

Temp Zine

Timeless Spirits: The Wine Gifting Guide

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Wine evokes a sense of richness in one's soul and reminds us that it is the distilled essence of goodness in life. It has become the gift of choice. But how do you select a really good wine or host a celebration with it?

The festive season has approached, and for many of us, this year will be all about entertaining at home, in small groups. This also means that festive gifting is also in full swing! The element of wine has become synonymous when it comes to celebrations. Beyond the traditional *mithais* and dry fruit route, whether it's entertaining/hosting at home or gifting, wine is now an option people often look towards.

Festive gifting gives you the opportunity to show the person you're gifting to, that you care about them, and about their taste and preferences. Here's how to determine the best way of gifting wines this festive season.

For The Discerning Oenophile:

First, identify the person you're gifting to. If this is someone who enjoys their wine and drinks it regularly, then you want to stick to classic wines. So other than Champagne, you could choose a white wine from a really established producer like a Masi Masianco Pinot Grigio, or a rich, dry red wine like an Amarone della Valpolicella.

You just can't go wrong here, as you will be picking from an iconic producer. When gifting classic wines, of course, the price point is a bit on the higher side, however, consider this paying a premium for gifting something really memorable to someone you care about.

For The Budding Enthusiast:

If the person you're [gifting](#) to is someone relatively new to the world of wines, but still has a curious mind and is a bit of an enthusiast, I recommend a white wine like an Italian Soave, which is a lovely blend of Garganega and Chardonnay grapes. It is a lively, vibrant wine which pairs well with almost anything.



If you're gifting a red, you can opt for a Vegante, which is a Chianti superior wine from Italy. What's unique about this wine is that it's vegan, which is certainly something different. Even the packaging looks like a newspaper, which keeps the feel of this wine very rustic and real. What's more, the price point of these wines is just under Rs. 3000, making it a not terribly expensive gifting option.

For Corporate Gifting:

When you're thinking of festive gifting, it's also important to think about the occasion and not just the giftee. Depending on the occasion, the type of wine that you want to gift or how much you want to spend may also differ. For example, if you're a corporate looking to gift wines, you're probably looking for something that looks and tastes expensive but is not, because you're going to try and follow a budget. For this kind of corporate gifting, I suggest choosing wines from lesser-known regions but still established producers. These will offer exceptional value for money in terms of the [palette](#).



Examples of these kinds of wines include the Chapoutier from France, which is a really juicy, flavorful white wine. It comes from an incredibly established producer, from the Rhone region of France. Those looking for a red can opt for the Montepulciano D'abruzzo from Italy, which is another rich, cherry-like wonderful wine. Both options are priced reasonably, at not more than Rs. 2500 per bottle.

While Hosting At Home:

The next category of wines one must consider is the crowd-pleaser – best served during gatherings at home, this festive season. One of my top picks is the South African Niel Jourbert Sauvignon Blanc – this variety of wine is hugely popular, and pairs well with a variety of cheeses and other foods.

My pick for a red wine that will wash down easy is a Malbec – everyone loves a good Malbec because it's fruity, full of flavour, and fuller in body and smoothness. It also pairs well with spicy foods. My pick for the festive season is Santa Julia from the Mendoza region of Argentina. Both these wines are again well-priced and will serve you well if you pour them at your festive get-together.



However, hosting a celebratory soiree at home needs you to demonstrate the best wine etiquettes too.

Tip 1: As a host, there is always one general rule that if you follow, you will never go wrong. Be generous with the wines you serve. Nothing is better than building great memories over a bottle of wine, so ensure you choose wisely and well.

Tip 2: The festive season is a great time to experiment when hosting intimate gatherings! We all have our tried and tested wines that we go back to, but why not expand your guest's palettes by serving as many styles of wine as possible? When hosting a wine party at home, try to create an assortment of different bottles of wine, that your guests can choose from. The beauty of wines is about enjoying the diversity of its various styles and discovering new tastes.



Tip 3: It's important to invest in good quality stemware, in which to serve your wines. It's a fact that the taste of even the most ordinary wines is enhanced when served from proper glasses. Choose clear stemware with no design or cuts. Ensure 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. Keep it simple yet high-quality, and you will never go wrong.

Tip 4: When hosting an evening at home, chances are that some of your guests will arrive with hostess gifts of their own, many times, a bottle of wine. It becomes your duty to ask your guests if they would like you to open their bottle and serve the wine to the guests – often, wine-loving guests 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.

At other times, 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. Either way, it's important that you ask them first, to let them decide if their bottle should be opened at the party or saved for later.



Tip 5: As a host, especially one who loves wines, it is absolutely fine for you to take the stage so to speak, to tell your guests a little about the wines you've chosen for the evening, and why. The only tip is: know when to stop. A few amusing, informational anecdotes about the bottles chosen are charming; anything more and you stand to lose your audience!

So there you have it, how to make your festive season more memorable with fine wine! This Diwali and onwards through the festive season, ensure you pick the best wines – either for gifting or for hosting at home.

All wines mentioned here can be purchased at Sonal's Vine2Wine Cellars located at Foodhall (Palladium and Linking Road), Mumbai or [online](#).

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Master of Wine, Sonal Holland is India's most accomplished and celebrated wine professional. She is the first Indian to be bestowed with the world's most prestigious wine title, with a present count of only 389 MW's across 30 countries.

Her entrepreneurial ventures include the SoHo Wine Club (founded in 2016), where her refreshing approach to demystifying wines has endeared her to budding oenophiles in a land of whisky lovers. She also founded the Sonal Holland Wine Academy (2009), India's foremost institution offering certified WSET wine and spirit courses.

Sonal's professional achievements include her role as the former corporate head of wine and beverages at home-grown luxury hospitality conglomerate, ITC Hotels. Currently, she runs Vine2Wine Retail, the high-end wine stores for luxury food retail chain Foodhall.

Link: <https://tempzine.com/features/wine-festive-gifting/>