



LIVE WELL

Hosting 101: The 5 rules of wine etiquette to follow for your next soiree

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They call it wine and dine for a reason...

With colder winds upon us (and the festive season still very much in play), the likelihood that we're all going to be hosting a cosy soiree or dinner party soon enough is fairly high. A great wine to pair with courses—or simple keep flowing through the course of the evening—is almost a prerequisite for the ideal evening. It's not, however, quite as simple as [choosing a signature](#) vino and leaving it at that, as Sonal Holland, India's only Master of Wine, tells us. Here are her dos and don'ts for handling your wine like a host with the most...

Wine etiquette: dos and don'ts

1. It's better to be overstocked

Nothing comes off quite as poorly as tipping the last bottle and shrugging wistfully when your guests are starting to get into the swing of things. “Be generous with the wines you serve,” Holland advises. “And also ensure you choose wisely and well.”

2. Offer a range

A red and a white are fairly boilerplate—what makes a wine-laced evening truly excellent is having a smattering of renditions for your guests to experiment with. “When hosting a wine party at home, try to create an assortment of different bottles of wine that your guests can choose from,” Holland says. “It's an opportunity to expand your guest's palate as well!”

3. Choose the right glasses

“It's a fact that the taste of even the most ordinary wines is enhanced when served from proper glasses,” Holland tells us, insisting that quality stemware

truly does make all the difference. “Choose clear stemware with no design or cuts, and make sure the glass has a lovely, steady base, a stem to hold the glass with, a broad base at the bottom of the bowl, and narrow rims,” she adds. Invest in something with a simple aesthetic with stand-out quality—the glasses will also age well and not lose their sense of style over the years.

4. The ‘guest bottle’ question

Arriving at a dinner party with a bottle of wine is often the safest go-to—it gives your guests something they can hand you at the door that takes less chances than chocolates, and is likely to fly better than a scented candle. However, not every guest comes with the assumption that the bottle will be uncorked in company. “Some guests are simply recycling bottles of wine they don’t want for themselves, so may not be comfortable with you opening their bottles at the party,” Holland says, adding that that’s not often the case but it should be accounted for. “The other extreme is wine-loving guests, who make a lot of effort to choose and bring a good quality bottle of wine to a party, and would therefore appreciate you and the rest of the guests trying what they have brought.” Holland’s tip to navigating this landmine is simply asking. “Ask the guest in private if they would like you to open their bottle and serve the wine to the guests, or have you save it for later.”

5. Limit the wine talk

It’s natural, as a wine-loving host who’s put out a spread, to want to have a little conversation about it—what you’ve chosen for your soiree, and why. However, it can quickly get tedious for people that are less invested in the

subject. “My only tip is: know when to stop,” Holland laughs. “A few amusing, informational anecdotes about the bottles chosen are charming; anything more and you stand to lose your audience!”

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