

Speaking of wine

By Russ Disotell

CONGRATULATIONS ON THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY ISSUE OF LIVING HERE MAGAZINE.

Time certainly does fly! This must mean a Christmas column with turkey and wine combinations!

The first thing to remember is to relax and not obsess. Christmas dinner isn't the ideal occasion for contemplating wine. There is a table full of culinary delights with different flavour profiles and textures. Undoubtedly there will be more dishes than are usually served for a family get-together. There will also certainly be a number of guests who could care less what is in the glass.

Add to this the chatter, and the general hubbub of annual family gatherings, and you have a situation where wine isn't the star of the show. Probably not even the co-star. At best it has a walk-on cameo. So don't worry about every little nuance.

This is also not the time to be experimenting. Stick to the tried and true. In the case of turkey, this means Pinot Noir for red and as a white wine selection try Riesling, a medium-bodied Chardonnay, or Viognier. Keep to a moderate price range unless your family includes a number of Masters of Wine!

We have talked about Chile's Cono Sur Bicicleta Pinot Noir (CSPC# 341602, \$9.95) in this column before. The 2013 vintage is superb. You can expect a fresh cherry nose, followed by a medium-bodied palate, with deep flavours of ripe berry and cherry fruit, with a light peppery spice and soft, supple tannins. The finish is lengthy, fresh and flavourful. Simple and straightforward, it offers great balance and is eminently quaffable, a great quality for a Christmas wine.

Vina Leyda Reserva Pinot Noir 2012 (CSPC# 358929, \$12.50) is another Chilean candidate for a Christmas invitation. This is the first vintage of this attractive Pinot Noir to appear on LCBO shelves and hopefully there will be many more. This complex Pinot offers fresh, forward strawberry fruit, with a hint of red cherries, herbal nuances, a light smoky quality and a touch of mineral, especially on the crisp, refreshing finish. Medium-bodied and superbly balanced, it is sure to become a favourite go-to Pinot.

For a white wine, you can't go wrong with another new arrival on LCBO shelves. Laroché Viognier De La Chevaliere 2013 (CSPC# 377622, \$12.70), from France's Languedoc-Roussillon region. Look for a medium-bodied complex white, with intense peach, apricot, pear and honeysuckle fruit with a touch of herbaceous spice and plenty of food friendly acidity. The finish has great length and flavour.

I wish our readers a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Relax and enjoy!

Russ Disotell enjoyed a twelve year career with the LCBO. He spent the last four years as Product Advisor in Vintages purchasing where he was a member of the buying panel and endured the arduous task of tasting products every week! Since leaving the Board he has written columns and articles on wine, helped develop wine lists and conducted wine tastings. LH

