



Grapevine

December 2019

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Happy Holidays...A Toast to Staff Picks

From tree lights and snow-frosted trees to foods and wines on our tables, the season of ultimate celebration has arrived. This month, we're featuring staff picks to accompany friends- and family-fêtes, be they small and intimate or full-table affairs.

Sheila is greeting the holidays with the **Duc de Romet Brut Prestige**, a Blanc de Noirs from the Vallée de la Marne in Champagne. Made from Pinot Meunier and Pinot Noir, this is a stunner with notes of baked apple and almond, graced with a streak of minerality. It would be lovely with hors d'oeuvres or New Year's Eve Lobster Wellington. **92 WS \$29.99**

Orin Swift Cellars is the creation of California winemaker David Swift Phinney, a known lover of Zinfandel. Ian chose the **2018 8 Years in the Desert Red**, a Zinfandel-driven blend, bolstered by Syrah, Petite Sirah and Grenache. It is named for the eight years Mr. Phinney abstained from producing Zinfandel, the wine for which he is most known. It is full-bodied with brazenly forward flavors of black cherries and fresh herbs. With ripe tannins and a long finish, a roast pork with ample spice is all that's needed for this big wine. **\$37.99**



Across the Rhone River from Chateauneuf-du-Pape in the heart of the other half of Chateauneuf sits Lirac. Vineyards in both appellations were wiped out by the phylloxera pest in 1863. Lirac was replanted more slowly than Chateauneuf-du-Pape, which went on to establish its solid reputation. Lesser known Lirac with climate and soils similar to its famed neighbor produces excellent wines. Ted's **2017 Clos du Mont-Olivet Lirac** is a stellar example. Mostly Grenache with Syrah and Cinsault, this sustainably produced wine is aromatic and complex with notes of garrigue. Paired with a leg of lamb, you'll find your holiday bliss. **\$18.99**

The hills around Alexander Valley hinder the fog, keeping mornings warm, while coastal breezes cool

the evenings, ideal conditions for Cabernet Sauvignon, the lead grape in Brian's pick, the **2016 vintage of The Calling 'Visionary' Red**. Blended with Malbec and Petite Sirah, this rich wine has bold flavors of coffee, toffee, blackberries and cedar. Ribeye would be a fine match. **\$18.99**

Bill is channeling a Christmas Eve bedecked with Tuscan fare for his pick of the **2016 Castello di Volpaia Chianti Classico Riserva**. Made with organic Sangiovese grapes aged 24 months in oak barrels and three months in bottle, this peppery wine with red fruit and baking spice flavors has smooth tannins and a long finish. You could take this wine from a starter of aged cheeses and cured meats to tagliatelle with wild mushrooms. **97 WS \$31.99**

Northern Italy's Piedmont region is breathtaking, with hills and striated vineyards colored by a painter's palette. Known for white truffles, sheep's milk cheeses, gnocchi and risotto, to name a few, the wines are Barolo, Nebbiolo, Dolcetto and Barbera. Tony's pick is the **2016 Fratelli Revello Nebbiolo** from the Langhe area, owned and run by two generations of the Revello family since 1954. Made from 100 percent organically grown Nebbiolo and oak-aged for 12 to 14 months, it has bright floral and berry notes. Simply spectacular alongside gnocchi with butter and sage or roast goose. **\$16.99**

The holidays are upon us so we have a lineup of excellent tastings and a selection of gift baskets, custom and pre-made, to make your holiday shopping simple and stress-free. Try our December staff picks at a tasting later this month and toast with us to the holidays. *Santé.* ♦

'Rudolph's Reds...'
A gorgeous basket of two 90+ rated red wines, Rudolph's Reds make excellent gifts for the wine lovers on your list. Check your list once, check it twice; and let us make your shopping a happy occasion.

Wine Tastings Fridays, 4-7 & Saturdays, 2-5

Days not mentioned will feature new arrivals.

Fri 12/6: New arrivals

Sat 12/7: Wines from WS and WE Top 100

Fri 12/13: Festive wines & Woodford Reserve and Gentleman Jack tasting and engraving

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Fri 12/20: December staff picks from page 1

Sat 12/21: Holiday host and gift wines

Fri 12/27: Wines for a New Year's Eve party

Sat 12/28: Wines and Champagnes for a quiet NYE

Lobster Wellington

Serves 2 hedonists or 4 well-mannered diners

- 1 3-pound lobster
- 4 Tbsp melted butter
- 3 large leaves Swiss chard, stems separated and reserved
- 1 Tbsp butter
- 1 Tbsp finely minced shallot
- 1 tsp concentrated tomato paste
- ¼ cup dry white wine
- ⅔ cup heavy cream
- 1 sheet puff pastry
- 1 egg yolk + 1/2 cup water (for egg wash)



Steam lobster for 9 minutes; completely remove all the meat from shell and cool, reserving shells, chopping meat into 2-inch pieces and tossing with melted butter. Meanwhile, coarsely chop one Swiss chard stem, discarding or reserving the remaining stems for another use. Heat butter in a skillet over medium; when sizzling, add shallots and chard stems, and sauté 4 to 5 minutes, until golden. Add tomato paste, stirring for one minute, then reserved lobster shells, stirring one minute more. Add white wine and reduce for 1 to 2 minutes. Add 1½ cups water and bring to a simmer, cooking for 20-30 minutes, until reduced to a half-cup. Strain stock through a fine sieve, returning stock to small sauce pan over medium high

heat. Add heavy cream and simmer until thick enough to coat the back of a spoon, about 15 minutes. Cover and keep warm.

Blanch whole, deveined chard leaves by dropping into boiling water for 1 minute; then shock the leaves in ice water; towel dry leaves. Lay out chard leaves to form a flat sheet shaped like a square. Place lobster tail down first, then claws and knuckle meat. Wrap lobster in leaves, tucking edges. Place the wrap atop puff pastry. Measure enough to wrap the lobster; cut and remove any excess pastry. Seal with egg wash. Bake at 375 degrees for 30 minutes or until golden brown. Slice and drizzle with lobster cream sauce and serve with a simple vegetable and Sheila's Champagne pick of the month.

French 75

Makes 2 cocktails

- 4 oz Boodles Gin
- 1 ½ oz fresh lemon juice
- 1 ½ ounce simple syrup
- 4-5 oz Champagne
- 2 long spiral lemon twists



Combine first three ingredients in a cocktail shaker filled with ice. Cover and shake until outside of shaker is very cold, about 20 seconds. Strain into two flutes. Top each with Champagne and garnish with lemon spirals.

Check out Wines from Wine Spectator's Top 100 for 2019

#27 Renato Ratti Barolo Marcanasco 2015

#46 Loveblock Pinot Noir Central Otago 2018 2018

#49 Wines of Substance Cabernet Sauvignon Washington Cs Substance 2017

#50 Marchesi di Barolo Barbera del Monferrato Maraia 2017

#58 A to Z Wineworks Chardonnay Oregon 2018

#59 Viña Montes Alpha M Colchagua Valley 2015

#61 Cambria Chardonnay Santa Maria Valley 'Katherine's Vineyard' 2017

#64 Dry Creek Zinfandel Sonoma County Heritage Vines

#65 Tania & Vincent Carême Terre Brûlée Le Blanc Swartland

#66 RouteStock Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast 116

#73 Cristom Pinot Noir Willamette Valley Mt. Jefferson Cuvée

#78 Gérard Bertrand Languedoc Art de Vivre

#81 Veuve Ambal Brut Crémant de Bourgogne Grande Cuvée

#95 Piper-Heidsieck Brut Champagne Cuvée