

# FOOD & WINE

DECEMBER 2009

best holiday recipes  
*from roasts to cookies*

quick & easy hors d'oeuvres

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best wines to  
bring to a party

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*Juicy rib roast,  
delicious with Shiraz*

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## Wine for Parties & Gifts

**Q:** *What's a good approach to wine when you have a large dinner party? Pick one wine (or one red and one white), or try to mix it up?*

**A:** I'd pour one white and one red throughout the evening, as people tend to have strong preferences between the two. That allows you to refill glasses without worrying about whether you're combining different wines.

**Q:** *For the holidays, I'd like to buy some bottles of wine with a personalized label. Are there any decent ones available?*

**A:** A number of wineries produce personalized labels. Washington state's **Northwest Cellars** ([northwestcellars.com](http://northwestcellars.com)) makes a wide range of good wines that can be labeled with your own artwork (\$85, plus cost per bottle of the wine, from \$14 to \$32). The Fusebox program from San Francisco's **Crushpad** lets customers blend their own wine from a set of samples, then design a custom label for it ([crushpadwine.com/blend/fusebox](http://crushpadwine.com/blend/fusebox); \$336 for 12 bottles). And tequila producer **Corzo** will custom-etch metal labels on its tequila bottles for free. Corzo's smoky reposado, aged in wood for up to a year, is particularly delicious (\$53 for 750 ml; [corzo.com](http://corzo.com)).

**Q:** *Are there any great wine deals that I should be aware of as I'm looking for gifts?*

**A:** Wine wholesalers have recently been offering sale prices on many high-end wines, a boon for gift buyers. Some of the best hunting is in *premier* and *grand cru* Burgundies, top Australian Shirazes and pricey California Cabernets. Wineries also seem to be offering more "library" bottles (older vintages they keep in their own cellars). At press time, Napa's Freemark Abbey, for instance, was selling a beautifully aged 1991 Sycamore Vineyards Cabernet for \$110—an extraordinary deal considering that many current-release Napa Cabernets cost more and aren't nearly as compelling.



**Q:** *What wines go well with classic Hanukkah dishes?*

**LATKES & SOUR CREAM**

**UNOAKED, VIBRANT CHARDONNAY**  
2008 Backsberg Chardonnay (\$14)

**BRISKET**

**RICH, FULL-BODIED MALBEC**  
2007 Flechas de los Andes Gran Malbec (\$25)

**POTATO KUGEL (ABOVE)**

**LIGHT, FRAGRANT PINOT NOIR**  
2007 Goose Bay (\$25)

For these recipes, go to [foodandwine.com/hanukkah](http://foodandwine.com/hanukkah).



**Q:** *What's a good Champagne that doesn't cost a lot?*

**A:** A reasonably affordable bottling that I like is the **NV Nicolas Feuillate Brut Réserve Particulière** (\$36). But for even more value options, check out the sparkling wines below.

### BEST VALUE SPARKLING WINES

**2007 CJR Reginato Blanc de Blancs (\$15)** This zesty Argentinean blend of Chardonnay and Chenin Blanc is crisp and refreshing.

**NV Jeio Cuvée Rosé Brut (\$18)** Floral notes and a nice citrus zippiness mark this rosé from the Veneto in Italy.

**2006 Gramona Gran Cuvée Cava (\$20)** Cavas are slightly earthy, with a light lemon-lime character; Gramona is a leading producer.

**NV J Cuvée 20 Brut (\$20)** One of Sonoma's top names in sparkling wine makes this lemony, lightly toasty bottling.

