

STUFFED AND HUNG(OVER)

THANKSGIVING CAN BE A CHORE – THESE WINES WILL EASE THE PAIN

BY ARI BENDERSKY



As far as holidays go, you don't get more American than Thanksgiving. Ever since the Pilgrims and Native Americans had that first feast, families have gathered to give thanks. To make it through this year's festivities, imbibe—but don't waste it on bad wine that will only give you a hangover to rival the mental beating you received from your mom the night before. Because there's a variety of food lying before you, you can choose from a breadth of wine to pair with it. However, one thing to keep in mind is that you have rich spices, hearty gravies and, well, turkey. A general rule is to look for light- to medium-bodied reds and whites, like a dry Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc, Syrah and Pinot Noir. But there are exceptions to the rule—so dig in, and get ready to love your family.

Moët & Chandon “White Star” NV

Start out the night by tickling your nose with some bubbles. A good Champagne or sparkling wine will help put everyone at ease and kick off the celebratory spirit. One of my favorites is the White Star by Moët & Chandon. This non-vintage bubbly is easy on the wallet but big on the palate. It's light and extra dry but still has some really nice fruit, like apple, pear and peach.

Available at Sam's Wines and Spirits (1720 N. Marcey, 312/664-4394), \$12.99-\$71.99.

Allendorf Riesling Kabinett Winkeler Hasensprung Rheingau 2005

Riesling is probably the perfect all-around wine for Thanksgiving. No, not the sugary sweet version. This is a full-bodied, off-dry varietal. The green apple and orange peel essence that wafts off the nose and onto your palate is a great balance to the turkey, stuffing, candied yams, sweet potatoes—hell, even with hints of lime, this wine can carry you through to dessert. Available at Kafka Wine Co. (3325 N. Halsted, 773/975-9463), \$10.99.

Stags' Leap Chardonnay

No Thanksgiving dinner would be complete without a bold bottle of Chard—because, frankly, your aunts are afraid to drink anything else. Sure, the grapes might overpower the gravy, but think about the mashed potatoes, string bean casserole and juicy turkey. There are very few wine houses that epitomize Napa like Stags—and just like the 100-plus-year history of the estate, this bottle is just as rich. It's tropical, creamy and lush, with hints of

peach, floral notes and green apple.

Available at Binny's Beverage Depot (3000 N. Clark, 773/935-9400), \$24.99.

Domaine La Garrigue, Cotes du Rhône 2005

Whether you're eating turkey and stuffing, cranberry sauce or sweet potato casserole, this is a well-balanced, medium-bodied red, made up of Grenache (65 percent), Mourvedre (25 percent) and Syrah (10 percent). The bright fruit will complement a variety of food but will definitely kick things up a notch when that cranberry sauce (hopefully fresh) enters your mouth. Available at Sam's, \$13.

Maison Champy Bourgogne Pinot Noir 2005

Even though Maison Champy is the oldest wine house in Burgundy (founded in 1720), this bottle is youthful, full of life and super juicy. It's elegant, but not snobby, approachable but not a pushover. Thinking of sipping something with the variety of spices on the table like nutmeg and cardamom? Look no further. Available at Flickinger Wines (flickwine.com) or call 847/881-2620 to arrange delivery, \$15.95.