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Wine for Thanksgiving... and Hanukkah



BY FRED TASKER

Choosing wines for the many flavors of Thanksgiving is never easy. You have to match not only the turkey but the oyster stuffing, the cranberry sauce, the

green bean casserole and the pumpkin pie.

This year is even harder, because, for one of the few times in history, Thanksgiving Day is also the first day of Hanukkah, the Jewish Festival of Lights.

Food bloggers are running amok, calling it Thanksgivukkah and suggesting cross-cultural recipes like turkey brined in Manischewitz with challah stuffing and sweet potato latkes.

Of course, all this makes the wine selection even more fun. Let the other guys play Fantasy Football. In my Fantasy Thanksgivukkah league, I would create a multifaceted lineup to go with all those flavors.

After greeting my friends at the door with a glass of kosher bubbly, I would load the groaning board with a bottle of red, a bottle of white and a bottle of rosé, and let the diners sort it out.

I would send in sweet red and white wines for those who like them. Alcohol-removed wines for those who need them. For my beer-loving friends, I would substitute a seasonal pumpkin ale. For overtime, a bottle or three of dessert wines.

In my fantasy league, I hope, everyone would find something to be thankful for.

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

2010 Tintara Shiraz, McLaren Vale, Australia: dark, intense and full-bodied, with black raspberry, spice and chocolate flavors, very rich; \$19.

2012 Enjoue Rosé, Lasseter Family Winery, Sonoma Valley (syrah, mourvedre and grenache): a French-style dry rosé, with aromas and flavors of tart strawberries; \$24.

2012 XYZ "Old Vine" Zinfandel, Alexander Valley (zinfandel, carignane, alicante bouschet and petite sirah): hint of oak, aromas and flavors of black raspberries and black pepper, full-bodied, smooth; \$12.

2012 Conundrum White Blend, California (sauvignon blanc, chardonnay, muscat canelli, semillon and viognier): lush, unctuous and full-bodied, with lavender aromas and flavors of apples, ripe peaches and vanilla; \$22.

RECOMMENDED

Nonvintage Bartenura Prosecco Brut kosher sparkling wine, Veneto, Italy: lightly sweet, gently sparkling, fruity, with lemon meringue flavors; \$17.

Nonvintage FRE Alcohol-Removed Brut sparkling wine, by Sutter Home, California: (74 percent dealcoholized chenin blanc and pinot noir, 26 percent grape juice): active bubbles, apple and pear flavors, almost dry; \$6.

2011 Sutter Home Sweet Red Wine, California (merlot, zinfandel and moscato): soft, lush and sweet, with flavors of cherries and peaches; \$5.

2011 Oakley "Eighty-Two" California Red Wine, Cline Cellars (56 percent syrah, 15 percent petite sirah, 13 percent barbera, 5 percent cabernet franc plus other reds): soft, smooth and lightly sweet, with aromas and flavors of black plums and black pepper; \$9.

2012 Don Miguel Gascon "Colosal" Red Blend, Mendoza, Argentina (malbec, bonarda, syrah, cabernet sauvignon): hint of oak, hearty flavors of black cherries and bittersweet chocolate; \$15.

2012 Cline Cellars Viognier, North Coast: pale yellow color, lush, rich aromas and flavors of ripe apricots and peaches; \$12.

2012 "Equilibrium" white wine, Franciscan Estate, Napa Valley (sauvignon blanc, chardonnay and muscat canelli): fruity, lightly sweet, aromas of ripe apricots and pears, spicy; \$23.

2011 Quady "Essencia" Orange Muscat dessert wine, California: rich, viscous and unctuous, with sweet orange and ripe peach flavors, nicely crisp; \$20.

Samuel Adams "Fat Jack" Double Pumpkin Ale: dark amber hue, long-lasting tan head, big and powerful, with flavors of pumpkin, cinnamon, cloves and nutmeg; \$7 per 22-ounce bottle.

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