

WINE COUNTRYTM

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\$2.50

Holiday Celebration!

Fourth Annual American Sparkling Wine Competition

Holiday Gift Recipes

Fête de Cuvée—

Best of the French Champagnes

Oyster Bars—What's New?

Champagne Cocktails

Sparkling Recipes

Wine & Food Events

Tasting Notes

Best Wine Buys

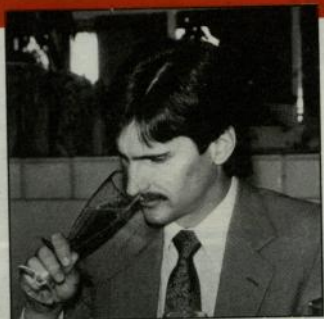
Important Imports

New Releases

Whether as a gift or for that sumptuous holiday feast, wine is the perfect drink. Yet, with thousands upon thousands of bottles from which to choose, it is sometimes tricky to find just the right wine for an occasion at hand. With this dilemma in mind, I have gathered the following group of recommended wines to help take the agony out of any of your last-minute December shopping decisions.

In any situation and under any circumstance, Champagne-method sparkling wines are by far the safest, and best received, bets. Rosé Champagnes are currently very fashionable—the NV Joseph Perrier Cuvée Royale Rosé (\$20) is a fine wine at a reasonable price. In something more unusual, but similar in both quality and value, try the excellent NV Grand Cru, Juvy Camps (\$15.50) from Spain. The top wine from this firm, it displays the yeasty character, crisp acidity and balance of the finest sparkling wines. Not surprisingly, it happens to be the best *cava* I've tasted. The greatest Italian Champagne-method sparklers are those from Cà del Bosco, a small winery located in the Franciacorta district of Lombardy.

Cà del Bosco's NV Franciacorta Pinot (\$20) is a real taste treat. Made from a blend of Chardonnay, Pinot Bianco and Pinot Nero, it has very good fruit flavors, moderate yeastiness and a crisp long finish.



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Our Holiday Helper

WINE FINDS

BY RONN R. WIEGAND