green plums and citrus fruit on the medium-bodied, well-balanced frame bright and refreshing.

During cooler weather, a versatile white wine comes in handy. I really like Rhone white varietals for this assignment and the **2013 Horton Vineyards “Tower Series” Viognier** from Orange, Virginia is about as good as this domestic version gets. Beautiful scents of gardenia and apricot float on the fragrant bouquet while luscious flavors of ripe peach, apricot and papaya glide over the tongue on the way to the long and elegant finish. This wine is a remarkable value. **\$18**

One of the most versatile and often over-looked reds in the wine world is merlot. It has a tendency to be powerful enough to pair with a variety of beef preparations yet elegant enough to enjoy on its own. The **2012 Matanzas Creek Merlot** from Sonoma County, California, offers up a lot of wine for the money. The complex nose features scents of dark berry, black plum and vanilla. The wine feels expansive and round in the mouth where layers of black plum, dark cherry, black currant and earthy notes integrate with soft tannins to provide a graceful and lengthy finish. **\$22**

Last, but certainly not least, is the wedding toast. While there are many great sparkling wines available, personally, I think Champagne – real French Champagne with a capital “C” - is the way to go. There’s just something about Champagne that adds just that extra touch of class to any special occasion, and weddings are about as special as occasions get. The **Non-vintage Laurent Perrier Brut** is great Champagne to toast with. The pretty aromas of brioche toast, candied ginger and wet stone are charming. The delicate bubbles carry flavors of apple, nectarine and toast over the entire palate and the semi-dry structure is a nice match with - or without - wedding cake. Considering you can generally get twelve glasses of Champagne per bottle, the **\$35** price tag is still reasonable.

Hint: when buying wine from a retailer, make sure that they will take back unopened cases or bottles of wine. That way, you won’t worry about having enough wine on hand.