



AL DIAZ/MIAMI HERALD STAFF



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**WINE**

## Looking for a gift that pops?

Wine makes a wonderful holiday gift if you put some thought into it. It's festive and flexible in price. It can be warmly personal, too, with a little effort.

A couple of caveats: Before you start shopping, determine the price that's appropriate for the person you're gifting. Give your boss a \$6 generic white, no matter how good it is, and she'll think you're cheap. Give a \$200 bordeaux and he might decide you don't need a raise this year.

Second, while some of the world's top wines come in screw-cap bottles, you should give them only to friends who know about wine. Many people still - erroneously - believe screw-cap wines are inferior.

Put the bottle in a gift bag, Google it to find a point of interest, and jot it down on the card along with a serving suggestion. For example, the Post Scriptum below is a Portuguese table wine made of grapes usually used in port. Or you might simply say you had that wine with a beef roast and it was a great match.

Finally, if you bring the wine to a holiday dinner, don't assume it'll be served with that meal. Your hosts may well have purchased wines to complement their menu.

Here are specific suggestions in various price ranges.

• TURN TO WINE, 1E

# SOUTH FLORIDA SPARKLE

## BUBBLIES TO COMPLEMENT LOCAL FLAVORS FROM FLAN TO BARBECUED RIBS

BY DINKINISH O'CONNOR  
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Sparkling wine is a bubble bath for your palate. It can refresh like beer and inspire like a Miami sunset. It's popping up from the most unexpected regions — and can complement the most unexpected foods.

Let me be your guide on a food and wine journey that will take you from a Jewish diner where an unassuming prosecco waltzes with whitefish salad to a North Carolina roadside grill where tangy ribs sop the soul from a semi-sweet sparkling red.

Like so much we love about South Florida, it's an experience you'll find nowhere else.

• TURN TO BUBBLY, 1E



JOE RINKUS, JR./MIAMI HERALD STAFF



MEG PUKEL/FOR THE MIAMI HERALD

**MIX AND MATCH:** Deinhard Lila Riesling Sekt goes with the panko-crusted fried chicken from Culinary Roots Kitchen Bistro, top, while the Paul Goerg Tradition Brut pairs well with the Dungeness crabs from the Rustic Inn, above left. At left, Dinkinish O'Connor ponders her next sip.



MEG UKEL/FOR THE MIAMI HERALD

Bougrier Loire Valley Vouvray Blanc de Blancs with queso frito (Nicaraguan fried cheese) from El Yambo.

## Bubbly to pair with local fare



MEG UKEL/FOR THE MIAMI HERALD

Graham Beck Bliss Demi Sec with leche flan from Enriqueta's Cafe.



### • BUBBLY, FROM 1E

**Wine:** Paul Goerg Tradition Brut Champagne (\$35)

**Grub:** Dungeness crabs from Rustic Inn.

**Tip:** Ask for crabs at the top of the pot; they are the freshest.

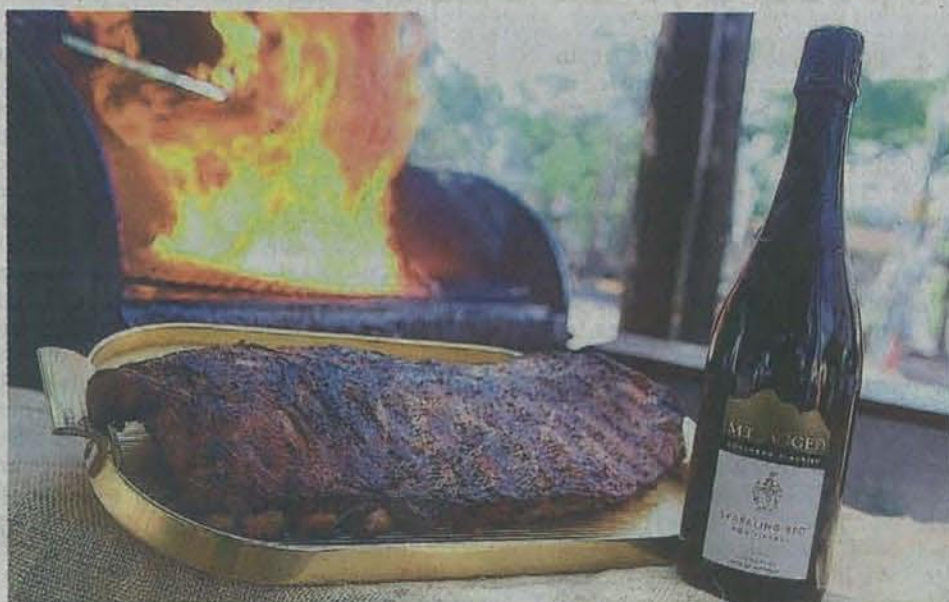
**Why it works:** The champagne's creamy texture and Golden Delicious apple and nut flavors are a textural match for supple crab flesh that is perfumed with caramelized garlic.

**Wine:** Graham Beck Bliss Demi Sec (\$15)

**Grub:** Leche flan from Enriqueta's Cafe

**Why it works:** The wine's velvety body serenades the dessert's crème brûlée richness, and its delicate acidity brightens the flan's pralines-and-cream flavor.

**Wine:** Santi Nello Prosecco Di Valdobbiadene (\$15)



MEG UKEL/FOR THE MIAMI HERALD

MT Jagged Sparkling Red Non Vintage with ribs from James Bar B Que.

araguan fried cheese) from

### WINE

## Looking for a gift that pops?

### • WINE, FROM 1E

#### UNDER \$25

• **2008 Antigal Uno Malbec**, Mendoza, Argentina: deep violet color, black plums, black raspberries and mocha, dry and smooth; \$20.

• **2008 Sanford Winery Chardonnay**, Santa Barbara County, Calif.: a quintessential California chard, bright and crisp, with hints of oak and ripe pineapple flavors; \$22.

• **Nonvintage Noval "Black" Ruby Port**, Quinta do Noval, Portugal: a powerful, sweet dessert wine with flavors of black cherries and coffee; \$22.

• **2007 Kendall Jackson "Grand Reserve" Cabernet Sauvignon**, Sonoma/Napa, Calif.: hint of oak, flavors of cassis and espresso, soft, ripe tannins; \$25.

#### \$25 TO \$34

• **2008 Wilson Winery Zinfandel**, "Sawyer Vineyard," Dry Creek Valley, Calif.: hint of oak, rich and hearty, with black cherry and sweet chocolate flavors; \$34.

• **2008 Morgan "Twelve Clones" Pinot Noir**, Santa Lucia Highlands, Calif.: big and powerful, with black cherry and cinnamon flavors; \$32.

• **2009 Freemark Abbey Viognier**, Napa Valley, Calif.: aromas of white flowers and vanilla, soft and rich, with vanilla and citrus flavors; \$27.

• **2007 Post Scriptum Red Wine**, Prats & Symington, Douro, Portugal (tinta roriz, touriga franca, tinta barroca grapes): rich, soft and smooth, with black cherry and dark chocolate flavors, soft tannins; \$25.

#### \$35 TO \$50

• **2009 Matanzas Creek Winery Sauvignon Blanc**, "Helena Bench Vineyard," Sonoma, Calif.:



PETER ANDREW BOSCH/MIAMI HERALD STAFF  
Santi Nello Prosecco Di Valdobbiadene with whitefish salad from Bagels & Co.



WALTER MICHOT/MIAMI HERALD STAFF  
Gran Pasion Brut Reserva Cava with the fried fish special from La Granja.

**Grub:** Whitefish salad from Bagels & Co.  
**Why it works:** Delicate saltwater and wet-sand aromas and white grapefruit flavors accentuate the oceanic experience.

**Wine:** MT Jagged Sparkling Red Non Vintage (\$20)

**Grub:** Ribs from James Bar B Que

**Why it works:** Made with mostly merlot grapes, the wine has barbecue-smoke aromas and amorous black cherry flavors that balance the savory tang of the ribs.

**Tip:** Douse ribs with owner's smoky, secret sauce.

**Wine:** Rondel Semi Seco Medium-Dry Cava (\$8)

**Grub:** Lambi (Haitian conch stew) from Chery's Bar & Seafood Restaurant

**Why it works:** Crème fraiche and Red Delicious apple aromas and flavors come alive in this chunky dish with an earthy, silky tomato sauce.

**Wine:** Bougrier Loire Valley Vouvray Blanc de Blancs (\$18)

**Grub:** Queso frito (Nic-

**El Yambo**  
**Why it works:** Buttery croissant and honeyed macadamia nut flavors balance the subtle saltiness of the mozzarella stick-like cheese.

**Wine:** Gran Pasion Brut Reserva Cava (\$13)

**Grub:** Fried fish special (with black beans, white rice and sweet fried plantains) from La Granja Pollos & Carnes a la Brasa

**Why it works:** The wine's peach sherbet characteristics are a peachy match for this Miami comfort food.

**Wine:** Deinhard Lila Riesling Sekt (\$13)

**Grub:** Lemon-pepper panko-crusted fried chicken from Culinary Roots Kitchen Bistro.

**Why it works:** Lemon meringue and pear aromas and flavors complement the dazzling lemon pepper seasoning in the light crust.

*Miami writer and sommelier Dinkinish O'Connor is founder of the wine-events company Purple Reign.*



PETER ANDREW BOSCH/MIAMI HERALD STAFF  
Rondel Semi Seco Medium-Dry Cava with lambi (Haitian conch stew) from Chery's Bar & Seafood Restaurant.

big, rich, crisp and full-bodied, with flavors of white grapefruit; \$38.

• **2007 Fogdog Pinot Noir**, Sonoma Coast, Calif.: big and rich, with spicy aromas and flavors of black cherries and coffee; \$35.

• **Nonvintage J Brut Rosé Sparkling Wine**, Russian River Valley, Calif.: lots of tiny bubbles, crisp citrus and black cherry flavors; \$35.

• **2006 Banfi "Bel-nero" Sangiovese**, Montalcino, Italy: rich, concentrated tart-cherry flavors, crisp and lively, long finish; \$39.

#### OVER \$50

• **2006 Shafer "Relentless" Syrah/Petit Sirah**, Napa Valley, Calif.: black cherries, black pepper and black coffee, big, ripe tannins; \$70.

• **2008 Freestone Chardonnay**, Sonoma Coast: hint of oak, aromas of camellias and lemons, crisp and mineral, powerful; \$55.

• **2006 Cakebread Cellars "Dancing Bear" Cabernet Sauvignon**, Howell Mountain, Calif.: hint of oak, aromas and flavors of cassis and other berries, powerful and smooth, with big, ripe tannins; \$105.

### Pairing tips

**Semi-sweet** sparklers temper the heat in spicy foods.

**Full-bodied**, nutty sparklers seduce buttery, creamy dishes.

**Mineral-driven**, high-acid sparklers complement the flavor subtleties in grilled and smoked seafood and vegetable dishes.

### Finding the food

**Dungeness crabs:** 3 pounds for \$42.35, 4 pounds for \$49.77 at Rustic Inn Seafood Crabhouse, 4331 Ravenswood Rd., Fort Lauderdale; 954-584-1637.

**Leche flan:** \$2.50 at Henriqueta's Café, 186 NE 29th St. Miami; 305-573-4681.

**Whitefish salad:** \$13.50 a pound at Bagels & Co., 11064 Biscayne Blvd., North Miami; 305-892-2435.

**Barbecued pork ribs:** Quarter-pound sandwich \$7, half-slab \$13, full slab \$23 from James Bar B Que, a mobile unit that sells at various Miami sites; 786-493-0941.

**Lambi:** A platter (feeds three) with rice and beans, salad, bonnon (fried plantain medallions) and pikliz (spicy slaw) \$15 at Chery's Bar & Seafood Restaurant, 12781 W. Dixie Hwy., North Miami; 305-895-9033. (Lambi is a special; call ahead to check availability.)

**Queso frito:** \$1.50 at El Yambo, 1643 SW First St., Miami; 305-649-0203.

**Fried fish special:** \$9.50 at La Granja Pollos & Carnes a la Brasa, 12630 Pines Blvd., Pembroke Pines; 954-447-9661.

**Lemon-pepper panko-crusted chicken:** \$20 for four pounds from Culinary Roots Kitchen Bistro (special order only); [culinaryroots@gmail.com](mailto:culinaryroots@gmail.com).

### Finding the wine

MT Jagged Sparkling Red Non Vintage is available at The Wine Shoppe, 1706 S. Red Rd., Miami (305-267-9921). Gran Pasion Brut Reserva Cava is available at Aficionado's Cigars & Liquor, 1200 Brickell Bay Dr., Suite 105, Miami (786-427-6165). You can find the other wines at Total Wine & More, 14750 Biscayne Blvd., North Miami (305-354-3270).



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